

May 8, 2020

Dear **St. Thomas Aquinas CHS** Family,

We are reaching out to let you know that your school will experience a change to the timing of the start and/or end of the school day, otherwise known as bell times, effective September 2020. This change will facilitate a standard length of the school day and will affect bus pickup and drop off schedules for schools in the East-West region of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario's (CDSBEO's) and the Upper Canada District School Board's (UCDSB's) jurisdictions.

For **St. Thomas Aquinas CHS** the change will be as follows:

Current Start Time	September 2020 Start Time	Current End Time	September 2020 End Time
8:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	2:25 p.m.	2:10 p.m.

Student Transportation of Eastern Ontario (STEO), in partnership with CDSBEO and UCDSB, has been aligning bus scheduling to reflect these bell times across the entire region of service over a three year period, to create consistent 8:00 a.m. start times for secondary schools and start times for elementary schools between 9:15 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. Bell time alignment supports consistent planning for families, the implementation of district-wide learning opportunities and significant transportation related savings, without loss of service to families. To get a list of the full scope of changes taking place in the East-West region, please visit:

www.steo.ca/belltimechanges

Changing Childcare Needs

STEO and the school boards recognize that changes to bell times may require families to make use of before-and-after school care services that they did not require in the past. To address these concerns, the boards are actively working with parents and childcare operators to assess the need for additional support and therefore, they require your input.

Changes to Childcare (for schools offering JK-6 programming)

The annual survey of parents by individual schools concerning their need for childcare services has been aligned with the notice of bell time changes to allow parents to consider their own needs in light of the anticipated changes.

The information parents provide to the annual childcare survey is critically important to helping childcare operators to properly assess demand and plan accordingly for resources in the new school year. Please complete the survey unique to your school board, which is located at www.steo.ca/belltimechanges by June 5, 2020. For support in accessing or completing the survey contact **1-855-441-1589**.

Parents who have questions about existing before-and-after school programming or childcare opportunities, can also reach out to their school Principal, or directly to the childcare operator, who will provide the appropriate resources.

Some families may be eligible for financial assistance for their childcare needs through the municipality. Parents can learn if they are eligible for the assistance program by visiting the following websites:

Counties of SD&G and the City of Cornwall	https://www.cornwall.ca/en/live-here/child-care.aspx
United Counties of Leeds and Grenville	https://www.leedsgrenville.com/en/services/child-care-fee-subsidy.aspx#
United Counties of Prescott Russell	http://en.prescott-russell.on.ca/services/social_services/early_years_services

Information Resources and Sessions

STEO and the boards are providing several resources to assist parents with specific information about how they will be directly affected by schedule changes and how they can most effectively source in-school or other childcare services if needed.

STEO has set up a call centre that can be reached at **1-855-441-1589**. It will be active as of May 11, 2020 and can assist parents in accessing online information and providing direction on where additional information resources can be found.

STEO and the boards are offering seven interactive parent information sessions between May 19 and May 28, 2020 to address questions. With COVID-19 safety measures in mind, these sessions will be offered through a virtual platform and will require pre-registration. Please visit www.steo.ca/belltimechanges to register for the session specific to your area. Registration support is available by reaching out to our call centre at **1-855-441-1589**. A recorded session will be made available at www.steo.ca/belltimechanges for those who are unable to participate.

Staying Connected and Ready for the Fall

In order to be ready for September, we encourage all UCDSB parents to register at myfamilyroom.ca in order to receive notifications by email, and for CDSBEO parents should confirm that their contact information on file at the school is correct in order to receive information through School Messenger. Parents can also download the free STEO BusPlanner Delays App to their mobile phone to receive direct notifications specific to their child's school.

SCHOOL and TRANSPORTATION
ELIGIBILITY

Parents can visit STEO's website at www.steo.ca and click on the icon to verify your child's eligibility for busing.



Detailed student transportation information, including pick-up/drop-off locations and approximate times, will be available **commencing August 17, 2020** using the FIND MY BUS STOP tool on STEO's website.

Please don't hesitate to contact STEO at 1-855-925-0022 or transportation@steo.ca for any clarification you may require as relates to transportation.

Wishing you the very best,
STEO, CDSBEO and UCDSB