

20 August 2020

Dear Merivale Families,

Further to the communication from the OCDSB, I want to take this opportunity to share additional information with you regarding Merivale's structure as you consider the mode of learning that best suits your student and family.

The following explanation is included in the [OCDSB FAQ document](#) and applies to students in grades 9 and 10 for the In-Person learning model at Merivale.

Non-semestered schools will be organized by octomesters. In an octomester, students will focus on two courses at a time and be grouped into two distinct cohorts that attend school on alternate schedules, as indicated by the OCDSB. An octomester will occur over approximately half the length of a quadmester. Students will complete half of each course during the first cycle of octomesters. Once students have rotated through each pair of courses, they will return to the first pair to complete the second half of their courses later in the year. At the end of the second cycle of the octomesters, students will have completed all eight courses.

We have adopted this format to best respect the continuity of learning represented by a non-semestered school while still adhering to a school environment that helps limit the spread of Covid-19. Should the Ministry of Education decide that the OCDSB can shift to five day per week attendance for secondary students, this plan will also allow us to pivot to provide the non-semestered learning environment with which students are familiar.

In response to Ministry direction, many districts, including the OCDSB, have designed a central virtual school for those students who opt for Remote Learning. Please see the following information from the [OCDSB's Return to School Plan](#):

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Remote Learning K-12



- Virtual schools have dedicated teaching and administrative staff;
- Students in remote learning will be registered in the virtual school instead of their home school;
- Secondary course options in remote learning may be limited, modified, and/or available through e-learning;
- A reorganization of all student placements, teaching assignments and course scheduling is required;
- Student transitions from In Person programming to Remote Programming are more limited;



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Family Requests to Change Learning Model

- As per Ministry direction, movement between learning models (in-person and full remote learning) during the semester is limited.
- There may be a waiting period for admission to school depending on scheduling and availability of class placement.
- Dates for switching models and corresponding deadlines for requesting a switch will be established as soon as possible.
- If a family/ student requires a change of learning models to occur at a time that is different than those stated, the change will be reviewed on a case-by case basis.



IB Diploma Programme Considerations

Please note: It will not be possible to deliver a pre-DP learning experience to your child in Remote Learning with the formation of a District-wide virtual school model.

We recognize that the decision about whether to attend in-person or opt for the Remote Learning offered by the OCDSB is not easy. Should you opt for the Remote Learning option for your student, Colonel By Secondary School and Merivale High School will honour your child's place in the IB Programme for the 2021-2022 school year with the completion of the [Memorandum of Understanding for Deferral Form](#).

Attending In Person or Remotely - Process for Changing Decisions

For those families that want to change the decision about In-Person or Remote Learning, there is still time to do that. If you have not changed your preference, you do not need to do anything. Your original request has been recorded and shared with the school. **If you want to change your decision, please complete the [Confirmation of Attendance form](#) by noon on Friday, August 21st.**

Haven't Made A Decision Yet?

Families who have not yet submitted their decision must also do so by noon on Friday, August 21st using the OCDSB's [Confirmation of Attendance form](#). In cases where no decision is submitted, students will be scheduled for In-Person attendance.

Thank you for your support as we work together to prepare for the start of school in September.

Sincerely,

Jean Fulton-Hale
Principal