



Blessed Carlo Virtual Elementary

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## Family Handbook

### Welcome!

We are thrilled you are joining our virtual school community! We believe in an iterative process and thus you will see this handbook change and grow as a result of input from families, staff and students.

With gratitude that you are on our learning journey with us,

Alison Hicks (Principal)

Sarah Girimonte (Office Administrator)



We are called to  
**Open Doors,**  
**Build Bridges,**  
**Nourish New Beginnings**  
"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock..." Rev 3:20

### We are a Faith-Based virtual learning community!

Children are multi-faceted; they deserve an education that supports all aspects of their development. This is why we approach education with the whole child in mind – ensuring they have safe spaces where their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual needs are nurtured. We provide our students with an education that is grounded in Catholic principles and respects the universal values of all faiths. Along with encouraging students to achieve academic excellence, we focus on helping students develop into well-rounded adults ready to become the leaders of the future.

We've adopted a model for Catholic character formation, where Gospel values are at the foundation of our religious and family life teachings. **Faith, hope, love, community, the dignity of persons, excellence, justice, and stewardship for creation** — these eight values motivate our students and add spiritual depth to their education. These themes permeate the culture of our schools as they are integrated into our curriculum and school life.

### OCSB's Strategic Commitments



**Be Community:** Guided by Catholic social teachings, we strive to be an inclusive learning community that embraces and values diversity, inclusion, and equity. We recognize that each member of our community has a unique role to play in building learning environments that honour the dignity of all people. As an organization, we are committed to doing our part to address systemic barriers, and model the Gospel values.

**Be Well:** Mental health and well-being will continue to be a priority for us at Blessed Carlo. We know there is a strong correlation between mental health and student achievement. When your child feels welcomed, included, understood and supported, they can better engage with classroom learning. Our staff work together to ensure your child has a safe and strong foundation to learn. This resource [from School Mental Health Ontario](#) as an excellent parent/caregiver resource.

**Be Innovative:** We know that the world is changing, and changing fast. We believe that the best way to prepare our young learners for the future is to help them develop skills and competencies that they can use in careers that might not even exist today. At every Ottawa Catholic school, we focus on helping your child develop global competencies: citizenship, character, communication, critical thinking, collaboration and creativity. We do this through the lens of [Deep Learning](#).

Our Board is an international leader in this area. In 2019, we were recognized as the District of Distinction by the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning Global Network for how we live out the concept of Deep Learning in our classrooms throughout Ottawa. Throughout the school year, delegations of educators from around the world come to visit our schools to see our innovative and impactful approach to teaching your children.

### How can I be a successful virtual student?

- Daily routines are very important! Getting up, having breakfast & getting dressed at the same time each day will prime your brain for learning. You might even consider having some time to have a body break outside before school as well!
- If possible, find a permanent, comfortable, quiet space in your home where you can work effectively. Do you need a fidget? Better lighting? A larger or smaller workspace?
- Keep all of your learning materials, especially the ones from your learning kits, organized and readily available. [Here are suggested learning materials.](#)
- Your educators will let you know how they are going to communicate with their students and their families. Monitor these communications often!
- Always try to do your best. Do you have a question? Ask your educator! They will communicate all of the ways that you can ask.
- Do your best to meet timelines so you don't become overwhelmed. Talk to your educators if you need support with this. We are here to help!

### How can I help as a parent/caregiver?

**Be involved through regular check-ins:** You have a strong influence on your child's attitude toward school, learning and future success. Your engagement and support in preparing them to learn independently will play a crucial role during their virtual learning experience. Monitor them but let your child learn independently and do the work themselves. Feel free to provide feedback at certain points in their learning journey but not continuously. When they make mistakes, they are in their learning zone! Consider starting and finishing each day with a simple check-in to help them organize and set learning priorities. Also, check to ensure that they are working on their OCSB email account and no other account or device is

being used. [Check their browsing history](#). We can only see some of what they are doing when in our OCSB account.

**Engagement check-ins:** We definitely need your partnership in this area! Bi-weekly please check your child's email, chats and Google Meet activity. The purpose is to ensure that they have a positive digital footprint. Talk to your child about what you find. Socializing is an important part of school but they also need to focus on their learning to a great extent during the day. If you find concerning content, please take a picture, [block the student](#), and alert your child's teacher. In partnership with parents, educators and administration will follow up accordingly.


**Check-ins regarding their mental health are equally important:** Help them to manage the range of emotions they may be experiencing. Encourage them to explore their feelings. Find calming strategies they can use around the house that work for them. It is alright for them to take a break in the day. Students benefit from being calm when learning. Here are two fantastic resources: [School Mental Health Ontario](#) & [Bee Your Best Self](#) written by our educator!

**Communicate with Your Team:** Our educators are happy to hear your questions & suggestions and are the first people you should contact. When they welcome you and your student into their class, they will let you know how to contact them. Please do not interrupt the lesson as this disrupts the learning for all. Posting or venting on social media isn't productive and can result in miscommunication or even false information.

**Being disciplined is crucial:** For optimal success, follow a daily schedule which includes getting dressed appropriately for class. **Attendance** will be taken at every block, daily for Blessed Carlo and regular attendance is expected of all students. If your child is going to be absent, please fill in this form [Report an Absence](#) before school begins (also located on our website) to let us know. **Engagement** is critical also. Cameras should be on unless there is a reason discussed with your educator. Check periodically to ensure they are only using their stu.ocsb.ca account and don't have another account open to watch videos or play on-line games.

**Encourage your child to take advantage of their scheduled breaks** to incorporate exercise, just like they would during recess. Movement has many benefits for kids, especially when it comes to learning. It can help improve focus, thinking and problem-solving. Take time for a snack or a friendly chat. We have increased the times of the AM and PM breaks to help support. We understand how long it takes to get young ones outside and back in, especially in winter time!

#### **Help them to understand and follow the OCSB Responsible Device Use Agreement**

 OCSB Responsible Use of Tech Agreement - Parent/Guardian Digital Form submission process . Know their password and check their student accounts frequently. Make sure that they tell you if they receive an inappropriate chat message or email, take a screenshot and follow up with their teachers. **Cyberbullying is taken very seriously at Blessed Carlo.** If you think they have shared their password, alert their educator and have them change the password.

[Samaritans on the Digital Road](#)

**Ensure you receive all of our communication** All messaging, unless the educators state otherwise, will be through School Messenger and will include upcoming events, emergency alerts and Board-wide events. [Here is how to sign up!](#)

**Attend our Family Information Sessions** which will feature question & answer sessions from our Boards's Mental Health & Wellness Lead, Social Worker as well as our Learning Technologist supports (i.e. How to Keep Your Child Safe On-Line). To help keep informed here are directions on [how to add our school calendar to your Google calendar](#). Additionally, I will send out family updates every Friday evening.

#### **Ensure their Device is Set Up Appropriately**

Here are the steps:

- Log out of all accounts on a device & [clear the cache](#).

- [Sign into Google Chrome OS](#) - this must be done on a chromebook or any other device. Students who log into Chrome have the best functionality for all of our programs, apps and extensions.
- Be sure to sync to your device. [Follow these directions to synch](#)
- Once logged into Chrome, students should log into their [Student Portal](#).
- Be sure to [Bookmark the Student Portal link](#).
- From the student portal, students can now [login](#) to their email, Google Meet, and all apps contained on the Student Portal through their [@stu.ocsb.ca](#) student domain.

**To note regarding tech:** when your child is at home, off of our wifi, the same security measures are not in place as in our schools but we do have Hapara Filter. This program works within the Chrome browser when students are logged into their stu.ocsb.ca student account. It filters out dangerous content, blocks ads and third party tracking and removes Youtube suggestions. However, we do suggest the following programs in addition to Hapara Filter to help safeguard your child while at home and when they aren't on our OCSB account: [Suggestions for Tech Use at Home \(Re: Parental Controls for Web Browsing\)](#).

## How do I let the school know if my child is going to be absent?

Please use [this form](#) to let us know. It is also linked to our [school website](#) for ease of access.

## My child has an IEP. How does this process look at Blessed Carlo?

All students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), requiring accommodations or modifications, will continue to have their needs met in the online classroom. *Blessed Carlo* resource teacher will liaise with our educators and families, and obtain family input to collaboratively develop and implement your child's IEP. Our resource teacher will be in touch with families in September to begin this process.

If you have any assessments for your child (educational, occupational therapy, speech) please email them to your educator team who will then consult with our resource team and get back to you.

## Will my child have access to books?

Regular visits to our Community library are encouraged so that your child will have access to print books and many other enriching experiences. [This link](#) will help you to see all of their offerings! We also have SORA in [our student portal](#) which is an on-line portal to sign out books as well as many other educational resources.

## What does it look like when my child's educator is absent?

Should educators be absent due to illness, they will have prepared lessons and activities to be facilitated by an Occasional Teacher (OT) during that day(s). You will see SUPPLY in the title of the meet link for that day. In the case that there is not an occasional teacher (OT) available, parents will be notified by email that Google Meets will be canceled. Students will be encouraged to work asynchronously that day. We will do our best to limit these types of days.

## What if there's an emergency?

We have that covered! Please feel free to print and post our school's [Emergency Plan](#).

## What will reporting look like?

You will receive all Ministry Reporting Documents (Progress Reports, Kindergarten Communication of Learning, Report Cards, etc.) through the [OCSB Parent Portal](#). Students will be evaluated as per Ministry of Ontario curriculum requirements except for gym.