



BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK Catholic District School Board

Transitioning to high school during a pandemic? No worries... we've got you!

January 15, 2021 (Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk) When faced with a global pandemic that has also essentially shut down the Province, local area Grade 8 students were faced with one more challenge: How can they meet grade 9 teachers, high school staff, learn about programs, see what high school looks like and has to offer? Local Catholic secondary schools understood that this has become 'one more thing' students needed to navigate and decided to help by introducing **Secondary Virtual Open Houses from January 18 – 22, 2021**.

The Virtual Open Houses provide potential students a glimpse inside the schools, lots of information about courses and selections, videos produced by teachers and students so there is a 'face to a name', and much more! The departments and individual classes provide forms so students can ask questions and our teachers will respond. Although school staff would prefer to meet new students and families in person, this alternate open house format has offered an additional benefit since all videos, 'Ask a Question' forms, course information, as well as registration and course selection forms will be available any time and any day going forward. The district has also moved the 'new Grade 9 student' registration forms to an online format.

When the district sent out a survey asking Grade 8 students and families if they had any questions about the transition to high school, the replies received made it evident that something was needed to fill this gap created by the pandemic. Although nothing can replace the connections made during the in-person Grade 8 Open House sessions that normally take place at each secondary school in January, the questions sent in by students made it clear that the schools needed to do something to help. How will I find my locker? If there is still a pandemic, can I come to school? How will I know to pick Academic or Applied level courses? What sports do you have? What do my science and math teachers look like? I have a Trades question... who can help? How do I register and pick my Grade 9 courses? These are a few of the questions asked that we answer for you during the Virtual Open Houses.

Although school staff may not be able to meet these Grade 8 students in person, they will begin to get to know them through this virtual experience. "Supporting student success and ensuring that grade 8 students are ready for the transition to high school is essential," said Director of Education, Mike McDonald. "Students are comfortable online, so we decided to take our Open House sessions to them, virtually. Students can hear from teachers, learn about great programs like Advanced Placement, Extended French, Co-Op/OYAP, sports and clubs, and even complete registration and course selection forms that are electronically submitted to the schools." The individual Catholic secondary schools are also offering additional opportunities to connect during online 'live' events and interactions taking place at specific times advertised by the school.

For now, the sites serve students moving from Grade 8 to high school. During development; however, we found opportunities the new online environment provided and decided to expanded our district's goal. Soon, all new students will be able to collect information, interact, register, and pick courses from the 'Future Students' section of any secondary school website.

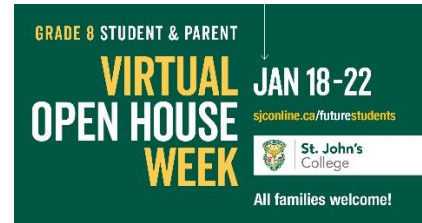
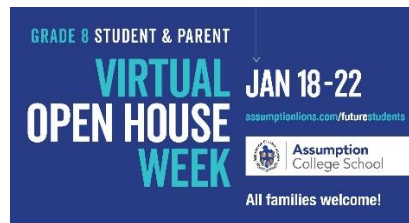
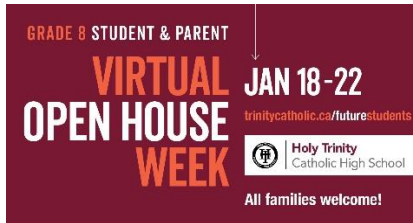
The Virtual Open House websites are available to all students and families as Catholic secondary schools are open access meaning that students of all faiths make up our Catholic school communities that work together to promote inclusive, open, and safe environments that support the needs of every learner.

To determine which Catholic high school is in your area, visit our [School Locator](https://transinfobhn.ca/Eligibility.aspx?Page=School) (<https://transinfobhn.ca/Eligibility.aspx?Page=School>)

Virtual Open House

To join a local Catholic Secondary School **Virtual Open House** beginning Monday, January 18, 2021 visit:

- Holy Trinity Catholic High School: www.trinitycatholic.ca/futurestudents
- Assumption College School: www.assumptionlions.com/futurestudents
- St. John's College School: www.sjconline.ca/futurestudents



Additional Opportunities

Holy Trinity Catholic High School

Thursday, January 21, 2021

6:30 p.m.

Live (only) Registration Information/Q & A Session (no registration for the event is required)

Access: [Via Microsoft Teams \(Link to Live Event\)](#)

Assumption College School

Assumption College guidance counsellors are here to help. If you have questions about your academic programming or about specific course offerings, please contact kdickson@bhncdsb.ca.

St. John's College School

The St. John's College guidance team are ready to assist and support all students. If you have questions about your secondary journey or about specific courses, please contact bspiers@bhncdsb.ca.

Note: The content of the Virtual Open House websites was collected/created from events prior to the COVID-19 pandemic or has been created within the health and safety guidelines set out by the Ontario Ministry of Health and our local public health unit.

-30-

For more information about the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board contact:

Tracey Austin | Manager of Communications and Community Relations

taustin@bhncdsb.ca | 519-732-5282