

March 27, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

As spring break comes to an end, I want to reach out to families to share what is on the horizon in the coming days and weeks. I would also like to acknowledge that this is an extremely challenging time for all members of our school community – our students, their families, and our staff.

We understand that many of you are experiencing uncertainty about your job and income, have concerns about childcare, and worry about keeping your children and family safe. We also recognize that you likely have many questions about what school and learning are going to look like moving forward.

Our staff are also juggling many of the same concerns. Our challenge now is to figure out how to move forward effectively in the difficult place we find ourselves. We have an incredibly dedicated team of teachers, support staff and school leaders who are ready to return to work after spring break with the full intent of supporting your children. I ask for your patience as we continue to figure out the details and work through this together.

As you know, the provincial government has suspended all in-class instruction until further notice. This means that students will not be returning to school after spring break. School district staff have been working over the past ten days to develop plans that will allow our students to continue to learn from home and for the school district to support students and families who need it most. We have been working hard to develop plans to support children and families who may be more vulnerable than others and will be reaching out to those families. Details will be provided on these specific supports in future communication.

**Our Priorities:**

The Ministry of Education has set the following four priorities which are to guide the work, resources and decision-making of all school districts across the province. These priorities have been guiding our planning efforts at the district level:

Priority One: *Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees*

Priority Two: *Provide the services needed to support children of essential services workers*

Priority Three: *Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance*

Priority Four: *Provide continuity of learning of educational opportunities for all students*

**Health and Safety Protocols:**

The school district must limit the number of people who will be present in schools at any given time in order to comply with the physical distancing orders of the Provincial Health Officer. At this time, the only students who will be spending time in schools are children of essential services workers who require child care. In order to limit exposure, we will be controlling access to all buildings and all

exterior entrances will be locked. Cleaning protocols designed to protect students and staff in schools will continue to be implemented.

Some students may need to pick up belongings at school. Your principal will be providing information about this next week and will provide details on how you or your child can make an appointment to pick up these belongings. Most of this will happen during the week of April 7<sup>th</sup> unless the item is of an urgent nature relating to health and safety.

**What to Expect Over the Next Two Weeks:**

Next week, as our staff return to work after spring break, teachers will turn their minds to developing learning plans to support their students. Teachers will spend the week gathering resources, collaborating where appropriate, and designing learning opportunities. It is our hope that by the end of the first week of school, all teachers will reach out to their parents or students to re-establish this important connection. This may be by phone or other electronic means.

During the week of April 7<sup>th</sup>, most teachers will begin to offer learning opportunities to students. These opportunities will vary from class to class - some may be online and some may be offered through other means. Teachers will make these decisions based on available resources, access to technology and what they believe to be in the best interests of their students. It is the expectation of the Ministry of Education that learning opportunities will be put in place for all students by mid-April at the latest.

**Access to Technology:**

We understand that not all families may have equitable access to technology. The school district is in the process of developing a plan that will enable students with limited or no access at home to be able to borrow school district equipment such as IPADs. Teachers and administrators will be reaching out to determine which families may benefit from this.

**On-site Support:**

At this time, the government has made it clear that K-7 children of essential services workers such as health care workers will be given priority for childcare. The school district is working closely with existing childcare providers in order to identify childcare spaces for children of parents who qualify as essential services workers. In order to assist us with our planning, we ask that if you are a parent who qualifies as an essential services worker, you complete this [survey](#) as soon as possible.

Priority One: Health care workers, emergency responders;

Priority Two: Workers supporting vulnerable populations such as social and income assistance workers, utility workers and workers supporting key chain supply such as grocery and warehouse workers;

Priority Three: Teachers and childcare workers who do not have access to childcare and who are providing care or instruction to children of essential services workers

### **Helping Your Child**

We understand that this is a highly stressful time for both adults and children. Please see the link to a [resource for parents](#) on our website for ideas on how to help your child cope with what is happening around them.

### **How to Stay Informed:**

The Ministry of Education has developed a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document that can be found online. In addition, the school district will continue to update its website and will be providing regular updates to parents and staff. We also encourage parents to reach out to their school principal if they have other questions.

In this time of great difficulty, I ask that we all continue to demonstrate support for each other through patience, kindness and tolerance. I am confident that we will make it through these challenging days if we take the perspective that we are all in this together and we believe in the best of ourselves and each other.

Sincerely,



Scott Robinson  
Superintendent of Schools