

April 3, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we conclude our first week back after spring break, I would like to provide you with an update as to what you can expect in terms of your child's educational experience over the next while. We are grateful for the connections that have re-emerged this week, as teachers and school administrators have reached out to students and families, and we are looking forward to our work together.

**Continuity of Learning:**

Teachers, educational assistants and administrators are planning a variety of ways to support your child's learning during these complex times. While teachers will continue to be the primary guide for students, the partnership with you, as parents and caregivers, is essential in providing home support for learning - especially for younger children. Throughout the remote learning processes, it is important to remember that we all have the same goal: to support children's growth and development by working together with patience, kindness, and respect.

We understand that circumstances are different in every home. We know that in addition to keeping your families safe and healthy, many of you have other responsibilities that you must attend to. Our goal is not to add extra pressure to your lives. We have tried to structure learning in a way that will not be a burden to parents. Please know that we are committed to working alongside you in order to create a sense of routine, connection and normalcy for your child as we continue our journey together. If, at any time, you begin to feel that things are becoming 'too much', please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher to discuss how learning opportunities may be adjusted. Ultimately, we want to support your child and your family in a way that works for you.

As I indicated in my letter on March 27, many teachers in Richmond will begin to offer learning opportunities to their students next week. These opportunities will vary from class to class - some may use a digital learning platform, and some may be offered through other means. Teachers have been reaching out this week to determine what will work for families, and 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, and Richmond teachers are committed to fulfilling that mandate.

**Learning Opportunities at Home:**

We understand that parents and caregivers are seeking ways to keep their children occupied and engaged. Many learning opportunities present themselves in everyday activities at home. For example, there are math, reading and applied skills to learn in preparing a meal. Everyday activities like going for a walk, or planning a garden can be enhanced with observations of the natural world, learning about the animals and plants in our city, and what might grow well in our climate. Helping with chores around the home can deepen understanding of organizational and lifelong skills, as well as build core competencies. Writing and talking about experiences during this time, will help to build oral and written literacy, and writing a thank you to an essential service worker will help to build social awareness competencies.

**Resources:**

The Ministry of Education has created a website with a collection of valuable resources, and ideas such as those above, to help support learning while families are home due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the suspension of in-class instruction. Please visit: [www.openschool.bc.ca/keeplearning/](http://www.openschool.bc.ca/keeplearning/) for more information. Additional information will also be added to the [school district website](#) over the next while, so please check back to this site when you have a moment.

**Picking Up Essential Belongings at School:**

You will soon be receiving communication explaining the process for picking up items from your child's school which you deem to be essential. Starting next week, opportunities will be arranged through your child's school by appointment only in order to ensure that health and safety protocols such as physical distancing are followed. Please note that in order for us to maintain a safe environment for students and staff, anyone experiencing any cold or flu symptoms or who has returned from travel outside of Canada in the past 14 days will not be able to enter the school. We are happy to explore alternate arrangements if you find yourself in this situation.

**Message to All Grade 12 Students:**

I wanted to take this opportunity to connect directly with all our grade 12 students. I know this must be an anxious time for you. You have spent more than twelve years in school working towards graduation and I know you have been looking forward to events such as the valedictory ceremony and the graduation dinner and dance. You are likely facing a huge amount of uncertainty and wondering whether these grad events will be able to proceed. I wish I had a firm answer for you, but I don't at this point. What I can tell you is the district will hold off on making any decisions about valedictory ceremonies and other graduation events for as long as we possibly can in the hopes that the public health situation will improve. No one wants to see any graduation event cancelled, and if it is safe to do so, we hope that we will be able to proceed. At this time, we need to think positively and stay focused on the road ahead. Your teachers and school staff are fully committed to ensuring you receive the educational experiences you need over the next few months in order for you to be eligible to graduate.

**Information for Parents and Guardians:**

I encourage you to continue to refer to the [Richmond School District website](#) for information about [continuity of learning](#) as well as updates from the Ministry of Education, including the regularly updated [Q & A document](#) for parents and guardians. If you have questions about your child's educational experience, please contact your child's teacher or school principal. If you have questions of a more general nature, there is a [link](#) on the district website from which you can submit your questions to the school district.

Thank you, in advance, for working alongside your child's teacher(s) and school staff as we navigate these challenging times together. Together, we are stronger, and I wish you and your families all the very best.

Sincerely,

Scott Robinson  
Superintendent of Schools

