

March 26, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I am writing to provide you with an update on where we are in our response to the pandemic and to share with you some information about what you can expect as we move into next week. As you are aware, this situation is unprecedented and is having a broad impact across our society. We understand in particular the concerns you likely have for the education of your child or children. Our staff will keep the best interests of our students and families in mind as we go forward together.

Our decision making is aligned with 4 key priorities, which have been communicated to us by the Ministry of Education:

- 1. Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students and families and all employees*
- 2. Provide services to support children of essential services workers*
- 3. Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance*
- 4. Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students*

We remain concerned for the health and safety of our students and their families as well as our staff, and have been keeping that in focus as we plan forward. We have placed our Pandemic Response Plan in the [COVID-19 Communication folder](#) on the website and is a guiding document for maintaining safety as our first priority. We will also be providing specific training for our staff about limiting exposure to the virus, and we have enhanced our cleaning protocols to support this. In the meantime, we continue to communicate the need for all of us to wash hands frequently, to practice appropriate coughing and sneezing etiquette, to practice physical distancing, and to ensure that we stay home when we have any symptoms of illness. You will likely have noticed that school playgrounds have been closed. This has been done in alignment with the closure of public playgrounds that are maintained by the municipalities within our school district, and is a response to the need for physical distancing to reduce transmission of the virus.

We have been asked to provide services to essential services workers and to keep the needs of our vulnerable students in mind. Over the coming week we will be collecting information from families so that we can determine the needs for services and to plan for them. Additionally, we have been asked to provide for continuity of learning for our students. This means that our school district staff will be figuring out how we will change what we have been traditionally doing and shape it into distance learning formats that look and feel significantly different for teachers and support staff, parents and students. It is clear to us that access to technology will be important for families as we navigate this new landscape. In order for us to gather information from you about this, and also about which parents are essential service workers, we have emailed you a survey. It is important that all families complete this survey to assist us with our planning.

The Ministry of Education has advised us to take the time that is needed to plan appropriately for this new reality. Our school-based staff members will be working together on this over the week of March 30 to April 3. It is our hope to begin phasing in services to families the week of April 6-10.

Here is a link to a recently developed FAQ for parents from the Ministry of Education. It provides detailed information regarding continuity of learning.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/bc-ministry-of-education-questions-and-answers-continuity-of-learning-k-12-education_system.pdf

If you have specific questions about your child's education please contact your Principal. If you have questions about this message or the FAQ please email COVID19@sd6.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

Paul Carriere
Superintendent of Schools