



Small Schools Make a Difference

April 12, 2021

Dear parent(s) and guardian(s),

As a preventative measure, the Government of Ontario has just announced that all students in the province will be required to move to remote learning on Monday, April 19, 2021. This means that our students will continue to learn from home after the Spring Break concludes. The government has stated that it will continue to listen to the advice of public health experts, and that they will update parents once a safe return to in-person learning is recommended.

Students are required to check the Edsby platform the morning of April 19, 2021 to receive direction from their classroom educator(s). As it is the first day of the new Quadmester, students in high school will engage in learning in an asynchronous manner (independent with assigned work found on Edsby) for Monday, April 19, 2021 and will then connect in real time with their classes beginning on Tuesday, April 20, 2021. Students in elementary schools will be fully virtual on April 19, 2021 and will be meeting with their teachers for instruction.

During this time of virtual learning, students will be required to engage in 300 minutes of learning each day which will include online learning with their teachers and independent work assigned by their teachers. As per the Ministry of Education requirements for remote learning, instruction will involve the following:

- For students in Kindergarten, a minimum of 180 minutes of direct online instruction daily.
- For students in Grades 1 to 8, a minimum of 225 minutes of direct online instruction daily.
- For students in Grades 9 to 12, 120 minutes a course in a quadmestered school.

The commencement of classes will follow your child's regular school timetable and attendance will be taken. Students are expected to attend their classes remotely. Please note that your child's school will be contacting you on Monday, April 19, 2021 if your child has significant special education needs.

For additional information regarding Remote Learning, please see the Remote Learning Fact Sheet, available at <http://www.sgdsb.on.ca/upload/documents/fact-sheet-remote-learning-aug-22--002-.pdf>.

If you struggle with Internet connectivity, you may be able to receive a device to help. Please contact your child's school on the morning of Monday, April 19, 2021 to discuss your request. If you have any technology challenges, please follow the instructions contained on the Information Technology Support Fact Sheet available at <http://www.sgdsb.on.ca/upload/documents/fact-sheet-information-technology-final.pdf>.

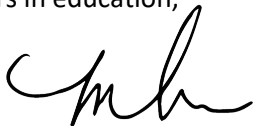
Please note that during this period of remote learning, our counselling services will be available online. As well, other mental health resources for students can be accessed on the SGDSB webpage at SGDSB.on.ca, as well as on our Facebook and Edsby pages.

A number of our special education staff have been identified as eligible to receive the vaccine now and we continue to work with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and local Assessment Centers to expedite this process. Note that this process is dependent upon vaccine availability. We continue to advocate for providing the vaccine for all front line, education staff as soon as possible.

In addition, much work continues to be done to expand the availability of voluntary Asymptomatic COVID-19 Testing for students, staff, bus drivers, childcares staff and students. We encourage you to follow our SGDSB Facebook page or Edsby page for further information on Asymptomatic Testing programs as there may be changes made to this program due to the advocacy that is continuing in this area. As promised by the Ministry, we are hoping to have this program available in pharmacies where possible, and perhaps to have at-home kits available. Advocacy is occurring to make testing programs even more available locally and to all school community members (including parents and caregivers).

Thank you for your patience, flexibility and understanding as we continue to work to ensure everyone's safety. If you have any questions or concerns, please phone your child's school on April 19, 2021.

Yours in education,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'mhc', is positioned above the printed name and title.

Nicole Morden Cormier
Director of Education