

March 26, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As Spring Break comes to an end, I wish to provide you with an update on the work that has taken place this week and what to expect over the next few days. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge this is an extremely challenging time for our school communities and thank those who have reached out to express their concerns.

For our students, there is a realization that the sudden and abrupt pause on in-class instruction means they are not going to see their teachers and friends for a while. For our Grade 12 students, they have many questions about their academic standing as they prepare to enter the next phase of their life. I also want to acknowledge the frustration and disappointment of their final year disruption, and the uncertainty over graduation celebrations. While we do not have all the answers right now, we will update Grade 12 students and their parents specifically about what comes next in their process once we know more.

For our parents, you are facing enormous pressures – the struggling economy, job uncertainty, child-care concerns and the responsibilities of keeping your family healthy and safe, to name a few.

For our staff, they are juggling many things, personally and professionally, and they have many questions about work expectations and how to support their students when face-to-face classroom instruction is not possible at this time. Collectively, we are worried about our health and well-being and that of our loved ones, and there is no one untouched by the reality of this global pandemic.

In my letter of March 20, 2020, I thanked all parents and staff for your patience and understanding as we continue to plan for the provision of continuity of educational services during the suspension of in-class instruction.

To assist with our planning and decision-making, the Ministry of Education has directed school districts to prioritize the following principles:

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

It has become clear the school system is part of a bigger solution during this COVID-19 pandemic. The B.C. government is calling on us to do our part, to provide educational and child-care services so essential services workers can continue to do their jobs - preserving life, health and public safety. Our health-care system needs us and it is our civic duty and role as public servants to stand together and collectively support the efforts of our front-line workers. I have full confidence that the North Vancouver School District will step up and respond to this call with professionalism, compassion and commitment.

To assist parents and staff with planning, please find the following communications timeline for the upcoming week:

- School Principals will be sending a message to their staff and parents/guardians on Friday, March 27;
- School Staff will be planning and collaborating the week of March 30-April 3 and will begin to connect (via phone, email or other) with their classes/students toward the end of the week;
- School Principals will be sending a message to their staff and parents/guardians on Friday, April 3 with an update for the following week;
- A new website for parents to help support their children and their learning will be launched late next week.

As a reminder:

In-class instruction for all K-12 students in B.C. has been suspended and **students and parents are not to attend school at this time**. If you have emergent and/or specific questions, please contact your school Principal/Vice Principal by email or phone.

14-day Self-Isolation Period:

If you have travelled outside of Canada, you must self-isolate for 14 days. If you have come into close contact with someone who has COVID-19 or who is suspected of having COVID-19, you must self-isolate for 14 days.

Social/Physical-Distancing:

To adhere to rules about social/physical distancing, school Principals will be establishing a process and schedule (in the next two weeks) for students and staff to pick up their resources and personal items in a way that is safe and controlled. Access to the school is limited to essential school staff only.

New Resources:

I am pleased to share with you two new Ministry resources:

- The new [Government website](#) for up-to-date, non-clinical information on COVID-19. This website includes information about childcare and education, and employment as well as resources for business, housing, transportation, travel and mental health.
- The [Ministry of Education Frequently Asked Questions](#) on Continuity of Education in the K-12 Education System.

We hope these resources will be helpful for you over the next while as we try to navigate our new landscape for the continuity of educational services in the North Vancouver School District.

In conclusion, in this time of difficulty I ask that all of us continue to support one another with tolerance, patience, kindness and grace. Despite our fears and heightened anxiety, I look to you with hope and confidence because collectively we will get through these unprecedented times by supporting each other through connection and common vision. We are well positioned to support our students, staff and community in the NVSD and we will rise to meet this challenge together.

Keep safe, everyone,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "M. Pearmain".

Mark Pearmain
Superintendent of Schools

