

March 26, 2020

Hello Erin Public School families!

I sincerely hope everyone is well and staying at home as your individual situations permit. To those of you who are providing essential services to people in our communities, my deepest gratitude to you for showing up and doing what needs to be done. I know our staff share my sentiments and I also know that all of society is grateful. I truly believe challenging times bring out the best in most people and choose to focus on our communities' kindness and compassion, which I see all around me.

This present emergency situation will no doubt be impacting your families in a variety of ways and be causing additional stressors to your already long list of personal and professional responsibilities. Some of you will have family members and/or friends who've been directly affected by the virus, others will have family or friends working in essential services or emergency services without an option to participate in social distancing, and some of you will be spending a great deal of time in self-isolation due to travelling or vulnerable health conditions, which has its own challenges.

I am sending this note to touch base with everyone and provide some information and support.

- You have all likely seen the letter from our board's Director, Dr. Martha Rogers. If not, you can read it [here](#).
- As you probably know by now, schools will NOT reopen on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Some provinces have set the return date for September, Ontario has not. It is possible that schools may not reopen this school year, but we do not have confirmation of this as yet.
- Both the Upper Grand DSB and the Ministry of Education, have provided online learning resources for students to use until a plan for moving forward is organized. These resources are by no means compulsory, but are there for you should you choose to use them.
- After April 5<sup>th</sup>, students will be continuing their learning via the online platform. As previously said, we do not have details of this as yet, boards of education throughout the province are working on this right now and information will be shared as it becomes available.
- We recognize there are some challenges to providing online learning. Currently, teams of school personnel are working on questions such as:
  - How do students who do not have access to tech learn?
  - How about access to Internet?
  - How do we reach out to the youngest students, in Kindergarten or grade 1, for whom an online platform is not a practical option?

Please know that even though we do not have answers to these questions yet, there are dedicated teams of professionals addressing them. We will provide the information as it becomes available.

- Teachers have been instructed to not provide programming just yet, until resources and a streamlined, equitable plan has been released. Again, we will have more information probably by early next week and will be providing it as quickly as we can.
- While labour sanctions are now off, in light of the Public Health situation, the grade 8 year-end trip to Quebec has to be cancelled. We regret this as much as the students do, but this is not an option at this point in time.
- Likewise, we need to look at the possibility of cancelling grade 8 grad as well. Fortunately, should things change, the grad can be planned fairly quickly and it may be possible to still have it. If not, we may defer grad until September. Time will show.
- Some families are asking when they can go to school to pick up personal items: most certainly not before April 6<sup>th</sup>, most likely not after that either. We do not have a date as yet, but will communicate that to you as soon as we do have it.
- Clearly, the Pizza and Subway programs are cancelled. Families will be reimbursed for the. Unused portion of the service. For those who have paid through SchoolCashOnline, you will be reimbursed that way too; for those who paid by cash or cheque, you will also be refunded. Again, we are working on both timelines and on how the cash/cheques reimbursements can occur.
- There is plenty of information, including Labour updates on the board website and a lot of information on the school website as well. Although I recognize that families have been given many of the web addresses below, I include the links just the same, so they are all in one spot for you, if that is useful.
- If you are looking for advice on how to help the younger students, please keep them reading and have them use RazKids if at all possible. If you are not sure how to log on, please e-mail me and I will get that information to you if I can.
- If your child has forgotten their username or password for the board login, again, please e-mail me and I will get that information to you.
- I am working from home every day. If you have any questions or concerns or maybe just need someone to talk to, please do not hesitate to reach out. I will do my best to get back to you as quickly as possible. My e-mail address is [marina.harrison@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:marina.harrison@ugdsb.on.ca)
- If you are e-mailing teachers and they do not get back to you, it is because they have been instructed to do so by me. It is imperative to prevent any confusion, things are uncertain enough and also change on a day to day basis. I have the most up to date information, so if teachers receive any queries, they will forward them to me.
- I know our teachers are eager to help in any way they can. If you need any help in any way, please let me know and I will direct your request.
- Below are some URLs for your information:
  1. [Board](#) website
  2. [school's website](#)
  3. Also, <https://webapps.ugdsb.on.ca/ug2go/> and <https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/ugdsb-school2go>.

4. Free educational resources from Scholastic  
[http://scholastic.ca/education/free\\_digital\\_resources/](http://scholastic.ca/education/free_digital_resources/)
5. Here are some additional resources I found while perusing the CBC. You may have seen them already.
  - How to talk to kids about the virus <https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/covid-19-coronavirus-kids-1.5495831>
  - How to support children's mental health  
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/children-anxiety-pandemic-1.5497338>
  - How to give and access help in and around Guelph [Guelphcoronavirus.ca](http://Guelphcoronavirus.ca)
  - Here's the original story: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/kitchener-waterloo/people-in-waterloo-region-and-guelph-start-online-groups-to-share-resources-amid-covid-19-spread-1.5499738>
  - If you would like to help: How to apply to be a volunteer  
<https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-involved/participate/call-volunteers-crisis-text-line/>
  - Original story on CBC <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/covid-19-has-kids-help-phone-calling-for-more-volunteers-as-service-swamped-with-calls-1.5499687>

Please stay safe and healthy and take care of one another. Please say hello to the kids from the entire staff, one and all. We miss them and we miss seeing our community, but things will get back to normal. We can do this.

Most warmly,

Marina Harrison  
Principal, EPS