

April 5, 2020



Hello everyone!

I hope this email finds you all healthy and coping with the new normal that is upon us all.

This note is to update you on the preparations the school, the board and our teachers are making for moving towards distance learning.

- This past week, your child(ren)'s teacher will have contacted you to find out your individual situation in terms of Distance Learning. Namely, whether or not you have access to technology and Internet connectivity. They will have enquired about the necessary passwords required for our students to log on to resources from the board and from school.
- We have now collated our data in terms of needs for technology and Internet connectivity.
- Parents who have indicated that they need to borrow chromebooks or that their child(ren) have left their tech equipment at school will be contacted tonight and tomorrow in order to verify the address and that someone will be home to receive the equipment when it is delivered.
- The technology will be delivered on Wednesday, April 8th by courier. It was determined that this is the safest way to do it, given the Public Health concerns.
- Some families have indicated that they do not have a safe or reliable access to Internet. One way to connect is to drive to a UGDSB school parking lot and connect from there. WE recognize that this is not ideal, but it is the best solution we have until a better one is found.
- I wanted to let you know how very thoughtful and generous our Parent Council members are and that they offered to source the technology for those students who need it. Way to go Parent Council and Erin community! We are very fortunate to have such dedicated Parent Council!
- This week, our teachers were busy setting up programs and activities for the Distance Learning program.
- Most teachers will be using Google Classroom to deliver their lessons. Google is a free public access platform that anyone with technology and Internet can access. It also allows students to access the Google Read and Write feature.
- I have already visited some of the classrooms that have been set up and am absolutely amazed at the creativity of our teachers!
- As you may have read, Distance Learning in Ontario is being introduced in phases. On Monday, April 6th, Phase 2 is starting. What can you expect in Phase 2? Teachers were instructed to provide students with open-ended activities. They will also be giving students some feedback. The reason Distance Learning is being phased in gradually is because

students and their families are at different stages of ease as well as access to technology. Most importantly, we want to ensure that we are sensitive to families' life circumstances. Some children, particularly the younger lot, will require more support from parents with Distance Learning. We are aware that many parents are caring for elderly family members or may be working in health care and other essential services and may simply not be able to help with homework after a demanding day. Please know that that is OK. Our students will be supported in the best way possible given every family's individual circumstances.

- I am also aware that some parents are quite concerned that their children are missing out in education and are increasing or creating gaps that will make returning to school more challenging once we are at that stage.

I would like to reassure you that when we do get back to school, we will assess where students are and will provide programming which meets the students where they are. That is, no one will be barreling through based on a given grade's curriculum alone. Teachers will most definitely take into consideration the circumstances of the current school year when they are planning for school return.

- If you should have any questions or concerns about this, or any other topic, please do not hesitate to reach out and I will do my best to help. I can be reached by e-mail at:

marina.harrison@ugdsb.on.ca.

- Here is some Information to support parents in understanding how to use Google Classroom.

- [2020 Parents Guide to Google Classroom](#)
- [Second example](#)

- Lastly, I would like to ask you for a favour. If you hear of anyone who say that they are not receiving e-mails from me, please direct them to check their spam folders and e-mail settings to ensure that they are set up to receive e-mails from us. They are also welcome to e-mail me with their queries. In addition, every e-mail that I send to the school at large, I also post on our website. I also Tweet and send out UGConnect push notification when I update the school website. I feel it is very important to communicate with our parents at this time and want to ensure I reach everyone. I thank you in advance for your help with this.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Most warmly,

Marina Harrison
Principal, EPS