

Continuity of Learning Policy 520



Category:	Students
Administered by:	Director of Education
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1. Policy Statement

The Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB) is committed to the continuity of learning for all students when schools and/or classes are closed to in-person learning. In the event of a class or school closure, students and parents/guardians must be provided with opportunities to maintain learning pathways which may include a combination of synchronous and/or asynchronous activities based on the Ontario curriculum. Expectations for educators and students during short-term closures will vary depending on individual circumstances and the nature of the closure.

As the UGDSB operates with a fundamental principle that every student should have equitable access and opportunity to succeed personally and academically, the needs of all students and staff must be considered when creating a plan for continuity of learning. This plan will help to ensure everyone in the school community is prepared when a switch to alternate forms of teaching and learning is initiated.

2. Definitions

Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning is learning that is not delivered in real time.

Asynchronous learning may involve students watching pre-recorded video lessons, completing assigned tasks, or contributing to online discussion boards.¹

Educators

In this policy, educators include teachers, educational assistants, early childhood educators, and school administrators.

¹ Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 164, August 13, 2020.

Synchronous Learning

Synchronous learning is learning that happens in real time. Synchronous learning involves using text, video, or voice communication in a way that enables educators and other members of the school- or board-based team to instruct and connect with students in real time. Synchronous learning supports the well-being and academic achievement of all students, including students with special education needs, by providing educators and students with an interactive and engaging way to learn. It helps teachers provide immediate feedback to students and enables students to interact with one another.²

Remote Learning

Remote learning is learning that occurs when classes are taught at a distance and when students and educators are not in a conventional classroom setting. Remote learning takes place in times of extended interruption to in-person learning – for example, as a result of a pandemic or natural disaster. Classes can be synchronous or asynchronous and can be taught online through a Learning Management System (LMS) or by using videoconferencing tools. In some cases, they may be delivered through emails, print materials, broadcast media, or telephone calls.²

3. Details

- 3.1 Schools and/or classes may be closed to in-person learning in situations outlined in [Policy 322 Safe Operation of Schools and Board Sites](#).
- 3.2 For short-term closure days (e.g., due to inclement weather), it is expected that educators allow for continuity of learning for students with postings to digital classrooms where possible. It is recommended that no new learning material be posted on these days.
- 3.3 During times of extended school closure (i.e., remote learning), it is expected that:
 - 3.3.1 all schools are prepared to transition from in-person instruction to remote learning as quickly as possible, accessing the support and/or resources provided by the board as needed.
 - 3.3.2 students will be offered daily learning opportunities following Ministry of Education guidelines

² Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum 164, August 13, 2020.

3.3.2.1 Educators shall provide a daily schedule for learning opportunities including a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. Programming must be based on the full Ontario curriculum and include a variety of instructional strategies that educators may select from. These include guided instruction, large- and small-group learning, synchronous check-ins, and asynchronous independent work.

3.3.2.1.1 Exemption from the minimum Ministry of Education requirements for synchronous learning may be provided to students on an individual basis.

3.3.2.2 Teachers must be available to students during the teachers' assigned teaching timetables as they would be if they were face-to-face in a classroom setting.

3.3.2.3 Educators should continue to provide accommodations, modified expectations, and alternative programming to students with special education needs, as detailed in their IEPs, to the extent that it is possible and appropriate in the remote learning environment.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 Staff at all schools shall continue to report to work on bus cancellation days as per usual practice or follow the inclement weather procedures issued annually by the People, Leadership and Culture department if staff are unable to safely report to work.

4.2 The board shall provide the tools and resources necessary for educators and students to participate in alternate forms of teaching and learning (e.g., remote learning) when necessary and where possible. This may include providing devices in advance of an expected short-term closure.

4.3 In the event of an extended school closure, educators shall determine potential student needs related to remote learning as early as possible (e.g., access to technology at home, internet access, etc.) in order that supports and/or resources can be arranged by the board.

4.4 Parents/guardians shall inform the school as soon as possible if a student

needs a device or other technology to participate in remote learning (i.e., during an extended school closure).

4.4.1 Where students do not have access to remote learning devices or the internet, and a school board is unable to provide this support, schools will work collaboratively with students and parents to establish alternative arrangements on an individual basis.

4.5 Educators shall ensure that subject-related content is available to students in one of the board's approved remote learning environments (i.e., Google Classroom or Brightspace).

4.5.1 Consideration shall be given to providing or assigning work and/or devices ahead of time to support students who do not have devices or internet access at home.

4.6 Educators shall inform students of the expectations related to remote learning.

4.7 Educators shall follow best practices in adhering to the legislation and board policies governing on-line safety, privacy, and security of information.

5. References

This policy operates in conjunction with the following:

- [*Education Act*](#), its regulations and Ministry memoranda, including [PPM 164: Requirements for Remote Learning](#)
- [Ontario Regulation 474/00 \(Access to Premises\) Trespass to Property Act, Education Act](#) (Section 305)
- [*Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*](#)
- [Policy 300 Emergency Procedures](#)
- [Policy 304 Transportation](#)
- [Policy 318 Responsible Use of Digital Technologies](#)
- [Policy 322 Safe Operation of Schools and Board Sites](#)
- [Policy 406 Health and Safety](#)

- [Policy 510 Safe Arrival](#)
- [UGDSB Collective Agreements](#)