

March 19, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I'd like to update you on where we're at after a busy week of figuring out our new reality. First of all, thank you for your understanding and support during this time. We miss your kiddos and are excited to reconnect with them, even if it's virtual methods of connecting. The first thing I realized this week is how much we appreciate working with children here in the building... it's been quite an adjustment for all staff and we recognize it's an adjustment for families at home.

Some important things to communicate as we head into spring break - starting tomorrow & next week is in fact spring break for our staff and I've reminded them to take their break and not feel guilty. I'll ask that you avoid asking teachers for work or help during their holiday time. This week was quite stressful and a week off to reset is exactly what is needed at this time. If you send messages or questions, don't be surprised if they're not answered until March 30th.

At this point, we have a plan for what we think is best for getting back into school after the break. Much of this has been developed from reading articles, listening to Alberta Education, and talking to colleagues across Pembina Hills. Week One - please don't pressure teachers or expect heavy academics. We are learning how to use technology that is new to us, as are most of our students. To try to teach how to do 3 digit multiplication when the sound or video isn't working would just be futile. I've told teachers to schedule some blocks of time to check in with those who can join online and make sure they feel like they've connected with students. Teachers also need to figure out all the technology glitches. Once that has been worked out, then I've encouraged them to start reviewing things that have already been covered. This allows students to get back into learning mode and work on previously learned topics while working through the technology. After that has been established, then teachers can do more with academics when they feel their entire class is ready.

We also recognize not all students are going to be on the same schedule. Some teachers will schedule live sessions for kids to connect through Google Meet. Google classroom is the platform we are going to be using. If your child can't connect live at the scheduled time for any reason, the learning videos will be saved and available online. Students can access these videos at a time that works for you and your family. When our teachers are not doing live streaming or on a lunch break, they'll be available to meet with kids on the phone or digitally to give extra support.

In terms of school work, teachers will make items available in both digital or print. This will depend on the teacher and the request of the parents. If paper is requested, teachers will arrange a specific time where parents can pick up these packages. Teachers will follow sanitization processes to ensure germs are not spread and the packages will be left outside of the school. However, we do not want paper copies returned to the school for sanitary reasons. We ask that when teachers require assignments to be returned, this must be done in a digital format (taking a picture, scanning to e-mail, etc.). There are **many** ways this can be done, please work this out with myself or the classroom teacher.

As a school division, our focus will be on Math, LA, Social, and Science at this time. For those who have children in grade 6, I've assigned Mrs. Ferster to teach grade 6 Social Studies as Mrs. De Waal has plenty to juggle between grade 6 courses and her jr. high Science. Your child will receive info from Mrs. Ferster very soon.

Finally, the most important message may be this - we're doing our best and we may have to adjust things as we learn how this all works. We appreciate your support and understanding.

If you have curriculum and academic questions, contact your child's teacher. If you have frustrations with how things are going, contact me directly so I can work on solutions. I don't want teachers dealing with those kinds of stressors.

Sincerely,

Brett Seatter,
Principal