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April 6, 2020

Dear KPDSB Families,

Further to our letter to families from April 1, 2020, ([click here](#) to view the April 1, 2020 letter) the Ontario government announced on March 31, 2020, that Ontario schools will remain closed until Monday, May 4, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the extended closures, as previously announced, we are launching a return to learning through distance learning that officially begins this week. The return to learning will be a “gentle entry”, as we know this is a new way of learning for our students, as well as a new way of teaching for many of our staff. We want to assure you that our staff are here to support our students and their families every step of the way.

Distance learning looks different for different students, as we understand that each family is unique and our staff will be flexible in how they support your child(ren). Please see the following notes below for some additional information on distance learning in our Board.

- Distance learning is in no way intended to put additional pressure on parents and families during this time, but rather a way to reconnect our staff with our students and support the continuation of educator-led learning. Parents and guardians are not expected to homeschool their children during the closures.
- The goal of our distance learning program is for our staff to support our students directly as much as possible. Our younger students may require some support from a family member to access certain information but instruction and follow up tasks are created for students to be able to do independently or with support from their teacher/educator.
- Online learning for families who have access to technology at home is launching this week. Families should have received a plan from their child’s teacher/educator. Outlines of upcoming online learning for students will be communicated with families weekly.
- For students who will not be accessing their learning online, your child’s teacher will have communicated an alternate way to receive the weekly learning tasks.
- For elementary students (Kindergarten to Grade 8), the main goal of distance learning is to support their continued growth in literacy and numeracy (as well as Science and Social Studies for Grades 4-8) through their interests.

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The Keewatin-Patricia District School Board puts students first by creating a culture of learning.

- For secondary students (Grades 9-12), the main goal is to support them in demonstrating the overall expectations of their Semester 2 classes in order to achieve these credits. Please watch for further details later this week with regards to secondary distance learning.

For specific questions around learning for your child(ren), please reach out to your child's teacher or school principal ([click here](#) to access contact information for our schools).

Additional Support for Families

As a Board, we are here to support our students, staff, families and communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our support for your family is not limited to academics. If your family is in need, please reach out to us. You can contact your school principal, call us at 807-221-7468, or send us an email now by [clicking here](#). Please see the information below for additional supports for families.

- **Free Internet Connections** - The KPDSB is making the internet connections at our schools and buildings available to anyone who may need it. Anyone accessing the wifi connections at our schools will have to do so from outside the buildings and follow all government direction around limiting the spread of COVID-19. To access the connections, all that is required is to select the 'KP-Public' option from the list of available wifi connections and agree to the terms of use.
- **Mental Health Supports** - At the KPDSB, the mental health and well-being of our students and their families is extremely important to us. Given the current climate related to COVID-19, we recognize that stress and anxiety levels may be higher than normal. Throughout this time we encourage you to attempt to recognize changes in your own, as well as your child(ren's) thoughts, feelings and actions. Some level of change is normal given the circumstances, however, in the event you start to notice changes in your own, or your child(ren's) behaviours on a frequent basis, long in duration or having a big impact on your daily functioning, you may need to reach out for additional support. In the event you are struggling, we encourage you to reach out to a trusted family member, friend or co-worker and/or one of the mental health resources listed on our website by [clicking here](#). In the event of an emergency, please call 911.
- **Community Supports for Families** – It's important to us that families requiring additional supports can access the community resources available to them. We have created a section on our website that lists different organizations by community that can assist in supporting families in acquiring basic needs like food and emergency shelter. As a board, we are redirecting the funds we receive to support breakfast programs to support emergency food services. To visit the page, please [click here](#).

We will continue to provide weekly updates to our families to keep you informed as we all adjust to this new way of teaching and learning. Please remember that our staff are here to support you during this time.

Sincerely,



Sherri-Lynne Pharand
Director of Education, Keewatin-Patricia District School Board