



April 5, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

First, I want to take this opportunity to thank our essential front-line workers for their tireless efforts to keep our school community, province, country and the world safe. Each day at 7 pm, community members step outside their homes to cheer in appreciation for their commitment. I also want to take this opportunity to thank parents/guardians for their continued patience as the Chilliwack School district builds its continuity of learning plan. These are indeed challenging times and, despite the new normal, we will continue to work in partnership with you to ensure the academic and social emotional development, growth and wellbeing of your student(s).

As we look toward the week of April 6 and beyond, I would like to provide an update regarding your child's educational experience, as well as the school district's priorities during this pandemic. Your school principal will also provide updates on the continuation of learning plan for your school community.

The Ministry of Education has set the following **four priorities** to support the delivery of learning opportunities for students, and allocation of resources and decision-making in school districts, as well as supporting a coordinated approach for B.C.'s K-12 education system. These priorities have been guiding our planning at the district level since the news to suspend in-class instruction was announced on March 17, 2020:

- ✓ **Priority One:** Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.
- ✓ **Priority Two:** Provide the services needed to support children of essential workers.
- ✓ **Priority Three:** Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.
- ✓ **Priority Four:** Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

Priority One: Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.

The health and safety of school staff, students, parents and communities is our highest priority. We have created district wide safety guidelines for all sites, including strict physical distancing and hand washing protocols. At this time, the only students who will be allowed in our buildings will be students of essential workers and authorized staff.

The school district has also implemented cleaning protocols to protect staff and students in all sites. Each site will have an occupancy limit as we review how best to support district priorities moving forward. In order to limit exposure, we will be controlling access to all buildings and all exterior entrances will be locked.

Last week, schools across the district communicated procedures with parents about how their child can pick up belongings and learning resources left in classrooms or lockers. Please note that schools will continue this process in the coming week. If you have any questions, please contact your school principal.

Priority Two: Provide the services needed to support children of essential workers.

The school district has been working diligently and collaborating with community partners on providing care and/or in-class instruction for children whose parents are employed as front-line workers in health care, social services, law enforcement and emergency response.

On March 27, the district initiated a “Continuity of Learning” survey that was sent to all parents. The purpose of the survey was for the school district to collect key information to start planning to provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers, as well as vulnerable students who may need special assistance. Based on the data collected, the district will implement a program for supporting children of essential service workers at G.W. Graham Secondary effective April 8. Please note that the Ministry of Education has created a [website for families](#) to access licensed child care providers across the province.

Priority Three: Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.

The first part of this priority is to ensure that we continue to provide supports for families facing food insecurity. The school district and its community partners, including Starfish Backpack, Bowls of Hope, Salvation Army, Chilliwack Community Services and the Food Bank, have coordinated their services to provide a hamper with approximately one week’s supply of food to families in need in our school communities. A sincere thank you to our community partners for their support. In the next little while these Hampers will be delivered safely in alignment with the directives from the Provincial Health Officer. Schools will continue to monitor the need for food Hampers within their communities on an on-going basis.

In the next couple of weeks schools will be identifying supports or accommodations that need to be made to support learning for students with disabilities and diverse abilities. More information will be provided by your school as soon as it is available.

Priority Four: Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

Given that face-to-face instruction has been suspended until further notice, most of the learning going forward will be online or virtual. The learning opportunities provided to students during this period will not be exact replicas of the instruction provided when regular classes were in session.

We know that this new format of learning will add pressure to parents and guardians on top of a myriad of other responsibilities. We understand the difficulties families are facing during these unprecedented times and our goal is to structure the learning to reduce the burden on families. Please note that, while your child’s teacher will be the primary instructional guide, our continued partnership with parents and caregivers will be instrumental. This will be especially important when helping younger children navigate the online learning environment during the instructional day.

During the week of April 6, school staff will continue connecting with families by phone and email to provide updates and begin at home learning. Online educational resources will be shared during this week and some students with identified needs may begin to receive services and support. It is the expectation of the Ministry of Education that learning opportunities will be



**Chilliwack
School District**

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put in place for all students by mid-April. Please see the district website for [activities you can do at home](#) with your child as well as [online library resources](#).

The Ministry of Education has developed a new [Keep Learning](#) website to provide learning resources and supports for K-12 students while in-class instruction is suspended. In addition, the Ministry has provided [FAQs on Continuity of Learning](#) as well as a [website](#) with up-to-date information and resources on COVID-19 for parents and guardians. Finally, during this time of physical isolation, it is key to find ways to support the mental health and wellness of our families, and I've found this [website](#) to be a great resource.

This is, indeed, a difficult time. Let us continue to show kindness, patience and caring for each other in our school community. We will continue to lean on each other as we walk this journey together. Thank you to the community for all its caring and stay safe everyone!

Sincerely,

Rohan Arul-pragasam
Interim School Superintendent