



March 27, 2020

Continuity of Education Plan Next Steps:

Dear families, students, staff, and community members,

We hope this update finds you and your loved ones healthy and safe. We recognize that this may be a very stressful time for you, and it may be challenging for students to focus on learning. We hope that with our schools providing access to learning, resources, and activities it will be of benefit to you and your children.

Regarding the many questions about what comes next for families, students, staff, and community members in light of the news that in-class instruction is currently suspended, we will be developing plans to deliver education and supports during this pandemic event. The four guiding principles provided by the Ministry of Education are as follows:

1. Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families, and all employees.
2. Provide services to support children of essential workers.
3. Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.
4. Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

1. Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families, and all employees.

School staff will be returning to school after spring break. Beginning Monday, March 30th, there will be virtual staff meetings to brainstorm creative ways to meet the continuity of learning as mandated by the Ministry of Education. There will be schedules created to determine who will be in the buildings and some teachers, due to immune challenges with either themselves or those they live with, will participate from their home. A staff survey has been sent to staff to determine pre-existing conditions and immune issues we need to be aware of in providing further support.

In adhering to the above principles, the expectation for staff at schools will be as follows:

- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from one another, at all times.
- Work in your own room as much as possible, and do not enter other colleagues' rooms.
- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 30 seconds before entering and after leaving common areas.
- If you are in a common area, wipe down any surfaces you have touched using the provided wipes.
- Use the washrooms on only your own floor, if possible.
- Use your telephones to have conversations – everyone has a direct extension number.
- Do not congregate in groups, as much as possible.
- No more than 10 people in a group, while still maintaining the physical distancing from one another.
- No more than one person at a time in the photocopy rooms.

We will also control access to buildings to limit exposure.

Schools will arrange with families to retrieve school supplies and personal items left in the building prior to spring break. Please wait until you hear from your school prior to going to the school.

Our maintenance staff and caretakers have been working hard to deep clean the schools during spring break and will continue to do so daily. They will be working after school hours to limit the number of people in the buildings.

The Ministry of Education will provide the district with a draft Safe Work Plan. The district will review this draft with our unions and put a Safe Work Plan in place for our district.

2. Provide services to support children of essential workers.

There is no standard provincial definition on “essential service worker”, but Emergency Management B.C. has provided general guidance, as follows:

“Essential Service Workers (ESWs) are those individuals considered critical to preserving life, health and societal functioning - including emergency responders, front-line health care workers, and critical infrastructure and supply chain (e.g. food, medicine) workers.”

Currently, we have a survey for families to complete in order to assess students’ access to technology that will assist us with our planning and which families access our food program. The survey will also help us determine which of our staff have students of essential workers.

The survey can be found on our website at www.rupertschools.ca, click on “Continuity of Education”, and then click on the link to complete the survey. Please submit only one survey per family.

For those families who are not able to complete the survey online, school staff will be contacting them next week and will complete the survey with them. The survey information collected will help us in planning our next steps.

We are also working with our community providers and the Ministry of Education on what these services may potentially look like in terms of providing this vital service during this period. We will keep you informed as new information becomes available.

3. Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.

Breakfast and lunch programs will look very different in our current context. After we have gathered information from our survey on which families accessed our in-school programs, we will create avenues of accessibility and we will communicate what the plans are once finalized.

The Learning Services team will be reviewing students who we determined are our priority students with special needs to assess what types of support can be offered while maintaining a COVID-19 response. More information will follow once the team has created a safe protocol for this aspect.

4. Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

Schools will take time over the next week to formulate plans on how ongoing learning opportunities can be provided to students during this time. The Ministry's expectation is that this planning process is started as soon as school returns from spring break. CHSS will begin Monday, March 30th. All other schools with educational support staff will begin Tuesday, March 31st. We expect school staff will require the full week to plan and prepare.

The opportunities for learning in this new environment will look very different depending on the level of the student. This could consist of connection between student and teacher by online learning, phone, emails, learning packages, Moodle, and other creative ways to keep the student connected to learning. Additional information from your child's school will follow.

For additional up to date information, please visit our website at www.rupertschools.ca. We also recognize that at any given moment the Federal or Provincial authorities could redirect our response to the COVID-19 pandemic on short notice. We will do our best to keep you informed.

We thank you in advance for your patience and wish you the very best of health and safety, and look forward to the eventual return of our students to our schools.

We are all in this together!

Irene LaPierre
Superintendent of Schools
School District No. 52 Prince Rupert