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Director Update to Families: Supplemental Learning and Next Steps

Hello Chinook Families:

As we continue with week three of Chinook Learning at Home, I want to thank parents and caregivers for taking care of our students. You are doing a great job in a very difficult circumstance. Remember, **Learning at Home** does not have to be perfect, our goal is to keep as many kids as possible continuing to learn. If you or your child need help, please ask us!

There are approximately seven weeks of teaching and learning remaining in our school year. As you organize your child's school day, I ask that you continue to show patience with their learning. Try to keep a schedule for them, but allow some flexibility in order to prompt the building of a few breaks into their day. Our weather is changing and fresh air is great, but please find time in the day to have your child work on the learning packages provided by your school.

Again, what will the new normal be? No one knows for sure. What I do know is that our staff is committed to helping you and your child. I encourage you to reach out to your students' teacher for support, and in doing so, know that we are all partners in student learning. Children will need help and clarification about learning activities, just as you may also need help with teacher expectations. Please be your child's learning conduit. Feel free to contact your child's teacher for clarification and support via email, a phone call or you can even try a Google Meet!

Today, I bring to you two bits of good news. First, in a recent provincial survey of school divisions, Chinook had a remarkable 94% of students sign up for supplemental learning opportunities. Awesome!

Learning at home is a partnership; this is not the regular classroom everyone is used to. We need to use all available resources to keep our kids engaged and on track. This is not an ideal teaching and learning environment. **Please remember, our main goal is to keep as many kids as possible engaged and connected to their classes. This will be better for your kids and their teachers next fall.**

I am aware that some of you are putting in many more hours than you would normally with your children learning at home. You might feel frustrated that your child may not be working as hard or is as interested as you are. This also happens occasionally at school. However, please be assured that our teachers are working hard, trying new strategies, and are going above and beyond to engage with your kids. Thank you for your partnership and for your efforts to help your kids be successful.

Yes, there will be peaks and valleys over the next seven weeks, but remember that this is not a regular circumstance. We want to keep kids in classes because in the long run, greater content understanding and skill mastery is better than a higher mark with little subject knowledge. Learning now will better prepare your child for his/her future.

You know your child better than we do, therefore you will recognize when they can be pushed and when they need help. Right now, it is important to reach out to your child's teacher when you need to. When in doubt ask for help. You are not alone.

Secondly, and not shockingly, we will not resume our “normal school operations” prior to fall. In the next few weeks, we are also providing schools, SCCs and Grade 12s with some options and parameters within which Graduation celebrations may occur.

As I look toward the fall, I cannot assure you that our schools will look the way they looked in September 2019. Chinook superintendents, the Board of Education and myself are presently working at creating return-to-work scenarios that include: continuing with at home learning, partial/staggered return to school and normal operations. We continue to work with the province, the ministry and with the province’s chief medical health officer. I want to ensure that schools are safe for students and staff before we will resume normal operations.

Please remember that everyone has a role and everyone has a responsibility in this unprecedented time.



RESPONSIBILITIES

Chinook Schools

Develop a Supplemental Learning Plan consistent with provincial requirements to ensure ongoing learning opportunities for Chinook students. Provide support for staff as the plan is implemented across the school division.

School Staff

Complete implementation of the plan as directed by the school division under the supervision of the principal. Provide learning opportunities for all students and support students and families as the plan is implemented. Take care of your own health.

Parents and Caregivers

Assist your children by providing a structured schedule, offering encouragement, supporting direct communication between your child and their teacher(s) and working directly with your children as they are learning when you are able to. Keep a list of things that you want to talk to your teacher about. Take care of your own health.

Students

Follow the schedule provided by your parents or caregivers. Do your best and have fun learning in a different way. Take care of your own health.

This is a challenging time for you, but it is also challenging for kids. Most students are doing fairly well considering the circumstances. Parenting can be a challenge; it is often demanding when we are not in the middle of a pandemic. We all know our children and we know what we as parents can and cannot handle academically. Thank you for your commitment to your children’s learning. Thank you for your creativity, for being risk takers and for continuing to do what is best for your kids.

Stay safe, stay healthy and if you have questions or need help, please ask.

Sincerely,



Kyle McIntyre
Director of Education