

March 18, 2020

Dear Chinook Families,

This letter is an update related to the provincial response to COVID-19 and the plans that are underway in Chinook School Division. I know there is much uncertainty during this time, and wish we had all of the answers to your questions. Our goal continues to be to support your children and your family, and we promise that we will continue to communicate with ongoing updates to staff and families as more information becomes available to us or as academic plans become more concrete.

On March 16th, the Government of Saskatchewan announced the indefinite suspension of schools in Saskatchewan beginning Friday, March 20th. "Indefinite" may mean that school is finished for the year, or it may mean that when the COVID-19 outbreak stabilizes, we will be able to return to school sometime sooner than next fall. At this point there has been no final determination. We are acting under orders and data from the province's Chief Medical Officer.

The Ministry of Education has also announced an education pause period for school programming in Saskatchewan from Friday, March 20th to Friday, March 27th inclusive. As a result of this announcement, Chinook will be enacting our business continuity plan to ensure that essential business services continue to function while ensuring all staff safety. This plan will include availability for parents, families and staff to still contact the division if they have questions during this time. Please do not contact your child's teacher. I assure you they are eager to provide learning opportunities when the province and Chinook directs them to do so.

During the education pause period, education sector partners will develop a good solid plan for all students to learn moving forward. In the meantime, please keep your children safe at home, increase prevention measures and practice social distancing. Try to maintain a daily routine, demonstrate calmness and connect with your children so they feel safe.

I can appreciate you are all concerned for your children. I have children in this circumstance too. There is no academic emergency at the moment so please do not feel pressure to teach your child. Please focus on the health and safety of your family and take this pause as time off from those pressures as well. Have them read books, play some board games, and monitor their online interaction with their peers.

Our division is working collaboratively with the Ministry of Education behind the scenes. The education sector is also working on a provincial plan to ensure the successful completion of high school courses and grade 12 for students interested in continuing to learn and to improve their standing. In due time when the pause is lifted, our teachers will reach out to provide instructional support for our students and resources for parents.

We appreciate your cooperation and patience as we work through this. The decision by our province has presented many unknowns, and we will continue to work through the details and communicate information to you.

For ongoing updates and information on the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) please visit saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. McIntyre', written in a cursive style.

Kyle McIntyre
Director of Education