



Lord Kitchener
Elementary

April 3, 2020

The following information was previously sent out to our teaching staff from the district and has been modified to address our parent community.

Dear Lord Kitchener Community,

Ms. Stewart and I are reaching out to give you an update on what has been happening at Kitchener this past week. We hope that you are all keeping well during these extraordinary and challenging times. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or concerns. There are a number of moving parts we are balancing, but we will always find time to connect.

You will have heard in the news that the Ministry of Education is recommending a “Continuity of Learning Model.” It is going to look different than what was happening in our classrooms, as the traditional 9am-3pm school day would be extremely difficult for families to recreate at their dining room tables. Moving to a continuity of learning model will take time, care and thought. In this new way of teaching, learning can and still will occur. It won’t be perfect, but we ask for your patience and flexibility as teachers navigate their new online world. We are also acutely aware of how important it is that we continue to be respectful of our community, your time together and your individual circumstances.

Relationships and realistic expectations are the most important things to be mindful of as we embark on this path. This move to continuity of learning is about connections and supporting each other. In many ways, it is like starting a new school year – we are going to need to build connections and relationships using different approaches and strategies. This process will vary from teacher to teacher as well as from family to family.

Our Guiding Principles:

1. Ensure the health and safety of students, staff and communities
2. Communicate thoughtfully, transparently and in a timely manner
3. Provide connections to ensure students feel valued and have a sense of belonging and community
4. Continued learning opportunities so that all students can successfully transition to their next phase of learning

During this first week back, staff have been asked to focus on safety, communication and connections. We understand that there are some parents who are ready to go and were hoping to have received some direction from their teacher; however, the Ministry has been clear that there is no expectation that staff will provide curricular learning opportunities at this time. Teachers are trying to make the best of a very complex and challenging situation. We ask for your patience and know that more information will be coming soon. In the meantime, encourage your child(ren) to keep a journal documenting what is happening and what they are doing to occupy their time at home. Students could be reading every day, playing and exploring, organizing their spaces, helping with laundry, meal preparation and dishes. Creating a schedule is highly recommended, and once teachers begin to send home learning opportunities, they can easily be incorporated into their daily routine. Don’t forget to include Wellness! Make sure that you are taking time to stretch, move and breathe.

With respect to technology, we understand that some students will not have access to devices, and we will need to find ways to connect with and support them. Conversations about how to support those students without access will be happening at the school and at the District level in the coming weeks. Students that do have technology will likely be sharing their devices with other household members. Therefore, they may have less time to do their schoolwork, not more. Many of our parents are now working from home and we need to ensure that student privacy and confidentiality are maintained.

For staff, three key messages have been suggested by the District:

1. It is better to think of a whole week, rather than an individual day. Students should have much more flexibility and control over when to complete the learning activities. This can be communicated in a weekly learning plan (overview of the week ahead, positive message, connections to the curriculum) and followed up with daily communication
2. Keep assignments simple. Assignments should be described very clearly so that students can succeed. It can be tempting to assign lots of independent work. However, teachers should give assignments that are bite-sized and similar to what they would assign on-campus. It is wise to avoid assignments that are complex or require materials or tools that are uncommon in homes. Give learners opportunities to work on developing skills and learning about topics that are of interest to them.
3. Be aware and considerate of all the various expectations being placed on the student. Technology within the household may be shared, so the student may not have full-time access. There may be other non-school-related demands being placed on students (i.e. helping to care for a younger sibling at home).

Guidelines for Continuity of Learning with students:

- **Kindergarten - Grade 3**
 - Teachers will focus on literacy and numeracy through the core competencies. Teachers will assign work for five hours a week (about an hour a day) and will work with families to deliver these materials digitally **or** in paper packages *as needed*.
- **Grades 4-7**
 - Teachers will continue to focus on literacy and numeracy through the core competencies. Teachers will assign work for 5-7 hours a week and will work with families to deliver these materials digitally.

Again, if you have any questions during this process, please reach out to your classroom teacher or to Ms. Stewart or me and we will do our best to update you on what is happening at the school. Thank you to those families who have stopped and waved from the sidewalk! It's nice to see some familiar and friendly faces.

We will be providing information to you as it is made available to us. Please check out the Ministry of Education's website <https://www.openschool.bc.ca> as well at the VSB's website <https://www.vsb.bc.ca/Pages/default.aspx> for up to date messaging, resources and information.

Take care of yourselves. Stay safe.
We will be in touch soon.

Mr. Murphy & Ms. Stewart.