

Dear West Vancouver Schools families,

As we get closer to Monday, I have that late August feeling of nervousness, anxiety and optimism as we start anew with our students.

I am sure your households are nothing like what they were even one month ago. I know for me, with a daughter in grade 12 anxious around graduation, her three younger siblings with differing levels of interest in returning to school, an 80-year-old mother who feels disconnected from the world right now and a spouse who is a small business owner who has seen her business close with no timelines of reopening – my house is very different. And so I am sure it is for you and it is for all of your families. I want to continually contextualize where we are because empathy and care for each other needs to guide our work.

I also want to emphasize that continuity of learning plans will look different across districts and in various independent school settings as access to technology, geography and many other factors influence plans. We are fortunate in West Vancouver, but the issue of equity in our district and across the province are top of mind for me as we go through this process.

Since the announcement last week that in-person classes are being suspended, West Vancouver Schools has been preparing a *Continuity of Learning Plan* so that when our students virtually return next week we will be ready to reconnect. We understand that teaching and learning will look different throughout our K- 12 system and our intent is not to replicate normal classroom instruction, but rather to provide opportunities for home learning during this very challenging time. The Ministry of Education has reassured all students and families that every student will receive a final mark and that all students on track to move to the next grade will do so in the fall.

At the beginning of next week, our Principals and teachers will be reconnecting, planning and building their capacity to provide opportunities for learning remotely. By mid-week, your child and/or you can expect communication from the school or their teacher to check-in – this might be via email, through Freshgrade or Google Classroom, or via phone. This communication will vary depending on the grade of your child. By Friday of next week, teachers should be in a position to provide students and families with a general learning overview for week two, focusing on essential learning.

West Vancouver School District is in the fortunate position where we have a strong technological infrastructure with staff, students and families. We anticipate that the majority of communication and

learning will occur through our approved digital platforms. To this point, principals will be following up with families next week to assess access to technology at home for students.

In designing its plans for school districts, the Ministry of Education emphasized that school districts must include in their frameworks, services to support children of essential workers and support vulnerable students who may need special assistance. You can learn more about both of these items and the work we are contemplating by visiting our website at <https://westvancouver.schools.ca/news/coronavirus-update> (our website will also continue to post the most current information we have from the province and context for our local situation).

We recognize that this is an incredibly difficult time for many families and understand that it may be challenging for students to focus on learning. While in-class learning has been suspended, schools will continue to provide opportunities, resources, and support for our students adapting to the individual circumstances of our families.

Our teachers are looking forward to reconnecting with you next week, and I know you will be excited to connect with them as well.

I would like to invite you and your child to join me for a live video on Friday at 10:00 am where I will share even more information (I will share this invitation in a later email). My goal is to lower anxiety and provide factual information as quickly as possible. If you have questions that you would like me to answer – please send them to info@wvschools.ca.

You can also expect to hear from your school principal in the coming days with more school-specific information.

Take care everyone. We are in this together.

Chris Kennedy

Superintendent of Schools