



BERWICK & DISTRICT SCHOOL

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Berwick & District promotes a fragrance free and peanut aware school.



Principal: Bill Doucet

Vice Principal: Amanda Connell

Thursday, April 2, 2020

Dear BDS Families

By now most of you have been contacted by your child's teacher. For many we had to leave messages but we've tried to check in with as many of you as possible. For students in Mrs Milne's class, Mrs Long will be calling today to say hello and check in. This is just the first step in the new Learning Support Plan that staff are now working hard on. I want to briefly outline what this will look like over the next few weeks.

Support without Technology

Starting on Wednesday, April 8th a bi-weekly package of educational materials will be delivered with the regular flyers. This package will have two weeks worth of material for students in grades Primary to Nine. Each grade will have a plan and activities for students to work on each day. This is the "No-Tech Plan". For families with no tech or insufficient technology/internet this may be what learning looks like for the duration of the school closure. Regional Centers around the province are designing these packages to cover the outcomes that would normally be taught at this time of year. These packages will be delivered every other Wednesday with the regular flyer delivery.

For some families, the "No Tech" packages will be enough. Students in grades P-6 are encouraged to work on school work for an hour each day. For some students this will be too much and for some it will not be enough. Students are encouraged to try work from other grades if they find the work included too challenging or not challenging enough.

Support with Technology

In addition to the baseline packages distributed with the flyers our teachers are working on ways to use technology to support your child's learning. Some will distribute material by email, some by Google Doc or Google Classroom. Others are exploring mediums such as Youtube, Facebook and Instagram to distribute learning materials and to keep in contact with you and our students. Each grade and each class will look different. Please be patient as we work through the rough patches in this plan. Your child's teacher will be reaching out to you over the next few days to outline what your child's learning supports will look like.

The DEECD has created a web resource for learning at home. You can access it here -

<https://curriculum.novascotia.ca/parentfamily-information>

Assessment

Our teachers will still assess learning, although it will not look anything like what it has in the past and, honestly, it will not be to the extent that we want it to be. Teachers will reach out using whatever tools are available to the student to assess their learning and give feedback. For some it will be a phone call, for others it may be through email, google docs, google classroom and for some it may even be through video conference. We will do our best to provide assessment and feedback.

Office Hours

Our teachers are working from home and are certainly working full days at this point. Wednesday morning we had a 2 hour staff meeting to talk about how we would implement the Learning Support Plan at BDS and I was emailing, texting and speaking with teachers all day. They are excited to start doing what they love to do - teach your children. Each day we have asked teachers to designate 1 hour as their **office hour**. This is when they will communicate with you **if you need them to**. This is not to say that they won't be working or sending out emails at other times but the hour will be dedicated to parent communication. We have asked that this time be during the school day but some office hours may need to be in the later afternoon or even evenings depending on the circumstance of the teacher.

Email is the preferred method of reaching your child's teacher. Parents may certainly request a call from the teacher but we are asking teachers to not give out their personal cell phone numbers for privacy reasons. When teachers call back they will either block their number or will call from their computer and the number showing will be 226-213-8281. **Parents who do not have email but can text can still send an email through their text app.**

1. Go to your text message application
2. Enter the teacher's email address instead of their phone number.
Staff contacts are here: <https://tinyurl.com/bdsstaff>
3. Compose your text
4. Send

Teachers are able to reply to a text sent in this way through their email.

If the only method of communication you have is to call please call the school at 902-538-4720 and leave a message. We will check the messages daily and will relay them to the teacher. Teachers will do their best to return calls within 48 hours.

This is a lot of information. For now, please know that we are working hard to give your children the best educational support we can given these incredible circumstances. Also, please know that we do not want to add to your stress or your children's stress. DO NOT STRESS ABOUT THE WORK THAT IS COMING HOME FOR YOUR CHILD AND DON'T LET THEM STRESS ABOUT IT. We will all do what we can and not worry about the things that are beyond what we are capable of. We are here for you and the students, not the other way around. No child will be penalized because of this virus. No one should be sitting at a kitchen table in tears because they can't do an assignment in the best of times and certainly not now. If it's too much, go for a walk, listen to some music, have a nap... whatever works best for your child.

One last thing. If you are not a member of the School and Community Council Facebook page and you have the means to access it you should join it, even for the next few weeks.

(<https://www.facebook.com/groups/604339973089620/>) There is a lot of good information posted there and it's a way to connect to other parents, children and staff. We are working to establish more of a presence on other social media for older students but, I will admit, we are struggling. We will try harder to make that connection in the next few days.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher, to me (Bill.Doucet@avrce.ca) or to Mrs Connell (Amanda.Connell@avrce.ca) if you have questions or issues you think we might be able to help with.

You are also able to access these emotional support resources, shared with us by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development:

Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868 OR Text 686868

Mental Health: <http://www.nshealth.ca/coronavirus-home/coronavirus-covid-19-resources>.

We miss you all and we especially miss our children. Hopefully this will all be over soon and we can be back together.

Stay Safe

Bill

Bill Doucet

Principal, Berwick & District School