



May 15, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are writing to provide you with an update on our efforts to ensure continuity of learning for our students. It is expected that the Minister of Education will be making an announcement regarding the remainder of the school year early next week as it relates to current school closures. The NNDSB will review this announcement when it happens and will provide families with an update in the days ahead. Until then, we will continue to work together to ensure that our students and your children feel supported.

Distance Learning Equity Plan

In response to needs identified through school surveys, the NNDSB began the process of providing board owned devices to students who do not have access to technology/internet. Our IT Customer Support team continues to work on device logistics, setup, configuration, policy, and eventual deployment to schools for curbside pickup. Devices are deployed to students based on identified needs and access to the internet, among other considerations.

It is important to note that the provision of devices is only one component of our Distance Learning Equity Plan. We will continue to utilize all available avenues to reach our students to ensure the continuation of learning. Our process involves the development of a plan best suited to the specific situation of each student. This is done through dialogue and collaboration between the teacher, principal, and the family. Please contact your child's school to discuss specific needs and requirements.

Please visit our [Passport to Learning](#) page for more information and contact your school if you have any questions or require assistance.

Graduations

Our schools are in the process of surveying our graduating students, parents, and Student Senate to determine what preferences there are for graduation ceremonies and celebrations. Once this information has been compiled, we will be developing a plan which considers our local needs, stakeholder input and the direction from the Minister of Education that graduation ceremonies are not to be cancelled. This information will be communicated to parents and students as soon as it is available.

Access to Student Lockers and Belongings

The direction from the Minister of Education is clear that schools are not to be opened for students or parents. We are working with the Ministry of Education and other school boards to develop a plan and process for accessing student belongings. This will be communicated to you as soon as it is available. In the meantime, if the need to access belongings is an emergency or urgent, please contact your school principal.

Mental Health Awareness

These are trying times for students and parents, and we are here to help. Our Mental Health Team has developed resources and guidance materials to assist parents in supporting their children during this time. Moving forward, we will be using our website and social media sites to bring awareness to the importance of mental health, along with resources and messages of support. Your support in sharing these messages with our students and community would be appreciated.

Additional information on Mental Health resources and supports is available on our website at [Student Mental Wellness](#).

Supporting our Students with Special Education Needs

Teachers continue to provide learning opportunities that enable students with Individual Education Plans (IEP's) to work toward the learning goals set out in their IEPs and successful experience while learning from home. Support staff at both the school and board level, continue to collaborate with the classroom or subject area teachers and with the students with whom they regularly support, to ensure that they have the accommodations and resources necessary to engage in learning at home successfully.

Additional information on Special Education Programming during school closures is available on our website at [Special Education Updates](#).

NNDSB Helping from Home

In partnership with Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services, the Near North District School Board is launching the "Helping from Home" campaign. The campaign will support homeless individuals living in the community.

Helping from Home provides an avenue for students to continue to engage in caring citizenship while remaining safe at home. The campaign simply asks students and their families to spread the word, give what they can, and share the link to the donation page for the Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services at

<https://nmhss.ca/contact-us/donate-today/>. Donations will go towards the purchase of essential items such as personal hygiene items, clothing etc.

Please continue to visit www.nearnorthschools.ca for the most up-to-date information.

We know that this new way of learning can present challenges for some families, and that is a learning process for everyone involved. Thank you for your continued support of our staff during this time.

Craig Myles
Director of Education