

Dear OCDSB Students:

I wanted to let you know that schools are going to remain **closed to students until Monday, May 4, 2020**. This is to protect your health and safety while we try to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As we get closer to May, health authorities will make a decision about whether it is safe to return to school or whether additional closure time is required.

Protecting Your School Year

Everyone knows how concerned students are about the school year. The government, the school board and your school are all working together to ensure that all students, from kindergarten to grade 12, can finish their academic year and be supported to advance to the next year or earn the credits needed to graduate. We understand the unique needs of students in grades 11 and 12, and the Minister of Education has said that no student will have their graduation compromised by COVID-19.

Phase 2 - Learning At Home

Beginning April 6th, students and staff at the OCDSB will move to the second phase of Learning At Home. Over the past two weeks, we have been planning for this possibility. The government announcement provides principals and teachers with more detailed information about what that will look like. It's important that we have some guidelines that apply to students in all schools across the province. Here are some of the expectations that we are working with.

Ministry Expectations for Phase 2

The Ministry announced the following expectations for Phase 2 including:

- Reconnecting students with teachers and other school staff;
- Re-establishing teacher-led learning by grade groupings as follows:
 - Kindergarten-Grade 3: five hours of work per student/week (focus on literacy and math)
 - Grades 4-6: five hours of work per student/week (focus on literacy, math, science and social studies)
 - Grades 7-8: 10 hours of work per student/week (focus on math, literacy, science and social studies)
 - Grades 9-12: three hours of work per course per week for semestered students; 1.5 hours of work per course per week for non-semestered students (focus on achieving credits/completion/graduation)
- Leveraging digital resources and identifying alternative forms of teacher-student connectivity, such as phone and mail;
- Developing a program of training for educators to support them in virtual learning delivery;
- Requiring final report cards for all students;
- Prioritizing and supporting students on track to graduate;
- Distributing laptops and/or devices from schools as needed, while observing public health direction;

The Minister of Education has written a letter to families. [You can read it here.](#)

Volunteer Hours

According to the Ministry of Education, the graduation requirement to complete 40 hours of community involvement is suspended for this school year. However, graduating students are encouraged to complete your hours if possible, as long as it's safe to do so. This could include volunteer initiatives that support communities' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as letter-writing campaigns to seniors.

We know there are still many questions about the extended closure. We are working to get answers for you. By now you should have been in contact with your teacher and next week, your teacher will provide you with more specific information about your learning plans. If there is something that you need help with, including access to technology, access to special education supports, meal programs or other services, please speak with your teacher.

And remember, all of these things are being done to keep you safe and well. Please continue to follow Ottawa Public Health advice to stay home and practice physical distancing. As a reminder, you can visit our COVID-19 website for latest updates, learning resources, frequently asked questions and mental health resources for families: ocdsb.ca/covid19.

Stay safe and be well.

Camille Williams-Taylor

Director of Education/Secretary to the Board