

Dear Students:

The COVID-19 pandemic has created many changes in our lives. Students, families and teachers are all learning how to adapt to this situation. This week, educators, principals and vice-principals are reaching out to students and parents to check-in and see how you are doing. Different teachers will reach out in different ways - watch your @ocdsb email, your classroom website or social media for your class or school. You can also reach out to your teacher by email.

Well-Being

This kind of situation is new to all of us, so it's natural if you sometimes feel anxious or worried. You may have seen the social media hashtag - *#ItsOKNotToBeOK* - this is an important message. Make sure you talk about your feelings with friends and family. [KidsHelpPhone](#) is also a good confidential resource for support.

School Closure - Phase 1

We understand the school closure is going to extend beyond April 5th, so we should think about this time period between March 23rd and April 5th as Phase 1. In this phase, our focus is adjusting to our new environment and ensuring everyone is well. Teachers and principals are reaching out and connecting with students and families; making the [LearnAtHome](#) and some [additional learning resources](#) available; and planning for learning in the weeks ahead. These online resources are being updated regularly. They are not a substitute for in-class instruction, but rather some optional activities to keep up your learning. In Phase 1, there are no formal tests or assessments that will affect your grades.

Planning for Phase 2 of Closures

We do not know how long the closure will be extended, but we are starting to make plans for Phase 2. We know that it's not possible to recreate the school day online, but there are some ways to ensure that we continue to have good learning opportunities which are based on curriculum requirements. In Phase 2, we can expect more structured teacher-to-student learning, which will likely include some online learning using Google classroom, D2L or the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), some self-directed learning and assignments and some tests/assessment. This will be different by age and grade.

A Plan for All Students

One of the biggest tasks in our planning is ensuring that ALL students have access to learning in Phase 2. Since this will include online learning, we need to ensure students have access to technology and wifi. We also need to make sure that we can support students with special education needs and English Language Learners.

Impact on School Year

For many students, and especially those in grade 12, there is concern about the possible loss of the school year. The Minister of Education has made it very clear that *"no graduating student will have their ability to graduate impacted by the two-week closure and the COVID-19 developments"*. The school district, your teachers and families are all committed to ensuring students can succeed despite the challenges posed by the current global pandemic. We will work to find fair, flexible, and equitable solutions that best serve our students.

Working Together to Stay Safe

Finally, a reminder that we all need to work together to overcome this pandemic. That means that we stay connected with each other, but practice physical distancing and regular hand washing. It's important to make some time for physical activity, get outside for some fresh air, but please don't use the play structures in school yards as they are not being cleaned and therefore not safe. Take a look at this poster about [Physical Distancing](#) which is also available in [French](#), [Arabic](#), [Simplified Chinese](#), and a few [other languages](#).

Part of a Caring Community

I know there is a lot of change happening and that can be hard. But, what remains the same is our commitment to you. All of us – your teacher, your principal and school board – care about you and know that our learning might be different, but we're still here and we will get through this together.

We will keep you updated as soon as we have more information. You can always check our website or our student portal for updates.

Be well.

Sincerely,

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education/Secretary to the Board