

April 27, 2020

A message to Parents and Guardians:

On April 26, 2020, Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced that the closure of all publicly-funded schools will be extended until at least May 31, 2020, as part of an effort to keep students, staff and families safe from COVID-19.

As we begin our fourth week of learning at home, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our entire NPSC community for their dedication and perseverance over the past weeks. Our staff have truly gone above and beyond to support student learning.

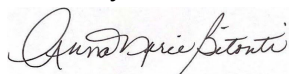
Over the last two weeks, our team of administrators and technicians worked tirelessly to safely distribute close to 400 laptops, chromebooks, assistive technology and other equipment to ensure students and their families could be connected during this time to continue their learning. Our education and support staff continue to provide creative and meaningful learning opportunities for our students and are always exploring new and exciting ways to facilitate instruction and communication. Our custodial staff continue to work to keep our schools clean and secure, so when it is safe to return to the classroom, our schools will be ready. These are only a few examples of the many inspiring individuals working across our system to support student learning during these unprecedented times.

Our team is also inspired by you, our NPSC families, who are doing all that you can to support your children and to keep them engaged in their learning, despite any challenges you may be facing. Whether logging on to Edsby for the first time, picking up a board laptop for your child to use, connecting with your child's teachers and principal, sharing wifi and/or devices while maintaining a work from home schedule, we thank you for confronting these challenges with grace. We recognize this time is difficult for many reasons and we thank you for your partnership and patience.

As we look ahead to the next several weeks of learning from home, please review the information provided below. I encourage you to continue to reach out to your child's teachers and principal with any questions or concerns you may have. We will be continuing to update our Learn at Home learning resources and I can assure you that we will share any new and updated information as soon as it becomes available.

Please continue to keep in touch and to follow the advice of the [North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit](#). Our entire staff continue to keep you and your families, as well as those around the globe, in our prayers during this time of uncertainty. Stay safe, be well and look after each other.

Sincerely,



Anna Marie Bitonti
Director of Education

NPSC Learn at Home Update April 27, 2020

Mental Health Resources

Our Mental Health team at Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board is offering a variety of resources for parents and students during this time away from school. Visit [our website](#) and continue to monitor your Edsby accounts for more information regarding:

- Mental Health Check-Ins via email for parents and students
- Elementary Well-being Edsby group for students and parents
- SJSH Edsby Wellness Hub for SJSH students. This Hub offers:
 - Information to support student mental health
 - A calendar of events with resources and daily activities and supports
 - Wellness Hub group “drop-ins” to keep students feeling connected to each other
 - Links to online, private Wellness Check-Ins for SJSH students looking to speak with School Social Workers. Appointment availability will be updated weekly and posted to the Edsby Wellness Hub group.
- Online group sessions **for caregivers** to talk about their successes and struggles in our current situation. Group sessions will provide participants with the opportunity to talk about their situation and share strategies for how to manage the challenges facing caregivers during this time

For more information on any of the mental health and well-being resources available to you or if you have questions, please contact tessierp@npsc.ca.

Access to Technology and Wifi

A provincial partnership between Rogers Communications and Apple has been established to help meet the educational needs of students and families during the COVID-19 outbreak by supplying iPad devices, pre-equipped with free Rogers LTE wireless data. Our school board will continue to work with families to supply appropriate technology and attempt to assist families to access wifi services, where possible. ***If your child does not have access to adequate technology or wifi to continue their learning at this time, please contact your school principal.***

Student Assessment

We recognize that this period we all find ourselves in is much different than what we are accustomed to as a Catholic school community. We also recognize that every student and their families are in different circumstances and this may be impacting their learning from home experience. Our educators understand the challenging and unique circumstances in which many of our families find themselves, and will assess and evaluate student learning, with tremendous care, flexibility, understanding and compassion.

For **elementary students**, teachers will use approaches to gather evidence of student learning and will provide meaningful feedback to students on their progress. Evidence of significant improvement in learning, during the closure period, may be taken into consideration by the teacher when assigning a final grade in a subject area. Otherwise, students in Grades 1 to 8 will be

assigned the grades earned based on their learning up until schools closed on March 13, 2020. All students, Kindergarten to Grade 8, will receive a June report card.

For **secondary students**, our educators have been providing a variety of tasks, projects and culminating activities to keep students engaged with course material. Teachers will be using a variety of approaches to gather evidence of student learning and will provide meaningful feedback to students on their progress.

Report cards will be issued in June 2020, and will be based on work completed until March 13, 2020, and after April 6, 2020. Only demonstrated improvements in learning will be taken into consideration when assessing a final mark. Our shared goal is to engage and support every learner and build upon their success from wherever they may be, as of March 13. With this understanding, for the duration of this school closure period, we expect that learning will continue and students will strive to do their best to complete all assigned work. We want students to be successful and supported as they work towards achieving their credits and being well-prepared for the next steps in their continued secondary or post-secondary pathway/journey. As a Catholic faith community, we value the relationships and connections we have with our students and we will do everything we can to support all learners to be successful.

All parents and students should continue to check Edsby regularly for updates about their child's learning and information from teachers and principals.

Specialized Health Support Services and Special Needs Programming

Students with special education needs will receive appropriate accommodations and/or modifications where necessary, to reflect students' IPRC and IEP. If you have not already done so, you are encouraged to reach out to your child's teacher and/or principal to establish a plan to help support your child's learning during this time.

Families can contact their children's service providers directly for updated information about what services may be available to them at this time. One Kids Place (OKP) has identified and prioritized students who have complex needs and require a continuation of therapeutic services. In the near future, OKP is expected to launch virtual services and resources for both families and educational staff. OKP therapists remain available to the schools and families for consultation.

Students who would have otherwise received school health professional or school health personal support services on school premises may be eligible for home care services. In recognition of the extended school closure, Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) are working with families with children who are eligible for home care.

We recognize that the stress levels and personal situations for some families at this time make it difficult to participate in virtual sessions. We remain available to support our students and families in accessing services and support in a manageable way.

Stay Connected!

Families are encouraged to continue to visit the [NPSC Learn at Home](#) website for resources to help support students in their learning at home. Please continue to check your Edsby pages and



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our Facebook (/NPSCDSB), Twitter (@npsc_schools) and Instagram (@npsc_schools) pages for the most recent information and updates from the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board.