



# GISCOME ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 57 (PRINCE GEORGE)

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Dear Parents and Students,

### **Our situation:**

Six weeks ago, I could not have imagined we would be in a situation where schools were closed to the public, many people were working from home, and social distancing is our reality. For me, pandemics were something that happened somewhere else, not in Prince George. The fact that a virus is the cause of such disruption is unprecedented in our lifetimes.

### **The Transition:**

I want to assure you that your child's education and Continuity of Learning Plan is important to us. It has been quite a shock and a shift to transition from in class instruction to learning from home. We have had many struggles over the past two weeks as we have tried to develop digital and online learning opportunities for our students. Our system was not set up for the sheer volume of people using our server, our e-mail system, and the stringent restrictions we have on program usage due to our mandate to maintain the highest levels of confidentiality for our students and families.

### **Technological shifts:**

You will see some information coming out regarding these shifts in our technological needs. Some of these shifts include:

1. We will all have new e-mail addresses. Our old e-mail system used [@sd57.bc.ca](mailto:@sd57.bc.ca). Our new e-mail system will be [@sd57learn.com](mailto:@sd57learn.com). More information will be provided to you as information is available.
2. We have all moved to Office 365 allowing us the versatility to create teams and share documents seamlessly with students.
3. The Province of British Columbia has purchased a provincial license for Zoom. Servers have been located in Canada and privacy concerns are being resolved to meet BC's privacy requirements for students. In the meantime, teachers are using Zoom Education with their students as recommended by the School District.
4. There are several programs we will may be utilizing to ensure that we are able to digitally connect with our students. Some of these programs include:
  - a. Class Dojo
  - b. Fresh Grade
  - c. Google Suite
  - d. MyEdBC
  - e. Teacher developed websites

### **The school website:**

In addition, we are currently in the process of overhauling our website. Currently, you will see some significant changes to our website including learning links for each subject area. We will continue to improve our website as teachers find and share effective resources for our learners.

## **The Continuity of Learning Plan:**

1. Over this week and last week you will see the following:
  - a. Teachers communicating weekly with students (e-mail, telephone, Class Dojo, Office 365, Zoom etc.)
  - b. Teachers setting up schedules for students that include: Health and Wellness, Literacy and Numeracy goals.
  - c. Stretch activities **may** be added at the discretion of the teacher. These would be activities for students who want to do a bit more. They would primarily focus on hands on learning, STEAM learning, or project based learning.

## **Suggested time allotments for student learning:**

Kindergarten - Grade 1	Up to an hour a day
Grades 2 - 3	Up to 90 minutes per day
Grades 4 - 7	Up to 2 hours per day

## **What is important for you to know:**

Just as each classroom is different within the physical school setting, so too, will each teacher's classroom in the home setting. Both individually and collectively the needs of each classroom are different from one another. The teacher's will be considering those needs when designing classroom schedules and materials. What one child is working on may look very different from another. There may be quite different volumes of material, and allocated time for learning, especially with the initial schedules.

## **In closing:**

Finally, it is important for me to acknowledge that we are not operating on a business as usual mandate. The Ministry has outlined four mandates for the Education sector during the pandemic. In order of priority, they are:

- ▶ Healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.
- ▶ Supporting front line workers
- ▶ Supporting vulnerable families
- ▶ Continuity of Learning

We are doing our best to strive to meet all four mandates both at the District and at the school level.

In addition, we know the pandemic has impacted your own family at varying levels of severity. We are doing our very best to balance all those needs to ensure you are supported as a family through our collective learning journey. Let us know if you are feeling overwhelmed or in need of extra support. Your child's teacher is the first and best place to start if you have queries regarding classroom learning.

I'd also like to thank you for supporting the pick-up and drop-off of student belongings. It provided staff an opportunity to connect with parents and students which was greatly appreciated!

Yours truly,

Sarah J Petrisor, Principal  
Jason Schwartz, Vice Principal