

HWDSB

April 9, 2020

Dear Families,

As we enter a holiday long weekend when families typically gather, we thank you for following the advice of public health agencies. We can overcome this challenge, together.

We know that we have shared a lot of information to support HWDSB families. To help families find this information, we have reorganized our web content at www.hwdsb.on.ca/covid19. This is where families will find our learning and support plan, *Caring in the face of challenge: learning and support during COVID-19*.

This letter provides further details for families about access to device and/or home internet, resources for students receiving special education supports, post-secondary applications, and clarification about assessment, evaluation and reporting for secondary students.

Access to a Device (Only)

Outreach by HWDSB staff last week has identified families requiring a device, including specialized equipment for students receiving special education supports. These families can expect to receive communication as early as Tuesday, April 14, about how and when to pick up the device and equipment. Staff will be on site during the scheduled pick-up times. Please note that all devices have been cleaned and inspected by staff.

A protocol with instructions for device pick-up by vehicle and by walk-ups has been developed in consultation with Public Health Services and will be clearly displayed at the school. Families traveling in a vehicle can expect routes in bus loading zones or school parking lots, for example. Families who arrive on foot can expect tables outside the school with markers identifying physical distancing.

If you have not been contacted by the morning of Wednesday, April 15, please contact your school.

Access to a Device and Internet (Both)

Families that require a device and internet capabilities will receive further information next week. We are working with a current vendor to provide a tablet with cellular data (internet) access for families who do not have home internet. We will contact families as soon as our shipment arrives.

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Students Receiving Special Education Support

Students who receive special education support should receive appropriate accommodations where necessary and be provided with assigned work by teachers, as well as feedback or assessment. The student's current Individual Education Plan should continue to be followed.

HWDSB's Specialized Services team has prepared additional learning supports, named [Learning4Success](#), which are tailored for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or a Developmental Disability who are on an alternative program. These materials are for family use and may be used to supplement instruction provided by the classroom teacher. There are examples of learning tasks that can be done at home. Tasks can be adjusted to accommodate learners ages and interests, with the understanding that they may not be a perfect fit for each learner.

We continue to enhance and develop [Learning4Success](#) to meet the needs of students and families. You will see additional videos and resources posted weekly, so please visit the site often.

NEW Information Related to College and University Applications

As mentioned in a previous letter, mid-term marks for those applying to universities will be submitted to the Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC) between April 23 and May 1. The Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) has also confirmed it will accept mid-term marks during this period.

This differs from our communication earlier this week and is a new announcement from the College sector.

HWDSB secondary schools will be submitting mid-term marks for students applying to colleges and/or universities; however, a mid-term report card will not be issued.

In determining mid-year marks for the admissions process, teachers will use evidence that reflects work completed prior to March 13, 2020, as well as provide an opportunity for students to submit any missed and/or additional assignments to demonstrate their learning. Teachers may adjust the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a mark, if needed. Marks should represent the most accurate reflection of student work, based on what is reasonable and in the best interest of students during this time. Any students applying to post-secondary education who have questions or concerns should contact their secondary school early next week.

The Ministry of Education continues to collaborate with post-secondary institutions through the Ministry of Colleges and Universities.

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Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting (Grades 9 –12)

Our most recent communication on Tuesday, April 7, is the direction of the Ministry of Education. We want to ensure that students continue to be motivated through distance education to engage in this learning and improve their marks.

HWDSB's commitment is to do what is in the best interest of each student as we attempt to balance the integrity of learning and marks for secondary credits, with the wellness of our students and staff. If you have any questions related to assessment, evaluation and reporting, please contact your child's school.

Events and Cancellations

All school trips and excursions are cancelled for the rest of the school year. All proms scheduled until May 31 are cancelled.

A decision about June proms and graduations will align with City of Hamilton's closures and will be communicated later. Please rest assured that solutions are being discussed and explored, if required.

Payments made for events or other reimbursements will be refunded. School staff will contact School Cash Online or initiate the refund directly to families, if the payment was done through cash or cheque.

We thank families for their patience as we process these reimbursements. If your address or contact information has changed, please contact your child's school office staff to ensure that we have the correct information.

As always, please reach out to us if you have questions. Our team of dedicated staff are here to help. Contact your school (see [elementary](#) and [secondary](#) school listings) or contact HWDSB by phone 905-527-5092, email info@hwdsb.on.ca or @HWDSB on social media including Twitter, Facebook or Instagram.

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education