

Thursday, April 9, 2020

### **RE: Our Second Week Back from Spring Break**

Good afternoon,

To begin with, I want to recognize the strength and commitment of our SD61 team. Our staff has been both modeling and repeating the messaging of wash your hands, don't touch your face, maintain a physical distance and stay home if you are sick. We stand strong together and we now know that following these critical guidelines will help us navigate through these tough times and change the direction of this pandemic. As we head into the long weekend, I encourage you to continue to share this modelling with everyone around you to help us stay the course and continue to flatten the curve. This is an amazing team that is truly making a difference during difficult times.

We have had a number of questions regarding the use of masks and gloves. We are all aware that some messages continue to change or evolve, so I have attached the BC Ministry of Health: COVID-19: Public Health Guideline for K-12 School Settings (that was updated on April 3, 2020). There is a specific section on the use of Personal Protection Equipment that you may find useful.

This week we were able to begin providing essential service worker support for our families. I would like to recognize and thank all of our incredible staff who stepped up to be there to directly support our children and families so our learning community could provide essential service workers with this care. With your support, we were able to create spaces for seventy six students at fifteen schools within a very short timeline. Kudos – we couldn't have done it without you!

Thank you,



Shelley Green

### **Field Trips**

Given government direction to limit non-essential travel as well as our intent to ensure the health and safety for everyone, all international school trips scheduled this spring up to and including June 30th are cancelled. Trips scheduled within Canada as well as local activities need to be put on hold indefinitely. The district will be working with individual schools to facilitate the paperwork necessary for international trip cancellation.

### **Food Distribution**

Week one of our Food Distribution initiative went well. Meals were provided through Truffles and Zambri's. With the support of Victoria Foundation and the Rapid Relief Fund we were able to double the number of meals normally provided to approximately 10 thousand meals. We will continue to distribute food through our four zone hubs and look forward to expanding the variety of food as well as increase the number of families that receive support.

While we were able to support 1000 families, we know that the need is greater. We are currently working with the gardening community and other food providers to expand our support. If families are in need, please have them contact their child's principal. In addition to food support through our school district, schools can provide a list of 'Neighbourhood Houses' that provide meals for families and seniors in need.