

Thursday, April 9th, 2020

Dear Students and Parents,

We have made it through the first week; a bit dishevelled and exhausted, but we made it.

There have been frustrations, many questions, some answers, but there have also been triumphs and things to celebrate as a community. What we have all accomplished in just the past 2 weeks is truly remarkable. Students have connected with teachers, some classes are meeting, and we are learning to use the technology that will be our main platform moving forward. While we have just started the journey, and still have a long way to go, we have managed to re-tool 200 years of “traditional” schooling overnight. We have turned our world into a virtual one. It has taken patience, courage, trust, and a huge amount of determination. It has impacted our entire community in innumerable ways, but we are moving forward.

I would like to thank each of you for your support and the part you will continue to play in making this possible. In particular, I appreciate the incredible patience that you have shown that is, and will be, required as we continue to figure this out as a school; all while living with the burden of stress we are all carrying in our own lives, and ~~with all~~ of the underlying anxiety which accompanies it.

The highlight for me this week was welcoming our students back into the building, even if it was only to pick up their belongings. It was wonderful to greet them at the door, and re-connect. For a few short hours, the building was alive again. It was so very good to see them all.

Following are some updates from this week, and a bit of what the next few weeks will bring. As always, there is a great deal of information here, so I have organized it into sections. I hope it is helpful, and that it will answer many of your questions. We will continue to set up resources for you to access through our website. Please visit it and provide us with feedback about anything that is missing that you feel is needed.

As we all look forward to the Easter weekend, I hope you can all find something to celebrate together, albeit 6 feet away from others.

As I said in my last letter, our number one priority is the health and safety of our greater school community. Please take care of yourselves and your families.

Sincerely,

Rob Mcleod, Principal

Jagruti Desai, Vice Principal

### **1. MS Teams Support:**

There will continue to be questions surrounding the set-up and use of MS Teams. For more information please go to the MS Teams page on the school website or click the link below: (<https://www.sd44.ca/school/seycove/Students/Pages/default.aspx#/=>)

### **2. Acceptable use of technology:**

As we have now well and truly embraced a virtual, technology-based world, we are presented with more questions and challenges around the appropriate use of technology by students. There will be a detailed guide coming out early next week from District Executive providing more clarification, but in the interim, please refer to the agreement that all students were required to sign at the beginning of the year. (see link below)

<https://www.sd44.ca/Search/Pages/results.aspx?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.sd44.ca&k=acceptable%20use%20of%20technology#/=>

### **3. School Class meeting schedule:**

In an attempt to solve confusion and conflict as teachers begin to schedule meeting times with students, the staff have agreed on the following schedule. We will do a trial run for the next 2 weeks and then adjust it if/as necessary.

	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tue</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thu</b>	<b>Fri</b>
	1 -2 -3- 4	5-6-7-8	X Blocks	4-3-2-1	8-7-6-5
10:15 - 11:15	1	5		4	8
11:20 - 12:20	2	6		3	7
12:55 - 1:55	3	7		2	6
2:00 - 3:00	4	8		1	5

#### **4. Students and lockers success:**

As mentioned in my introduction above, students had access to the school today to pick up belongings from their lockers. The system ran incredibly smoothly, and huge thanks go to the students for following all of the protocols so carefully, and for filling the school with so many smiles. There will be further opportunities for organized student access as needs arise. Once again, safety is our number one concern.

#### **5. Technology concerns:**

There have been a number of concerns raised about technology and the number of software platforms teachers are using for delivery. While it would certainly be ideal if there were one single platform, making a complete shift from “old to new” in 2 weeks is just not possible. For now, teachers will be using what they are most comfortable and familiar with, and in most cases have been already using in their classes. There will undoubtedly be a gradual migration to MS Teams as a preferred tool, but there is a great deal of work to be done first. I have confidence in the ingenuity and adaptability of our students in a digital world.

#### **6. Some Q&A received this week:**

- **Question:** Are there any laptops available to loan to students?  
**Answer:** Yes, we are working on this, based on demonstrated need. Please contact your child’s teacher directly.
- **Question:** When will students be able to pick up textbooks?  
**Answer:** If they were in their lockers, then they were picked up today. Today was for lockers only. As mentioned above, we are looking to create other opportunities for students to access the school. More will be communicated later.
- **Question:** Some frustration from parents about the various platforms being used  
**Answer:** Yes, we are aware of this. Please see “Technology concerns” above. This will get more consistent as people adapt to the new technology.
- **Question:** Parents are concerned about their children who do not do well with online learning  
**Answer:** These students will be identified by case managers and teachers, and then supported by EAs and Learning services. Please let your child’s teacher, or grade counsellor, know if you have concerns.