

Parent Update

February 12, 2021



Hello everyone,

I just wanted to thank each of you for your continued patience as we make our way through a highly unusual week from a weather perspective. Our entire school division fell under an extreme cold warning, with wind chill values between minus 40 and minus 50 from Monday to Thursday.

For the safety of our students, we closed our schools to ensure that no one felt pressured to walk or drive to school. When the windchill is below -48 C skin freezes in two-five minutes, which makes walking to school particularly hazardous even if students are well dressed.

To ensure student safety, it is our practice to close schools when the windchill is forecasted to be at or near -45C between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. based on the best local weather information that is available to us at 5:30 a.m.

While you may appreciate that safety is a top priority for us, I know that for many of our parents there is an inconvenience that comes with the cancellation of school. I have heard from many of you that we need to consider giving you more notice of a potential Red Day which could mean the closing of a particular school or group of schools, or in this recent case, the entire school division. I want to assure you that we have every intention of coming up with a plan to alert you to the possibility that you might need to plan for your child to be at home.

We have also heard from parents and teachers that, while it is with the best of intentions that we try and sustain learning during a Red Day, it is not without its challenges. Both parents and staff have limited access to technology and materials, and it can put pressure on our parents when they are asked to support their child's learning for extended periods of time. This can be particularly challenging with respect to our youngest and most dependent students. Please know that we have done our best to support your child's learning throughout this extremely cold week and we are committed to ongoing improvement. We are reviewing details of our Inclement Weather processes, with involvement from various stakeholders, to plan a way forward that responds to what we are hearing.

On behalf of all of our staff, and our Board of Trustees, thank you once again, for your continued patience as we learn and grow as a school division.

In closing, I hope that you are able to spend quality time with your family over the upcoming long weekend.

Kurt Sacher
Superintendent