



NEW WESTMINSTER SECONDARY SCHOOL

835 Eighth Street, New Westminster, B.C. V3M 3S9

Telephone: 604-517-6220

April 24, 2020

Dear NWSS Families,

We hope you and your families are in good health and adjusting to our present reality. From a school perspective, it has definitely been a challenging time. Through communication and the cooperation of our entire school community, we have been able to account for and connect with most of our students. We have tried to identify those (and their families) who were in need of additional supports, and have provided technology to those students who required the loan of a Chromebook to participate in the continuation of learning as we move forward.

Learn at Home

While most learning plans allow students to learn the same material at different times and locations and can take place outside of a regular schedule, as a rough guide, we have asked our teachers to keep a weekly schedule to help space out student learning and teacher communication. Staff are using a regular bell schedule as a guide to plan virtual instruction, small group or 1-on-1 support or for other opportunities to connect with their classes.

Attendance & Student Check-in

As part of the learning process, it is important that students remain connected with teachers of the courses in which they are enrolled. Students are expected and required to check-in with each of their teachers at least once per week. Students are encouraged to contact their teachers more than one time per week and are expected to engage in a meaningful way in the learning tasks that are shared out by teachers.

This check-in can occur in the form of replying back to an email, submitting an assignment assigned on MS TEAMS, Google Classroom or other platforms, checking in with a teacher virtually, or participating in a virtual discussion hosted by the teacher. We are asking teachers to document this contact, and if, by the end of the week, your student's teacher has not had a connection with your child, we will be contacting the parent/guardian by e-mail or phone call regarding a lack of engagement or connection with the teacher and their course.

Assessment

Just a gentle reminder to families AND students that instruction and learning have not ended. The midterm report cards have been published on the MYED portal as of Friday, April 17th. As mentioned above, we are fully engaged in teaching and learning; therefore, final marks are yet to be determined. Please note the key points to know below...

- All students will receive a final grade for each course they are enrolled in AND successfully complete from now until the end of the school year.
- Teachers will determine a final grade for students based on work completed to date AND the assessment of learning that will occur over the coming months (Apr-Jun).
- Teacher will consider those students whose learning needs or circumstances may require unique approaches to assessment.

Take care,

Murray McLeod
Principal, NWSS

Strategies for Parents with Teens Working at Home

-Tips to help ease the transition-

Working from Home

- When possible block off separate chunks of time for your work and time with your teens and post it where your teens can see it
- Try to give your undivided attention to the scheduled task - find a quiet separate space for work

Space to Work for your teen

- Setting up a home learning space to work can help teens focus.
- If possible, the space should include:
 - a quiet atmosphere, good lighting and a desk
 - a storage basket or bin to keep supplies (paper, pens, pencils, markers, books, etc.)
 - access to a computer/tablet or other smart device if possible

Keeping a Schedule

- Co-create a full day schedule with teens - let them have input on their daily activities (within recommendations of health officials)
- Teens can be encouraged to create their own schedule with parent input
- Provide a checklist if they need help - including homework task and other functional things to do such as chores
- Include exercise, outdoor activities, regular bedtime, wake-up and meal times, time for learning and breaks, and time for social interactions via skype, FaceTime, TEAMS

Helping Teens feel Safe

- Take extra time to talk with your teens including at meal times
- Be social and do things together - cook, bake, exercise, play board or card games etc.
- If they are worrying about things, reflect back their emotions, let them know that you are there for them and come up with a plan to help (contact your school counsellor if you need help with this)
- "Teens also want to be altruistic and flatten the curve - so that everyone doesn't get sick all at once," says Miller.

When You Need Space

- Admit you are stressed if you are
- Communicate with your family members that you need some space - and that it's out of love
- Take a step back if you find yourself angry or irritable
- Be honest and tell people you just need a few minutes to calm down
- Ensure you are staying connected with your own supports - friends, family, counsellor
- Take some self-care moments

Tips adapted from Dr. Ashley Miller's article, "Helping Children and Teens Cope with self isolation" March 2020. http://www.bcchildrens.ca/about/news-stories/stories/helping-children-and-teens-cope-with-social-isolation?utm_source=BCCHF+Newsletter&utm_campaign=3fa9a8c4c9-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_07_31_08_49_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_c1b47bec15-3fa9a8c4c9-465229515

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF AT HOME

- Strategies for Students-

1. Stay Active

Taking frequent, activity breaks away from devices is an important part of staying healthy!

- ✓ put on some music and dance
- ✓ run up and down stairs
- ✓ go for a jog or a walk in nature
- ✓ stretch, do yoga, watch a yoga video
- ✓ play with your pet
- ✓ sit outside
- ✓ play in the backyard

**Be sure to keep appropriate physical distancing with others when active

2. Get at least 8 hours of sleep and have a regular sleep schedule. Go to sleep at the same time each night and set your alarm for a regular wake up time. Regular routines are important.
3. Healthy eating – during stressful times our bodies need good fuel to cope. Make sure you are eating regular balanced meals at the same time each day (ex. breakfast, lunch, dinner). Try to stay away from junk food as much as you can as it can affect your mood and energy levels.
4. Be kind to yourself and engage in positive coping and self-care skills. Do things you find relaxing such as drawing, painting, reading, cooking, taking a warm shower, spend time with your pet, talking to family/friends who make you happy, play video games, and watch your favorite Netflix show. You can also download relaxation apps free such as Mind Shift or Headspace. We all have different strategies to calm ourselves and take this time to get to know which strategies work best for you.
5. Stay social and have fun! Eat meals together with people, play games, connect with your friends virtually through tools such as FaceTime.
6. Take breaks from the news and social media.

It is important to self-monitor and watch for changes in your emotions, mood and behaviour. Changes can signal a need for additional support and/or resources. You may notice you are feeling anxious, preoccupied, or tired, and/or there may be an increase in:

- anxiety
- worrying about self or loved ones
- difficulty focusing
- pre-occupation with illness

If you are feeling overwhelmed and need extra support, please contact your school counsellor:

NWSS Secondary Counsellors:

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|------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Dave Mori | Grade 9 | dmori@sd40.bc.ca |
| Marika Melvin | Grade 10 | mjmelvin@sd40.bc.ca |
| Jennifer Towers | Grade 11 | jtowers@sd40.bc.ca |
| Cindy Vit | Grade 12 | cvit@sd40.bc.ca |
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