



KNIGHTLY NEWS

April 2020

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE:

It has been incredible to see how everyone has come together this past week and I know it hasn't been easy. It warms my heart to observe so many acts of kindness! In this time of great uncertainty, our best defense is to all work together and be good to one another. My thoughts and thank-yous go out to those on the front lines who are doing all they can to fight this pandemic. I know each of you are doing your part to flatten the curve.

I am so incredibly proud of my staff! They have been asked to think and act in ways beyond what we thought was possible. With unprecedented speed, they have sanitized the building, and brought emergency distance learning to fruition. I so appreciate their dedication especially during these extraordinary conditions. This Learn at Home phase does not mean that the teaching that was once done in the classroom is now on-line. A virtual learning environment is very different and it may not be what you were expecting. For example, not everyone is comfortable with the use of video conferencing as a communication tool. Teachers will use their professional judgement when making decisions about which communications tools they will use to interact with your children. Additionally, rarely will we be prescribing synchronous times for students to be online. Some families, I know, are very excited about this new and innovative way of learning. Others are wondering how they will manage. I know you will do your best to support your child's learning, but please know, we are not asking you to be your child's educator. We do not want to add unreasonable stress and expectations to your already busy lives. I understand that when learning from home, each family's environment, familiarity with various platforms, availability of technology and the internet, and access to resources to materials is different. We will do our best to offer flexibility in our learning opportunities. This is uncharted territory. No one has been here before. No doubt we will make some mistakes, but we will learn from them and improve. We will work hard to remove barriers for students and families so that children can participate in learning to the best of their ability. In this regard, we are adopting a "do no harm" philosophy. No student will be disadvantaged academically as a result of this pandemic. Students will only have the opportunity to improve their marks from March 13 forward.

Teachers will be offering regular feedback to the students as they participate in activities and complete assignments. I encourage the children to focus on learning and gaining an appreciation for learning rather than solely focusing on marks. They will, however, receive some form of a report card at the end of June.

Teachers want to maintain regular contact with parents too! The relationship between home and school remains critical during this phase of At Home Learning. If you have been requested by your child's teacher to sign up for "Messenger", please do so. This will help support continuity of learning. Some teachers may try to connect with you using their personal phones. Please consider answering the call that comes up with "No Caller ID."

Thank you for completing the "Request for Technology" survey forms. We have begun the process of distributing ipads, chrome books and laptops. It is a daunting process to gather, configure, sanitize and deploy this equipment. Disbursement should be completed by April 17. Our secretary, Mrs. Shirley Mills, will call to inform you of the date and time of your "curb side" pick-up. Thank you in advance for your patience.

In case you missed this, you can apply to the provincial government for a one time payment of \$200 to offset the cost of buying materials to support your child's learning while you practise self isolation and physical distancing: ontario.ca/page/get-support-families

On another note, we have received the initial staffing allocation for our school for next year. We are certainly growing! Considering our grade eight graduating class consists of less than 20 children and we will have over 40 new junior kindergarten registrations, our school will grow by one class. They have also provided us with an additional K1K2 class (Kindergarten) to alleviate the high numbers we have had in those classes over the last two years. Therefore, we will be adding a total of two new classes. This means the addition of two portables—tarmac chalets as we like to call them! Most likely, grades two, three and four will be housed there. Many combined grade classrooms will still be necessary next year. Due to possible family moves, final organization of classes will not be determined until after the first week of school in September. Also, if you know of someone who is planning on moving to the area, or if you are planning to move out of the area, we would appreciate knowing ahead of time so we can better predict the number of children in each grade. If you know of someone who has a child who will be turning four years old before the end of 2020, please encourage them to register for Kindergarten on-line at tvdsb.ca as soon as possible. Messages may also be left at the school: 519-452-8530.

Enjoy the warming days and the extra hour of sunlight! Please continue to practise physical distancing. The more we make ourselves safe, the more we make others safe! Enjoy a "Happy Virtual Easter" with extended family and friends. Stay home! Stay safe! Hope to see you all soon! We miss you!

Sincerely,

Nancy Tustin

P. S. The Wellness Event that was postponed to April 30 will be further delayed.