



St. Maurice School Inc.

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COVID-19 Remote Learning Planning Update

Current to: April 24, 2020

The Province of Manitoba recently released its COVID-19 Response Plan for K-12, which provides some direction and guidelines for schools across the province. We have reviewed the document and are implementing its guidelines in our practices for remote learning. Here are some highlights from the provincial document and more information about your child's continuing St. Maurice School education while at home.

Guiding Principles

Students are expected to continue learning from home with teacher input, delivery and support.

Parents/guardians will support a learning from home environment. When regular classes resume*, teachers and the school team (administration, resource, etc.) will work together to determine the next steps in learning for each child to ensure each child continues to progress.

*The suspension of classes continues to have a status of indefinite; the schools are beginning to plan for remote learning through to the end of the school year, if necessary.

This has been a significant change for children and adults. Many parents have also shifted to working from home. You may be experiencing considerable stress from attempting to balance competing priorities at home, along with worry, concern and care for family and friends. **Please remember that while learning should continue for children, everyone's mental health and well-being are a priority. Parents can and should determine, with teacher guidance, what activities are realistic and reasonable for their family and situation.**

Priority Learning and Supplemental Activities

Priority areas for learning in the K-6 grades are literacy (English Language Arts) and numeracy (Math), as these are foundational to future learning. Opportunities for Social Studies, Science, PE/Health, Art, French, Music and Religion will also be incorporated.

Priority areas for remote learning in the grade 7-12 courses will initially focus on the core subject areas, with an emphasis on courses which are preparatory for the next level of learning in the subject area. Direct remote instruction will expand into other courses as our systems evolve.

Teachers will identify which activities they consider integral and necessary to ongoing learning, as well as in determining their students' understanding of concepts. Other activities may be offered as supplementary for students to complete. When planning for your child's learning, please attend to the integral activities as a priority and make choices regarding the activities that are identified as supplementary. Teachers will be using the integral assignments as part of their assessments leading into June report cards.

Time Commitments/Expectations

In looking at planning for remote learning, we recognize that it isn't sustainable for parents to maintain a regular school day schedule, particularly for those with younger children. With that in mind, the province has set minimum average expectations for learning time as follows:

Grade	Academic Time
Kindergarten-Grade 4	5 hours/week
Grade 5-8	10 hours/ week
Grade 9-12	1.5 hours per week per course

This learning time will be a combination of on-line opportunities (whole group, small group or individual conferences), independent assignments, and parent-supported work for younger students. Older students should be encouraged to complete their work independently and communicate with their teacher for directions and guidance.

The times in the above chart are the minimum expectations. Our staff want to ensure that our students continue to receive the best standard of academic programming possible, which would increase these times. Please bear in mind that teachers are trying to find a balance for all families, some of whom desire more learning activities and some who are feeling overwhelmed. It is difficult to judge how long each student will take to complete assignments, especially in the remote learning environment, as there are many factors that are different at home compared to the regular classroom environment.

Communication

Teachers will continue to keep normal school hours (8:30-3:30) and are available to answer questions that arise for students and parents. You can email your child's teacher using the linked email addresses from the Teacher Contacts button on the home page of the school website at stmaurice.mb.ca Students in Grades 7-12 now each have a school-issued email address which grants them access to the Microsoft Teams Platform, now the best means of connecting with their teachers.

Please be sure to communicate with the teacher if you are finding it difficult to get your child engaged in learning, if you need clarification about instructions, or if you have concerns about the assignments and workload. Teachers can help parents set priorities and address engagement concerns. We ask that students and parents continue to respect that our teachers need downtime and family time as well. Although they are working extra hours outside the normal school day to prepare lessons, activities and assignments for remote learning, they should not be regularly working directly with students or answering school emails outside of the usual school day hours. Thank you.

Learning Platforms

K-6: Teachers are using a variety of different methods to deliver learning activities and on-line teaching, mainly Seesaw and Zoom in Kindergarten to Grade 6. Teachers are using Zoom as a platform for online lessons, individual conferences, and as an opportunity to maintain social relationships. There were some concerns in the media about the safety of this platform, but updates to the platform have addressed the majority of these issues. In addition, information has been shared with teachers about how to use the safety features in the program, including utilizing a waiting room, controlling screen sharing and chats, locking a meeting, and means of ensuring the meeting is kept private to the class group.

7-12: We have this week introduced Microsoft Teams as the communication platform for grades 7-12. Teams is an all-in-one portal for teaching and learning, including places for teachers to post notes and assignments,

students to submit homework, teachers and students to participate in video conferencing for online classes, direct messaging/chats for simpler questions and answers, internal webpages and more. Many “bugs” have been ironed out quite well over the past of couple days, but please connect with your child’s teacher or with a school administrator nsagriotis@stmaurice.mb.ca or bdoiron@stmaurice.mb.ca should your child be experiencing difficulty accessing their Microsoft account and the Teams application. The online classes schedule has been posted to the homepage of the school website for April 27-30; see: stmaurice.mb.ca. We may need to continue to make adjustments to this online classes schedule after next week, but the goal is to have as consistent a schedule as possible going forward.

We are not making plans to transition all 393 K-6 students over to Microsoft Teams in the near future, as this would require significant re-training for all involved, especially parents and young students. We *may* have a couple of our elementary class teachers experiment with Teams so that we can determine if it is a good fit for the needs of the current K-6 situation at St. Maurice; parents would be advised directly by email from the teachers involved.

Important Note: All or portions of Zoom and Teams class meetings will be recorded so that teachers can share the audio/video with students who were not able to attend the live class meeting.

Caring for yourselves and your family

Please know that our prayers are with you throughout all of the challenges faced by our students and their families. God has not abandoned us, and is always there to guide, support and save us with compassion, mercy and love. Remember to allow God to bring strength, hope, and love *to* you and *through* you to your children.

We are all faced with a contradiction in these days of remote learning ... we’ve all heard that we should limit the time our kids spend in front of screens, and now, their main school learning opportunities are driven by technology and screen time! While there is no best answer to this problem, we do suggest that you consider:

- Making sure your children take a break from all screen work, video conferences, online chats, etc. between their scheduled classes
- Having your children take a 5-15 minute break from on-screen work at least every 45-60 minutes (adjust these values for your child’s age and attention span)
- Encouraging them to engage in activities which do not involve screen electronics: puzzles, artwork, hands-on crafts, board games, audio-only voice calls with friends and relatives, etc.
- Taking them outside for safe playtime in the yard or for a walk together
- Taking time to exercise and be active to stay healthy

Remember, too, that the need for remote learning is a result of the outbreak of COVID-19, which will pass in time. We will return to regular in-person classes when it has been declared safe for schools to re-open!

Below are a few links to resources we wish to share, FYI:

- A new online resource for mental health provided by the Province of Manitoba: <http://www.manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html>
- An excellent starting link to many resources for Manitobans: <https://mb.211.ca/>
- The new My Learning at Home website for parents from Manitoba Education: <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/mylearning/index.html>

- Our School Counsellor, Mrs. Jocelyn Lantin, can be reached by email at jocelyn.lantin@stmaurice.mb.ca or you can visit her website at <https://jblantin.wixsite.com/stmaurice1>

Next School Year

The Province has set the expectation that no student should be adversely impacted by COVID-19. All students will proceed to the next grade in September. However, this is predicated on the assumption that students were on track to advance and that they will continue to engage in learning over this spring term of remote education. Our school team will assess any gaps in learning and address these upon the resumption of regular classes.

If teachers do not see evidence of a student's learning during the suspension of classes, the student can be designated as in need of recovery learning at the beginning of the next school year, and this will be indicated on the June report card. Any students at risk academically and/or those who choose not to participate in remote learning will proceed to the next grade level, but will have to undertake some recovery learning to ensure that they have the foundation necessary to be successful at that grade level. As the spring progresses, our school team will be in touch with parents of these students. Recovery learning needs will involve different approaches at the different grade levels and subject areas, and these plans have yet to be developed, but are currently being discussed by committees of educators organized directly by Manitoba Education.

Normal School Processes for April

A reminder that **class placement requests** for the 2020-2021 school year must be submitted by May 1st. Please email your request directly to the Principal's office at bdoiron@stmaurice.mb.ca Please use the subject line "Class Placement Request" for your email to help make sure it is identified in the daily avalanche of emails! Please refer to page 6 of the March school newsletter for information on making a class placement request; here's a direct link to it: https://5df2b469-f3ce-4765-8ef2-4f35f284dd6d.filesusr.com/ugd/7eb69d_429fff5edcab4f9f9191e260f6c12787.pdf

As the school phone lines are not being monitored daily at this time, you can email office@stmaurice.mb.ca for general inquiries and your email will be addressed or forwarded to the correct personnel. Please be patient for a response as all school personnel are handling much higher than normal email and other electronic traffic these days.

Summary

Thank you, once again, for your support as we navigate this new reality of remote learning together. Our teachers have commented on the many messages of encouragement they have received. We are blessed to have a community that cares deeply about its children. We look forward to the time when we can be physically together as a school community – hopefully soon.

Prayers for health and healing for our community and our world,

Peace,



Bryan Doiron
Principal