

COMMUNIQUÉ 6

Office of the Director General



Commission scolaire English-Montréal
English Montreal School Board

Sunday, March 29, 2020

Dear EMSB Staff, Parents, Students and Community members,

I write to provide additional information that has come into effect since my last Communiqué last Sunday – see EMSB website.

IMPORTANT RE-CAP

Last weekend, Premier, Mr. Francois Legault announced that schools and centres would remain closed until at least May 1st.

Education Minister, Mr. Jean-François Roberge, added that while the Ministry of Education is not asking parents to replicate a regular classroom situation in their home, parents who wish to keep their children academically stimulated will be provided with some activities that will allow their children to *consolidate their learning* during this period of school closure.

Specifically, Mr. Roberge stated that he envisions the school closure period in three phases:

1. For the two weeks up to March 27th: Full closure for students, teachers and staff - with no educational activities being formally provided.
2. As of March 30th: A list of general educational activities will be made available to parents and students via the Ministry's website and school board websites. These activities are optional. These activities will not be graded, nor will they count for marks.
3. As of April 6th: A list of grade level specific educational activities will be provided to school boards. These will be shared with the schools, and school teams will share these activities with the parents and students. These activities continue to be optional. They will not be graded, nor will they count for marks.

In last week's press announcement, it was also stated that:

- all end of year Ministry exams are cancelled;
- and year-end grades for the final report card will be produced by the teachers, using their professional judgement based on term I and II grades.

Details to follow.

UPDATES & DETAILS ABOUT LEARNING AT HOME

Starting on Monday, March 30th, we will be in what the Minister referred to as Phase 2 wherein optional educational activities will be made available progressively by the MEES – both online and via public television.

The EMSB has also worked very hard over this last week and weekend to create its own list of learning activities that parents and students can avail themselves of, starting Monday.

- I would like to take this opportunity to THANK the EMSB Teachers, Educational Consultants, Student Services Professionals and board Directors for their hard work on this initiative!

The goal in providing these learning activities is not to complete the regular curriculum, but rather to continue to stimulate student interest and learning.

Parents and students are invited to check the EMSB website on Monday morning to access the MEES and EMSB list of learning activities.

As of April 6th, we will be in what the Minister referred to as Phase 3 wherein school teams (coordinated by the Principal and including members of their multi-disciplinary team – Teachers, Resource Teachers, Special Ed. Technicians, Guidance Counsellors, Addiction Counsellors and other Student Services professionals) will take on a more active role in both providing appropriate grade level learning activities to their students and by supporting those students who were receiving their direct support prior to the shut-down.

More information to follow.

Clarifications

This week, teachers are being asked to contact their students to see how they are doing and to suggest that they engage in some of the learning activities available to them.

As of April 6th, school teams coordinated by the Principals, are asked to forward the learning activities provided by the MEES to their students and to help make any necessary accommodations.

Teachers are not being asked:

- to hold classes or carry out group lessons via Zoom or any other video conferencing software;
- to complete the curriculum for the year;
- to require the completion of assignment, nor to grade or mark student work.

For your Consideration

Please consider that our teachers and staff, like many of you, are:

- parents - home with their own children - trying to keep them occupied, safe and healthy;
- wives and husbands - with family issues of their own derived by the COVID-19 crisis;
- daughters and sons – some with elderly or sickly parents who need much attention.

Some may:

- have recently suffered the death of someone close to them – either here in Montreal or in another country, like Italy, where many have family and friends;
- have family members, including spouses or adult children, who have lost their job or who have had to close down their business, and are experiencing serious financial difficulties;
- have family members working in essential services roles – in hospitals, pharmacies, etc., which may be stressful.

The COVID-19 crisis has taken a toll on many members of the EMSB community and of our larger society. Your support for what our teachers, professionals and staff are able to provide in the next few weeks, given their own realities, would be much appreciated. Thank you!

ACCESS TO THE SCHOOL BUILDINGS & THE RETRIEVAL OF LEARNING TOOLS / MATERIALS

I recognize that some parents and employees wish to retrieve some items left at school. But *Santé Publique* has deemed our schools **closed** during the provincial shut down period - in effect until April 13th. Therefore, to be able to allow staff or parents to retrieve any items from the school buildings, requires strict health and safety protocols be put in place.

The EMSB will work this coming week to put such protocols – as outlined to us by *Santé Publique*, in place. When in place, Principals will inform their school communities.

➤ **Access will be by appointment only.**

Parents and staff will be asked to limit their requests to retrieve belongings from the school buildings to only the most ESSENTIAL of items. Requests for items not deemed essential will unfortunately, have to be denied.

Priority will be given to teachers and staff who need to retrieve materials and tools, like their laptop, to be able to contact students and provide them with support.

More info to follow.

IF URGENT HELP IS NEEDED

Students or parents who need urgent help for their child – urgent counselling or addiction services, etc., are encouraged to contact the school Principal by email. The Principal will work with the school board service Directors to see how we may be able to provide or connect you to the services that are needed.

Until my next communiqué:

Keep safe, stay healthy and be well!

(Don't forget to wash your hands often and practice social distancing.)

This Communiqué will be translated into French and posted on our website as soon as possible.
Thank you for your patience.