

May 5, 2020

Dear UCDSB Families,

This week is Education Week, and while it looks much different than usual, we want our students and families to continue to stay connected – to their learning and to each other. This week is also Mental Health Week. To acknowledge both these important events, we are encouraging you and your child to reach out to someone you haven't connected with recently, find out how they are doing and share one thing you've learned over the last month.

As we enter our seventh week of distant learning, be assured that we continue to evaluate our day-to-day operations and consider how we can continue to support the success and well-being of our students. We know you have questions, and while we don't have all the answers, we can clarify the following, which seem to be top of mind for many of our parents and students right now.

1. Can I get my child's personal items from school?

At this point, we are not permitted to let students or members of the public into our facilities. Some staff members have been allowed to enter our schools to get items they needed to work from home, which includes teaching from home. This access had to be approved by public health and had to be done under strict guidelines. Should we be able to secure permission [during the current Declaration of Emergency](#) to permit students and their families to access school buildings, then we will let you know immediately.

2. When will I be getting one of the iPads from the government?

The [partnership between Apple and Rogers](#) is a government-supported partnership, but it is not a government initiative, nor is it government funded. The UCDSB is looking into if iPads would meet the needs of our students, taking into consideration the online tools and teaching methods our teachers are using, as well as the availability of Rogers coverage for our students who indicated internet was an issue.

3. I've filled out the technology survey, when will I get my device?

We will be implementing our second phase of device distribution this week, which will be focused on our Grade 7- 8 students, and those in Grades 9-12 who did not pick up their device in phase one. The UCDSB expects to loan approximately 3,000 devices to students when the device distribution process is complete. If access to technology is a barrier for your child to participate in distance learning, then please contact your school principal who can arrange print materials to be made available.

4. Why are teachers taking attendance? Will my child be penalized for missing days?

Attendance is as much of a wellness check as it is tied to tracking distance learning participation. We understand that not all students will be able to participate fully in distance learning at all times.

5. Do students really need to participate in distance learning?

We do want our students to keep connected to their school and to their learning – to whatever

John McAllister
Chair



Stephen Sliwa
Director

extent is reasonable for them and their families during the pandemic. Maintaining routines is important for children and youth during a period of unexpected change and uncertainty. Making time for learning each day is important as it is an opportunity to practice and get better at skills that they have learned, to prepare for returning to their classroom once schools are re-opened, and to keep a good balance between work and play.

We know that you may have additional questions and [we encourage you to check our FAQ section](#) for the most up-to-date answers, or contact your teacher or principal.

Additional Distance Learning Resources

We've again updated our online [Learn At Home resources](#) with new activity menus, suitable for students from Kindergarten to Grade 8. These are supplemental to anything that may be provided by your child's teacher.

- [Kindergarten Activities](#)
- [Gr. 1-3 Math Activities](#)
- [Gr. 1-3 Literacy Activities](#)
- [Gr. 4-6 Math Activities](#)
- [Gr. 4-6 Literacy Activities](#)
- [Gr. 7-8 Math Activities](#)
- [Gr. 7-8 Literacy Activities](#)
- [Health and Physical Education](#)

Mental Health Resources

As this is Mental Health Week, we want to draw your attention to some resources that may be helpful for you or your child.

- [UCDSB Student Well-Being Resources](#)
- [Supporting Mental Health & Wellness During School Closure](#)
- [School Mental Health Ontario](#)
- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
- [Kids Help Phone](#)

Thank you for all you're doing during these very different times that currently define our lives. Remember, our school staff want to assist students with keeping engaged and connected during this time. We are only a phone call or an email away, so feel free to connect on any questions you may have.

Please accept my best wishes for keeping well and for staying safe!

Stephen Sliwa
Director of Education
Upper Canada District School Board

John McAllister
Chair

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