

November 3, 2020

Dear parents and legal guardians:

The Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) continues to follow public health guidelines to ensure the health and well-being of its students and staff. According to the latest guidelines announced last Friday by the Province of Manitoba, all DSFM schools in the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region are currently in the Restricted Level (Orange) as of November 2nd.

What does a Restricted Level (Orange) mean for a school?

- Schools remain open but must make efforts to achieve two metres of distancing between students in the classroom. Cohorts are required when this is not possible.
- Maximum use of school space, including the library and music room.
- Students with special needs will continue to receive their education at school.
- Students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 will have a temporary* right to receive remote learning if the school cannot achieve a two-meter physical distancing.
- Students Grades 7 and 8 will receive blended learning for the duration of the Restricted Level (Orange) if the school cannot achieve a two-metre physical distancing. Students will be at school every other day to allow for two metres of physical distancing.
- Students Grades 9 to 12 will receive blended learning for the remainder of the school year if the school cannot achieve a two-meter physical distancing. Students will be at school every other day to allow for two metres of physical distancing.

What you need to know:

- Blended learning for students Grades 7-12, when unable to achieve a two-meter physical distancing, will begin on Monday, November 9.
- Parent engagement is key to student success.
- It is important to consider the language dynamics of the child's environment. In our minority community, a francophone environment conducive to language development is not always possible at home.

The DSFM does its best to ensure a physical distancing of two meters is implemented in its schools as stipulated by Manitoba Education. Despite our efforts (removal of furniture, books, materials, use of alternative spaces except the gym), it is still impossible for us to guarantee a physical distancing of two metres due to lack of space. We have contacted Manitoba Education and they have given us approval to continue with the current system, which is one metre of physical distancing and cohorts.

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Parents

Participation will be recorded. Students may need to come to school (or elsewhere) for assessments and discussions with teachers and school administrators, as required.

Parents and caregivers will need to participate and provide support, which will vary depending on the student's age and ability to work independently. Under this approach, the parent or guardian will have to monitor the child's commitment and ensure that the work required is done properly.

Ability to Meet Needs

Despite all our recruitment efforts, the DSFM is facing a shortage of qualified teachers to meet the needs for substitutes, especially in times of pandemic. With yesterday's announcement by the Chief of public health in regards to the isolation of all members of a household when only one of its members is symptomatic, we are concerned about an increase of absenteeism.

"Public health officials are advising the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region that anyone who is symptomatic, or has a household member who is symptomatic, the entire household needs to self-isolate. The symptomatic individual needs to stay in their own room and, if possible, use their own bathroom and not use common areas."

In this respect, this new directive changes the situation and it is possible that many teaching staff cannot go to school and substitutes would have to be called.

While principals try their best to meet this challenge by exploring a variety of options available to them, the only option they have left may be to cancel the school day for students in a specific class.

Respectfully,



Alain Laberge
Superintendent

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