

January 12, 2021

Dear parents and legal guardians:

Let us begin by wishing you all a healthy and happy 2021.

The Division scolaire franco-manitobaine (DSFM) continues to work hand in hand with public health, always to ensure the health and well-being of its students and staff.

After a meeting with the administrators of Manitoba Education this afternoon, we received confirmation that the schools and school divisions were returning to the Restricted Level (Orange) as we knew it last November, starting on Monday, January 18, 2021.

What does a Restricted Level (Orange) mean?

- 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.
- Masks are optional for Kindergarten to Grade 3 students in the classroom.
- Masks are mandatory for all students on buses.
- 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 8 will have a temporary right to receive remote learning.
- 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.
- Since Collège Louis-Riel is a Grade 7 to 12 school, Grade 7 and 8 students will also receive blended learning.

What you need to know:

- Parent engagement is key to student success.
- It is important to consider the language dynamics of the child's environment.

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. That said, several of its classes can offer a distance of 1.5 metres. We have contacted Manitoba Education and they have given us approval to continue with the current system.

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Since we are returning to the education models of last November, data from the previous survey about learning preference will be used to establish class groups. It is important to remember and to understand that the DSFM hopes to offer all the available options, but in some cases may be limited in its ability to offer all options in a given school due to a shortage of staff as a direct result of this pandemic.

### **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.

Please note that while principals try their best to meet this challenge by exploring a variety of options available to them, there is a possibility that the only option left may be to cancel the school day for students in a specific class.

Respectfully,



Alain Laberge  
Superintendent

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