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To: Horizon Families and Staff
From: Kevin C. Garinger, Director of Education
Jim Hack, Board of Education Chair
Date: September 4, 2020
Re: School Start-Up

Good morning, Horizon families and staff.

We are so very excited to be welcoming students back to our classrooms in just a few short days! Our staff have been working tirelessly to prepare and to ensure the safety of students and families as we begin the new school year. I want to thank each and every teacher and staff member for their incredible work and planning contributions. As always, Horizon staff have gone far beyond our expectations in unprecedented circumstances, in support of Horizon students and communities. Their efforts have been nothing short of remarkable, and I invite our Horizon families to join me in thanking the teachers and staff members in your lives for their work these past weeks and months.

As we re-enter our classrooms, we know that the year ahead comes with new challenges and new practices within our schools. We know that health and safety are our number one concern, because a child learns best when they feel safe and cared for. As a Safe & Caring school division, Horizon has implemented several new practices, requirements, recommendations, and procedures to keep our students, staff and communities safe --- while delivering the full Saskatchewan curriculum for all students.

Below, I wish to provide you with information and reminders ahead of our first day of school on Tuesday, September 8.

Re-Entering School Plans

We have produced a short animation video to highlight the new practices that will be in place this fall. Our video can be found through the following link: <https://youtu.be/vOYDp1aoyyw>. I invite you to watch this video with your child(ren), as part of your conversations to prepare for the first day of school.

Reminder that our [Ready Reference for Re-Entry to Horizon Schools and our detailed Re-Entering Horizon Plan can be found on our website at horizonsd.ca](#). Within this plan, you will find our newly finalized [Illness in Care – COVID-19 Administrative Procedure \(AP 166.1\)](#). This AP details how we will respond if a student displays symptoms that may be attributed to COVID-19 while in school. Please take a moment to review this procedure, found on our website through the link above.

As our schools have shared, school-specific plans can now be found on [school websites](#) and social media accounts. I want to thank our school staff once again for their work and planning to put these documents together in a timely manner.

Please call the school for assistance, if required, to make an appointment.

Learning from Home

Horizon School Division will support all students in the full Saskatchewan curriculum who may choose our “Learning from Home” option. Horizon is in the process of hiring teachers dedicated to supporting students who choose this option to begin the coming school year.

“Learning from Home” is an alternative for students who are immunocompromised or otherwise require their teacher-led learning to occur away from the classroom. This option will be supported in the following ways:

GRADES K to 6

- “Learning from Home” students will connect to their local school and classroom in order to begin each day with their peers. Often classroom teachers begin the day with morning messages and welcoming activities. This synchronous opportunity may occur at additional times during the day when it makes sense to do.
- A Learning from Home Teacher will be assigned to each grade to support children through synchronous (face to face) and asynchronous (independent) learning opportunities.

GRADES 7 to 9

- Learning from Home will be supported primarily by the child’s local school, classroom teacher in a synchronous manner (face to face). The student will be a participant in the class.
- A Learning from Home teacher will be assigned to provide support for all Learning from Home students and their classroom teachers, as necessary.

GRADES 10 to 12

- Horizon will provide support to high school students who are Learning from Home through their full-service Online School.

Stay Home if Sick

As we return to classrooms, we will need to remain vigilant in our behaviours to stop the spread of COVID-19. This includes hand hygiene, social distancing, masking when we can not maintain social distance, and staying home when sick. I will once again remind you of the resources available at www.saskatchewan.ca/covid19, including a self-assessment tool to determine if you should seek a COVID-19 test.

There is a growing list of symptoms associated with COVID-19, and we hope to err on the side of caution when encountering any new instances of these symptoms. So, we ask that you keep your child home and consult HealthLine 811, or your family doctor, if your child is experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headache
- Muscle and/or joint aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Conjunctivitis
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite (difficulty feeding for children)
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing

Face Masks for Students and Staff

Our number one priority as educators and as an employer is to ensure the safety of our students and staff. As we have shared, Horizon will begin the year at Level 2 of the [Provincial Safe Schools Saskatchewan Plan](#). This means that masks will be required for Grade 4 – 12 students in hallways and common areas, when a social distance of 2 metres can not be maintained. We are also recommending masks for children in Kindergarten – Grade 3. Within our classrooms, we will be taking a number of precautions like spacing out desks as much as possible, ensuring students will be forward-facing, and keeping students within their designated cohort groups. These steps will largely limit the need for masks within classrooms.

Horizon has purchased reusable cloth masks for all students and staff, and we have also provided disposable masks for use as needed. We have asked families to include reusable masks in their child's school supplies. More information about children and masks can be found in the Government of Saskatchewan's [Safe Schools Parent Package](#).

Student Transportation

Horizon's bus drivers and Transportation Services team have been hard at work preparing new practices and safety protocols to ensure our bus students continue to get to school safely and on time.

These new practices include:

- All students will be required to wear masks on the bus.
- Family members will be seated together.
- Detailed seating plans will be kept and shared.
- Drivers will wear masks when loading and unloading students.

As always, for questions or concerns, please continue to use Horizon School Division's Communications Centre Hotline at **1-306-682-2558** (please ask for the Communications Centre). Please continue to visit www.horizonsd.ca for regular updates. A full history of our past communications regarding COVID-19 can be found on our website, [here](#).

On behalf of my office and our Board of Education, I hope you have a wonderful, safe Labour Day Weekend, and an even better school year.

Thank you,



Kevin C. Garinger, B. Ed, M.A. Ed
Director of Education/CEO
Horizon School Division No. 205



Jim Hack
Board of Education Chair
Horizon School Division No. 205