



Bluewater District School Board

351 1st Avenue North – PO Box 190

Chesley ON N0G 1L0

Telephone: (519) 363-2014 Fax: (519) 370-2909

www.bwdsb.on.ca

September 15, 2020

Dear Remote Learning Families:

This is a follow-up to last Friday's communication regarding the new requirement of opt out dates for elementary students participating in remote learning. As there have been a number of questions expressed, we wanted to share the rationale behind this decision.

As we had communicated, elementary students wishing to opt out of remote learning and return to in-person learning at school now have two deadline dates during the school year: Tuesday, September 22, 2020 at 9:00 a.m. and Friday, January 8, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Elementary students who have not opted out by these dates will remain in remote learning for the duration of the term. Secondary students who wish to opt out of remote learning will be able to do so at the end of each quadmester.

Like many other school boards in Ontario, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we are constantly adapting to an ever-changing situation that has required the need for revisions and shifts. More than ever, administrators and school staff have been required to adjust and readjust their planning. We continue to update our website with the most current information.

The decision for opt out dates supports our board's ability to determine staffing needs for both our remote and in-person schools to set them up for success. As is the case every year, we reorganize staffing and classes as needed following the September start-up. As it stands, we have been unable to hire enough teachers to staff our remote learning school despite our attempts to proactively advertise. To help reduce this shortage, we are in the process of reorganizing our in-person schools to ensure we have an appropriate balance for both (in-person and remote learning schools).

This was a difficult decision for our staff, and we understand the concerns expressed by our families. As much as we had originally hoped to offer more flexibility for our remote learning families, setting dates will allow students to have a full term of instruction, and receive a report card for that term. Each date aligns with a typical school year term and provides continuity of learning. In the long term, we believe that all students deserve the opportunity to join a program that supports stability of learning.

We apologize for the inconvenience and disruption that some of these changes have had on our families, who we know are managing many responsibilities and pressures during these challenging times. Our staff are working diligently to come up with solutions as we work through this process, and to ensure that once launched, our remote learning school will be a positive and engaging experience for all involved.

We remain committed to providing ongoing updates to our remote learning families. In addition to direct communications from our co-principals, we will continue to post information on our web page at https://www.bwdsb.on.ca/Parents/Remote_Learning and our new 'BWDSB Remote School' Facebook account at <https://www.facebook.com/bwdsbremoteschool>.

Our remote learning school co-principals are available to support you through this process, and you will be hearing more from them as the school year begins to take shape. You can also connect with them as follows:

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Lefebvre', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Keith Lefebvre – keith_lefebvre@bwdsb.on.ca

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'K. Whiteside'.

Karla Whiteside – karla_whiteside@bwdsb.on.ca