

Website Post: March 19, 2020

GYPSD SCHOOLS CLOSED TO STUDENTS

On March 17, the Alberta Government [declared a state of emergency under the *Public Health Act*](#).

The decision came two days after the provincial government canceled all classes indefinitely across Alberta. This means:

- All schools are closed to students starting March 16.
- All child-care and community programming that takes place within Grande Yellowhead Public School Division schools is canceled.
- School buses are canceled.

STAFF

In line with the decision of neighboring school jurisdictions, the Board of Trustees and Superintendent Lewis are implementing a work-from-home option to begin March 19, 2020.

Principals are coordinating with school staff to identify work that can be done from home. However, schools will remain open to staff who wish to remain at the site and a principal or delegate will be on site during the workday.

Critical staff will remain in our facilities. This decision aligns with [new public health measures](#) that include restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people.

Staff who are sick, including those with mild cold symptoms, are expected to stay home and follow all guidance from [Alberta Health Services](#).

GYPSD is committed to and values its employees. No staff will be losing their jobs, and contractors will continue to be paid so that they can maintain their crews.

STUDENTS' BELONGINGS

Schools have let families know when they are able to pick up students' belongings. This is a school-based decision. Pick-up times are staggered to ensure we're supporting safe social distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

STUDENT LEARNING

Instruction is going to change. Each school is looking into instructional alternatives for students after spring break. The Division uses G Suite, which offers Google Classroom to all teaching staff. In addition to Google Classroom, other communication tools include Google Docs, Gmail, and Google Hangouts. Teachers will be using the platform tools to deliver lessons and connect with students. Schools will be coordinating with families who do not have internet access to provide them with hard copies of learning materials.

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We know families have a lot of questions about student learning and we will share more information as it becomes available. The Alberta Government has confirmed:

- Every student will receive a final mark and students will progress to their next grade level for the next school year.
- Provincial assessments, such as provincial achievement tests, are canceled.
- At this time, diploma exams essential for post-secondary acceptance will continue.
- Every student who is eligible to graduate from Grade 12 this year will graduate.

FEES

We have received a number of questions about fees and refunds for the remainder of the year. We appreciate that during this time of uncertainty, families are looking for clarification and direction on all impacts of class cancellation. We are working on a Division solution right now for fee refunds and hope to have information to families after Spring Break. Thank you for your support, patience and understanding.

STAY UP TO DATE

School Messenger and the school website is an important way to stay connected with your school.

Our Division takes guidance from Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services and the Public Health Agency of Canada as the situation continues to evolve. All families are encouraged to stay updated on the latest information.

Here are credible sources on the coronavirus situation in Alberta:

- [Government of Alberta](#)
- [Alberta Health Services](#)

We know the situation has a significant impact on families, students and the larger community. There is nothing more important than the health, safety and well-being of our students, families and staff.

We have many unknowns at this time and are asking for everyone's patience, co-operation and understanding as we navigate this uncharted situation, together.