



## Gananoque Intermediate & Secondary School

175 William Street South, Gananoque, Ontario K7G 1S8

Phone: 613-382-4741 Fax: 855-376-4214

Trevor Holme, B.Sc., B.Ed. OCT Principal (acting)

Lesley Mackellar, B.Sc., B.Ed., OCT Vice Principal



April 14, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As you know, the coronavirus/COVID 19 pandemic has led the provincial Ministry of Education to announce that schools in Ontario will remain closed until at least May 4th.

Since our return from the March 2020 Spring Break, our school and school board has been proceeding with its "Learn At-Home" strategy for our students, in accordance with the direction provided by the Ministry of Education. Even though all school buildings are closed, our staff are making adjustments to the focus for teaching and learning to meet the three operational goals for all schools in the Upper Canada District School Board:

- Goal 1:** Getting each and every one of our secondary students across the finish line so that they can complete their semester;
- Goal 2:** Keeping elementary students engaged in their learning by assisting families with making connections to board-level and provincial resources, and;
- Goal 3:** Having all schools connect with each of our students, so to confirm that they know that we are here for them.

**Next steps:** Over the course of these first two weeks staff have been reaching out to students working to adapt course material and direction for distance learning. At the same time, our school staff understands that there are a great number of complex challenges being faced by families in our community, and as such we are employing a flexible approach. We will continue to work with you to address your concerns such as confirming the availability of digital tools for learning, finding an appropriate pace for your son/daughter to pursue the completion of their course-credits, accessing non-digital resources for students who cannot connect with internet resources, and to support any of our students who may require additional advice, guidance, or attention during this transition to learning at home. Please continue to reach out to your school Principal or to the school Board directly to share information about how we can support you best moving forward.

**Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting During School Closure:** The Ontario Ministry of Education has provided clarity regarding the assessment, evaluation and final report card for each student during this time of closure. School boards, schools and teachers must consider the learning that happened prior to closure of schools on March 13, 2020 when determining a student's achievement in a course or subject. The teacher may also consider any demonstrations of



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learning that they are able to gather during this time of closure. Marks will represent the most accurate reflection of student work, based on what is reasonable and in the best interest of the student during this time. Students who are unable to participate in distance learning will not be penalized in terms of their mid-term and final marks. However, these students will not benefit from continued learning in preparation for the future or from having greater evidence of learning to inform an improved final report card mark. We encourage our students to engage in the continued learning being offered to the extent that it is possible for them to do so.

The Ministry of Education has provided the following guidance regarding the amount of time per week secondary students should engage in learning activities:

<b><u>9-12</u></b>
3 hours/week per course

Teachers will assign learning tasks at the beginning of each week, providing students and families with the flexibility to schedule time for schoolwork in the manner that works best for them in consideration of the many needs and priorities in individual households.

**A Special Word About Supporting our Grade 12 Graduating Students:** It is important that I highlight for you (and, for our graduating students in Grade 12 courses) how the Ministry of Education, our school board and our school will continue to prioritize and support students who are on track to graduate. In order to meet admission requirements for post-secondary education, *graduating students will be receiving mid-term marks by April 23<sup>rd</sup>*. These mid-term marks will be comprised of any evidence of learning submitted prior to March 13<sup>th</sup> and any further evidence of learning submitted to the teacher since that time that benefits and is in the best interest of the learner. These mid-term marks will be submitted to colleges and universities in the usual manner as part of the annual admissions process.

As well, the graduation requirement to complete 40 hours of community involvement is suspended for this school year for any graduating student. Community involvement hours that have already been completed will be recorded on the report cards of graduating students

**Reporting on Student Achievement – Final Report Cards:** All secondary students will receive a final report card which will be issued at the end of Semester 2. As we build towards this outcome, I want to highlight that our teachers will continue to provide feedback and assess student work while we follow our new distance learning strategy. We also want our students to understand that their continued investment in learning comes with important benefits. First, improvement in a student’s overall final mark can be achieved through the distance learning focus. Given the unique circumstances that our students face at this time, staff will only count learning activities as part of a student’s final mark



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in any course when it lends itself to improving a student's overall grade. As well, we do need to prepare for the next level of learning beyond this semester of study and so, our current focus on distance learning will provide background and experiences that support student learning for next Fall.

Please reach out to your child's teacher, to Student Services staff or to the school's administration about any questions that you have as your child seeks to settle into their learning and as you try to understand how you can support their efforts. We are all experiencing change in a range of daily routines due to the pandemic and I know that we will find comfort and success if we all work together, whenever we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Trevor Holme", written in a cursive style.

Trevor Holme

Principal (acting)

CC:

Area Superintendent of Schools;  
Chair, School Council.