

## NEWS RELEASE

February 14, 2021

### All District K-12 Schools to Switch to Online Instruction

In-school classes are suspended at all schools under the jurisdiction of the Newfoundland and Labrador English School Board, effective Monday, Feb. 15 until at least Friday, Feb. 26, inclusive. This decision was made in consultation with the Provincial Government and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, as part of province-wide efforts to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. All in-school classes in the Avalon Region were suspended last week.

During this two-week “circuit breaker”, school administrators will only be allowing the retrieval of a student’s personal technology device left at the school, or essential items required for health and safety (e.g., medications, medical equipment). Other personal items cannot be retrieved at this time.

Central, Western and Labrador teaching staff will begin online instruction as follows:

- High School and Intermediate grades begin online classes no later than Wednesday, Feb. 17.
- Primary and Elementary grades begin online classes no later than Thursday, Feb. 18.

For the Avalon Region, excluding St. John’s Metro, as previously communicated:

- High School and Intermediate online classes begin no later than Monday, Feb. 15.
- Primary and Elementary classes begin no later than Tuesday, February 16.

For St. John’s Metro schools:

- High School and Intermediate schools have already begun implementing online classes.
- Primary and Elementary grades begin online classes no later than Monday, Feb. 15.

All sessions will adhere to the Scenario 3 [Protocols for Online Learning](#) for different grade groupings.

**Students and families are reminded that most personal laptops, tablets, desktop computers and smartphones can be used for online learning. You do not need a Chromebook for online learning. If you have a compatible device, please do not request a Chromebook from the school at this time.**

District Student Services staff will be working with schools this week to prepare for the learning needs of students with complex needs. Further information will be provided to families as it becomes available.

“I have every confidence in our school-based leadership and the District personnel who support them to switch to an online teaching and learning environment,” said Goronwy Price, Chair of the Board of Trustees. “We have anticipated this, and devoted months of preparation for this scenario. There will, however, need to be adjustments based on the move to Alert Level 5 and the emergence of the Covid-19 variant. I thank our District staff and school leadership for working diligently to make this as smooth a transition as possible for our more than 250 school communities.”

**Please see the Backgrounder below. More information will be provided, as it is available, in the days ahead.**

“We know there will be challenges. We know families have individual circumstances which raise concerns,” said Tony Stack, CEO/Direction of Education. “We may not have immediate solutions to every individual’s concern in the early days, but we are committed to working through these issues as quickly as possible. I ask that everyone be patient and understanding as school and District personnel tackle this unfortunate turn of events.”

The District will continue to work closely with the Department of Education, our educational partners, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Public Health officials in the various regions of the province, to adhere to the recommendations and advice provided - which is ever-evolving and sometimes adjusted day-to-day or even hour-to-hour.

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What devices can I use for online learning?**

Most personal laptops, tablets, desktop computers and smartphones can be used for online learning. **You do not need a Chromebook for online learning.** If you have a compatible device, please do not request a Chromebook from the school at this time.

#### **What if I don't have a compatible device?**

The District has a variety of devices available for distribution to families who don't have their own compatible device at home. Schools have compiled lists of families in this situation, and will be reaching out in the coming days. If you believe you are not on these lists, but should be, alert your school administrator by email.

#### **What if I don't have reliable internet at home?**

In May 2020 NLESD distributed "MiFi" devices to the majority of homes with identified internet connectivity issues. If you haven't received a device and have connectivity issues, alert your school administrator by email.

#### **How does online learning compare with in-class instruction?**

It is not expected, nor is it encouraged, for students to sit at their computer for the entire school day and listen to teacher lectures. Lessons are designed to provide daily, meaningful interaction between students and their teachers while also allowing time for individual work. Instruction time ranges from 60 to 90 minutes per day for grades K-6 to the normal PowerSchool schedule for Grades 7-12.

#### **How do I help my young child access online learning?**

The District has information posted online to assist families here: [Google Resources for School Communities](#). If you still have questions, you may contact your child's teacher.

#### **When can I collect personal items from the school?**

During this two-week "circuit breaker", school administrators will only be allowing the retrieval of a student's personal technology device left at the school, or essential items required for health and safety (e.g., medications, medical equipment). Other personal items cannot be retrieved at this time.