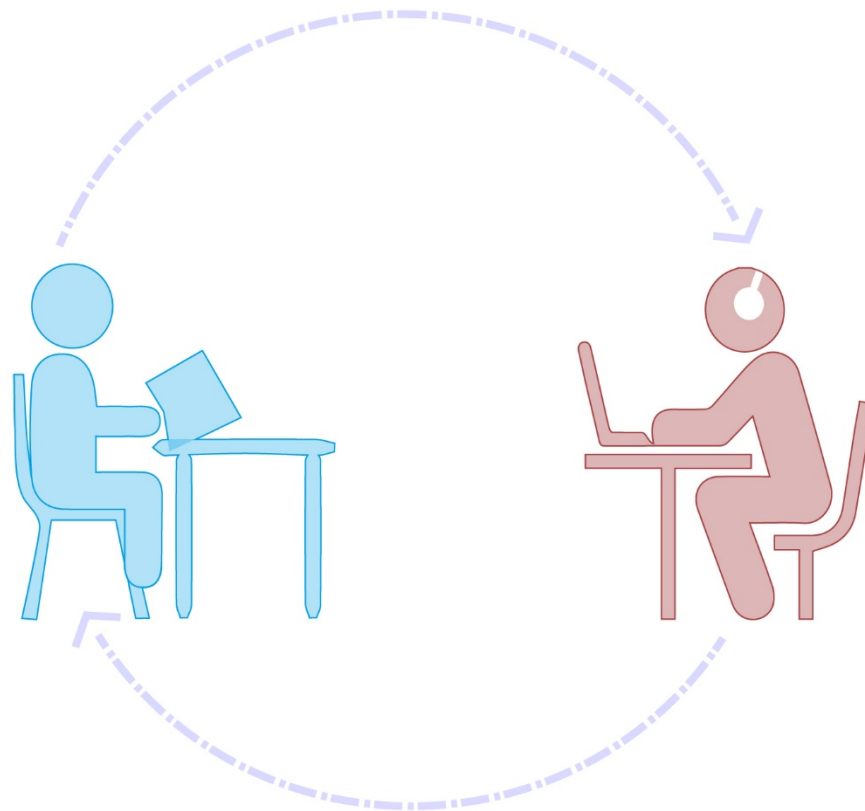


TORONTO CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

TRANSITION TO DISTANCE LEARNING PLAN

Transforming the world through witness, faith, innovation & action.



OCTOBER 2020

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INTRODUCTION

TCDSB recognizes that during the COVID-19 pandemic the schools need to be prepared to seamlessly transition to distance learning in response to health and safety issues. This has the potential to impact specific classes, schools, or the entire system for undetermined periods of time.

This plan specifically focuses on the process of transitioning from in person learning to distance learning and does not relate to the operation of the already established virtual school. The plan outlines roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders to ensure a smooth transition and provide a clear plan that students, parents and staff can understand and support. The health and safety of students and staff remain our primary focus. TCDSB continues to follow the guidance of Toronto Public Health.

The TCDSB Transition to Distance Learning Plan focuses on three key components:

PREPARING – What tasks and actions need to be completed before there is a need to transition to distance learning.

INITIATING – What steps will be taken to ensure a structured and systematic process during transition.

REVIEWING – Following a return from distance learning, how we will review and reflect on the experience in order to improve our practices.

PREPARING FOR DISTANCE LEARNING

Preparedness is the most important part of an effective transition from in-person to distance learning. Several steps will be taken by local and central staff to ensure a seamless transition to distance learning regardless of the scope and context of the closure.

School Principals will:

- ✓ Ensure all teachers have Brightspace or Google Classrooms setup
- ✓ Collect a list of all Brightspace and Google classroom codes/names
- ✓ Elementary Form [link](#)
- ✓ Secondary Form found [link](#). (Note: Form can be used by whole school or a school department)
- ✓ Review PPM 164 guidelines with staff to outline the expectations of virtual learning requirements [PPM 164](#)
- ✓ Ensure teachers are updating online classrooms regularly
- ✓ Encourage the practice and use of Brightspace and Google regularly during face-to-face learning
- ✓ Ensure teachers can reset student passwords using Roster Manager <https://rostermanager.tcdsb.org/>
- ✓ Ensure an inventory of school computers/devices is up to date
- ✓ Ensure access for staff and administrators of prevalent medical condition forms

Administrative Staff/Office Staff will:

- ✓ Prepare electronic contact lists for each classroom's folder
- ✓ Confirm appropriate staff have access to the necessary platforms from home (School Messenger, SEMS and SAP)
- ✓ Ensure a virtual ready workplace is available at home to perform the duties associated with your role

Teachers and Designated Early Child Educators (DECE) will:

- ✓ Continue professional development on Brightspace or Google, as a follow up to the PD offered during the first week of September [link](#). For more professional learning on Google, Brightspace, Google Meet please click on the link provided [link](#)
- ✓ All teachers responsible for curriculum and in class student support are expected to engage in ongoing learning and support for students virtually (this includes itinerant, special education and clinical staff)
- ✓ Timetables will remain intact throughout the virtual learning period to allow for synchronous delivery of itinerant subjects (coordinated between home room and itinerant teachers)
- ✓ Engage in practice sessions on Zoom and/or Google meet with students following the proper protocols [link](#)
- ✓ Consider how each lesson can be delivered following PPM 164 guidelines [PPM 164](#)
- ✓ Ensure that students can complete a homework assignment using Brightspace or Google from home as practice
- ✓ Canvas the students in the class to understand and determine technological needs/capacity of each family/home to transition to virtual learning and review any identified issues with the school Principal.
- ✓ Have a copy of lesson plans and/or other learning materials/resources at home to ensure continuity of lessons
- ✓ Ensure internet, personal computer, and software are working at home
- ✓ Provide access to “virtual classroom” (Brightspace or Google) to; all itinerant staff with teaching responsibilities, a grade level colleague and Principal
- ✓ Be able to reset student passwords with [Roster Manager](#)
- ✓ Provide the school Principal with an electronic version of an emergency supply folder containing all required information in order to ensure an Occasional Teacher can seamlessly cover the assignment in event of an absence. Post class assignments, reference material, announcements and other class work at least weekly on the virtual classroom during the in-person model of instruction to promote continuity of learning
- ✓ Engage parents and support their ability to login and review updates, resources, and classwork
- ✓ Include daily opening exercise routines such as welcome, prayer, Land Acknowledgement, O Canada, and attendance

Students and Parents should:

- ✓ Ensure access to a working device and internet at home (contact school if support required)
- ✓ Login to Brightspace or Google classroom regularly
- ✓ Develop contingency plans for childcare and supervision at home

- ✓ Update contact information, including email, at the school
- ✓ Ensure you know the teacher's name and contact information
- ✓ Ensure you are receiving communication (email, School Messenger) from the TCDSB
- ✓ Login to [School Messenger](#) to verify your contact information. If you require assistance updating, please email your school for assistance

ICT Services will:

- ✓ Deploy extra technicians to schools to support the distribution of devices when transitioning multiple classes or a whole school to distance learning
- ✓ Ensure disinfection of devices before distribution
- ✓ Support school principals to update school device inventory records
- ✓ Prepare a small inventory of Chromebooks and LTE enabled iPads for students where there is insufficient inventory at the local school
- ✓ Have an inventory tracking process and distribution process for student devices that can be used by the school
- ✓ Ensure all students are provisioned with student accounts
- ✓ Ensure automatic integrations are working between the Student Systems, Google, and Brightspace
- ✓ In the event of full system wide closure, develop a student device request and order fulfillment process

Toronto School Transportation Group (TSTG) will:

- ✓ Advise bus operators and TDSB (if applicable) of positive case affecting bus routes
- ✓ Provide, if required, seating charts for previous 3 days with confirmation of student attendance on each day
- ✓ Provide driver name and contact information for each bus route on each day
- ✓ Support school bus operators to ensure bus(es) undergo deep cleaning and alternate drivers (if necessary) are found to deliver the service
- ✓ Communicate with impacted school communities where appropriate

The Special Education Department will:

- ✓ Ensure all students requiring special education support are included in all aspects of distance learning plans
- ✓ Ensure that Special Education Resource teachers are prepared to provide ongoing support to special education students via their Brightspace or Google Platform
- ✓ School based support team members will be prepared to continue their support of staff and students through a virtual platform

- ✓ Special education programming and support will be prepared to continue virtually using appropriate learning platform
- ✓ IPRC and Assessment protocols will be adapted where feasible, with consideration for the integrity of the process. Meeting agendas will be revised as required
- ✓ Individual Education Plans (IEP) will include appropriate accommodations to reflect a potential return to distance learning
- ✓ Preparations to liaise with outside agencies supporting special needs students to review/adapt/cancel provision of services as appropriate
- ✓ Ensure relevant Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment to support distance learning is prepared to go home with students
- ✓ Special Services staff will support teachers with adapting learning platforms to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) and Blind and Low Vision (BLV) students.
- ✓ SEA funded Assistive Technology staff will continue to support classroom teachers and support staff in the adaptation to distance learning
- ✓ ECPP teaching and support staff will work with agency and hospital treatment partner staff to ensure a fluid continuation of service to students in these programs
- ✓ Provide families with ongoing supports and resources to address issues emerging from the transition to distance learning
- ✓ Will continue to support families through ongoing assessments, communications and support of the school
- ✓ Promote a mentally healthy return to distance learning mental health resources will be prepared to be shared with parents through school messenger
- ✓ Clinical staff will be prepared to continue to support families through ongoing assessments, communications and support of the school through a virtual platform

The Communications Department will:

- ✓ Continue to remind parents/guardians to update contact information via weekly wrap up, weekly updates via school messenger and social media
- ✓ Keep FAQs updated on the TCDSB website as needed with information related to Transition to Distance Learning Plan.
- ✓ Develop template letters that include information about why the move is happening, timeframe, and flag for parents/guardians some key items such devices, internet, childcare, etc. The letters will be used in the event of:
 - A class/cohort being moved to online learning
 - An entire school being moved to online learning
- ✓ Share templates with school administrators and senior staff
- ✓ The [COVID-19 Advisory page](#) on the TCDSB website is updated as soon as Toronto Public Health provides confirmation of a new case

INITIATING DISTANCE LEARNING

The following is a step-by-step process to transition a class, school or all schools to distance learning. This process assumes all the above preparation tasks are completed.

Step 1: Reporting a Case of COVID-19

The process to initiate a transition to distance learning starts when a school first learns about a **confirmed** case of COVID-19 affecting a school staff member or student registered at the school.

To ensure cases are tracked effectively and the exposure and risk to the community is well understood, the following will be completed by various groups.

The Principal will:

- ✓ Notify TCDSB OHS Department and Area Superintendent
- ✓ Notify Toronto Public Health
- ✓ Notify the Ministry of Education using online COVID Reporting Tool

The TCDSB Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Department will:

- ✓ Inform Director's Council and Communications about the positive case
- ✓ Work with the Principal, Area Superintendent, and Toronto Public Health to pinpoint the exposure and risk to the school community.
- ✓ Notify TSTG, if the student uses school bus transportation

Toronto Public Health (TPH) will investigate the confirmed case and make the final determination on which staff and students are required to self-isolate.

The Communications Department will post the relevant information on the COVID-19 Advisory section on the TCDSB website and support the school principal in sending relevant communications to the school community.

A detailed step-by-step report protocol for schools can be found online [link](#)

Step 2: Transitioning to Distance Learning

Once the Principal has reported a positive case and Toronto Public Health (TPH) has determined a class will be required to self-isolate, steps must be taken to move classes to online learning for the duration of the TPH determined isolation period.

Under the following conditions the transition to Distance Learning will be initiated:

SCENARIO 1 – *INDIVIDUAL COHORTS*

A student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19 and TPH directs that some/all students and staff associated with that cohort self-isolate for a predetermined amount of time.

SCENARIO 2 – *MULTIPLE COHORTS/TPH CLOSURE*

TPH determines that multiple cohorts at one site are required to self-isolate. TPH will determine next steps and guide the TCDSB response.

SCENARIO 3 – *SCHOOL OR SYSTEM-WIDE CLOSURE (OTHER REASONS)*

Where local conditions warrant a response, all decisions will be made with student and staff safety as the top priority. The decision to close schools will be made by the Director of Education, Toronto Public Health, or the Ministry of Education. Considerations will include, but not be limited to, enrolment, staffing, and other available resources.

The process and Director's authority of Emergency School Closure is described under TCDSB Policy A. 16. [link](#)

Step 3: Communication

The TCDSB is committed to providing stakeholders with timely communication about the transition to distance learning. Throughout the transition, communication will be primarily managed by the Principal and the Area Superintendent.

The Principal will:

- ✓ Communicate to local staff the decision of Toronto Public Health to transition to distance learning
- ✓ Send the TPH communication of isolation details via email and phone call to all affected parents via School messenger
- ✓ Update the school's voicemail where appropriate
- ✓ Inform TSTG (Transportation Group) of class or school closures
- ✓ Inform Environmental Support Services about class or school closures
- ✓ Inform ICT Services about class or school closures

The Area Superintendent will:

- ✓ Inform Director's Council/EOC of any classes that need to transition to distance learning
- ✓ Inform Special Services as needed
- ✓ Inform the Communications department about class or school closures
- ✓ Update the local Trustee of decisions and plans

The Communication department will:

- ✓ Review communications from TPH prior to release to the TCDSB and/or school community
- ✓ Provide on-going communication support to the Principal and area Superintendent to ensure communication remains timely, clear, and targets the correct stakeholders.
- ✓ In the event of a system-wide closure, communication to parents would come from the TCDSB Communications Department

Step 4: Continuity of Learning

To ensure continuity of learning and an effective transition, the following will take place within the first few days of distance learning:

Teachers will:

- ✓ Ensure all students can login to the learning management platform and provide new passwords to students who cannot
- ✓ Coordinate virtual timetable with itinerant, special education and clinical staff connected to their classes
- ✓ Hold first synchronous learning session and ensure students have the required resources to continue
- ✓ Call any students who are not able to connect and determine their needs
- ✓ Inform Principals of any students who may need a device and are not able source one on their own
- ✓ Inform Principals of any other concerns with individual students such as mental health, family situations, and other relevant matters that can significantly affect the student's ability to participate in distance learning
- ✓ Upon notification of an isolation period, teacher will conduct a check and connect with every family to ensure that the learning platform is operational

Principals will:

- ✓ Ensure all teachers have started online synchronous learning lessons and support any teachers as needed
- ✓ Work with ICT Services to prepare school computers for distribution to families
- ✓ Review students needing technology and inform them of how and when technology will be made available to them
- ✓ Inform Special Services /Clinical staff of any students who may need support
- ✓ Ensure office staff are online and able to support school operations
- ✓ Visit classes virtually through Zoom, Google Meet and participate in lessons to maintain a connection to the school community

Area Superintendents will:

- ✓ Support staff and families through transition process, responding to concerns and needs that arise
- ✓ Problem solve issues in collaboration with appropriate TCDSB departments or other senior staff where necessary
- ✓ Provide ongoing updates to local Trustee

In the event of an extended system-wide closure, ICT Services will also initiate a process to order additional student devices, where feasible, to help bolster device inventories at the local school. Under this scenario, devices will continue to be distributed by school staff to students but tracked in central database.

Step 5: Preparing for Return

In preparation for the safe return of students and staff to the physical school, the following tasks will be complete:

Environmental Support Services will:

- ✓ Perform enhanced cleaning and disinfection of all affected area, high-touch surfaces, and classrooms
- ✓ Review and restock PPE and sanitizer
- ✓ Review and restock custodial cleaning supplies

The Principal will:

- ✓ Provide an update to parents and students at least once during the closure on preparedness of the school for return
- ✓ Work with ICT Services to plan for the return of loaned computers to school

Toronto School Transportation Group will:

- ✓ Work with school bus operators to ensure bus(es) undergo deep cleaning and alternate drivers (if necessary) are found to resume services
- ✓ Communicate with school bus user about any changes and plans to resume services
- ✓ Review safety procedures with bus operators to determine if any improvements should be made to improve staff and student safety

Step 6: Return to In-Person learning

At the end of the prescribed isolation period, the class or school will return to in person learning. To ensure a smooth transition, the following should be completed.

The Principal will:

- ✓ Ensure staff, students, and parents are informed of return date prior to the scheduled return to in-person learning
- ✓ Update school voicemail
- ✓ Inform TSTG of return date
- ✓ Review and update the Area Superintendent of any issues arising from the return to in person learning.

The Area Superintendent will:

- ✓ Inform Director's Council/EOC of any challenges with the reopening
- ✓ Inform the Communications department of the return to school
- ✓ Update the local Trustee of decisions and plans

REVIEWING THE TRANSITION TO DISTANCE LEARNING PROCESS

The TCDSB will engage in a review process following the transition of a class and or school to and from distance learning to provide insight and feedback as to how the process was successful and where improvements could be considered.

The feedback should be documented and reviewed with relevant staff to ensure that protocols can be improved and that the Transition to Distance Learning plan can be updated.

Following the transition of a cohort back to in person learning, the Area Superintendent will meet with the school Principal to review. During the meeting the following items may be discussed and noted:

- Issues or concerns with preparation of the school, staff, or virtual classroom
- Concerns raised by students, staff, or parents
- The effectiveness and timing of communications to students, parents and staff
- Communication and processes with other stakeholders such as TPH
- Other major issues encountered and how they were handled
- Suggested process improvements should be discussed

The information above should be noted by the area Superintendent and reported to Education Council where appropriate. Common themes and issues among area Superintendents may be reviewed at Director's Council/EOC in order to adapt the process and/or make improvements to the plan.

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