IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ALL ADSB PARENTS  
re CONTINUITY OF LEARNING

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation during our current public health crisis and for respecting the need to maintain emergency measures such as self-isolation, physical distancing and staying home, except for essential outings. Our collective efforts protect not only ourselves and our loved ones, but our entire communities and we extend our thanks and support to healthcare workers across the Algoma district.

Tuesday afternoon, Premier Doug Ford and Minister Lecce announced an extension to the closure of schools until May 1st for staff and May 4th for students, noting that the decision will be re-evaluated based on public health advice. We have been working to establish plans for the continuity of learning and would like to share some important information with you. We apologize for the length of this information, but wanted it to be as comprehensive as possible.

Technology/Internet Access

First, thank you to all those who were able to complete our survey about internet access and technology, as this will greatly reduce the number of phone calls we will have to make. Staff have been following up with families who did not/were not able to respond to get the information we need. As you can imagine, this is a big undertaking and we are moving as quickly as we can to determine needs and how we can best provide learning materials for ALL learners. More information about this will be coming over the next week, but we will be prioritizing the access of technology to students, considering factors such as grade (graduating students will be first priority), special education needs and students who have no access to a computer at home. It is important to note that not all technology in schools is of a portable nature. Based on program and feedback from parents, we will not be deploying any technology to students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, as technology is not essential for learning at this age. Parents are welcome to encourage computer use at home, however, the learning materials from teachers will not require computer time. Many parents shared their concern about “screen time,” particularly for young children and want to encourage learning tasks that are not dependent on a computer for these age groups.

For those students/families without internet access or with limited access, we acknowledge this is a real and difficult challenge in some geographical areas. We remain committed to communicating with you and to establishing a way to get materials to you. These efforts will continue and will evolve over the next week or so, but please know we are exploring every possible avenue to make this happen, including the delivery of packages via volunteers, school buses, mail or courier, as well as working with internet providers to help us find a reasonable solution.
Parents, if you have specific questions and have technology access, please email your child’s teacher and if you do not have email access, please call the school and leave a message as messages are being checked regularly. (Please be sure to include your name, your question and a call back number.)

**Edsby**

For parents with access, Edsby will remain our platform for educator use and school communication, as it is already available in our system and links to both the school and ADSB website. We encourage parents to ensure the school has your email address so that you can accept the Edsby invite and to access this tool which will support communication during this time. We will continue working with schools to use this secure tool which is supported by our I/T staff, to promote parent engagement.

**Continuity of Learning**

We will be respecting the following suggested minimum hours of work for students, outlined by the Ministry, recognizing some additional time may be needed, depending on communication method and student needs:

- **K-3** 5 hours of work per student per week, focus on literacy and numeracy
- **4-6** 5 hours of work per student per week, focus on literacy and math + science and social studies
- **7-8** 10 hours of work per student per week, focus on core math, literacy, science and social studies
- **9-12** 3 hours of work per course per week for semestered students; 1.5 hours of work per course per week for non-semestered students; focus on achieving credits/completion /graduation.

The hours refer to the approximate amount of time *students* would spend on the work assigned by teachers. Teacher work would include preparation of assigned work and providing feedback or assessment. Staff engagement with students is expected, but will vary depending on circumstances and could include a range of ways that teachers and/or support staff would connect with students.

We recognize that “learning at home” and “working at home” pose a variety of challenges for children, parents, families and staff. It may take a little time to establish a definite “rhythm” to this learning method, so please work with us as we adjust plans as needed.
We are committed to ensuring that first and foremost, there is a teacher connection and communication with students to continue their learning. To support this commitment, we have prioritized curriculum content based on the fundamental concepts at each grade level, so our staff will be focusing on and reinforcing these fundamental learning concepts. This approach, while keeping key learning concepts at the forefront, will support our staff in adapting wherever they were in their teaching prior to March Break.

**Final Report Cards for Elementary Students**

The Ministry has advised that final report cards are required for all elementary students, however, teachers will use assessment for learning (formative assessment) to gather evidence of how students are progressing in their learning and provide feedback to their students to support their continuous and ongoing learning.

In determining final grades and marks for the final report card, teachers will use the evaluation information gathered **before March 13th**. When in the best interest of students, teachers will include evidence of learning completed during the school closure period in their determination of final grades. Reporting on Learning Skills and Work Habits will also reflect information gathered prior to March 13th. Teachers may choose to include comments on the final report card if they feel that doing so would support the student’s progress.

The Kindergarten Communication of Learning will be based on teachers’ observations of key learning and growth in learning **prior to March 13th**. Teachers may choose to include comments on growth in learning demonstrated during the school closure period when it is to the child’s benefit.

**Secondary Mid-Term Report Cards**

The Ministry advised that the requirement to issue mid-year (March/April) report cards for all secondary students, including graduating students, **is suspended** for this school year. Be assured that the Ministry of Education is continuing to work with the post secondary sector, including OUAC and OCAS to support the admissions process and transition to post-secondary.

**Mid-Year Marks for Grade 12 Graduating Students**

Last evening, the Ministry advised that, as a result of further discussion and collaboration with Ontario Universities’ Application Centre (OUAC), Boards can submit marks for graduating students between April 23rd and May 1st. The Ministry is continuing to collaborate with the college sector and will provide an update regarding marks to the Ontario College Application Service (OCAS) next week.
The Ministry has also advised that, “in determining mid-year marks for the admissions process, teachers may use evidence that reflects work completed prior to the school closure period, as well as provide opportunity for students to submit a missed and/or additional assignment to demonstrate their learning. Teachers can adjust the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a mark, if needed. Marks should represent the most accurate reflection of student work, based on what is reasonable and in the best interest of students during this time. In alignment with Growing Success, teachers will use their knowledge of curriculum expectations, context, evidence of learning, and methods of instruction and assessment to support their students in the current context.” We will be working with our teachers to implement these recommendations.

**Civics and Citizenship and Career Studies Half-Credit Courses**

For students currently enrolled in Civics and Citizenship and Career Studies half-credit courses, their final mark for the half-credit course underway at the time of school closures will be based on work completed as of March 13th. Where appropriate, teachers may adjust this mark in the best interest of students to be a more accurate reflection of their learning. Students are not required to complete any further culminating assignment for this course. On April 6th, students will begin work on the other half-credit course.

**Final Report Cards for Secondary Students**

The Ministry has advised that final report cards are required for all secondary students, therefore teachers will assign learning tasks, projects and culminating activities for both formative and summative purposes. Teachers will communicate results of these marked assignments to students. Results will be used by teachers to inform students’ final course marks. In keeping with the understanding that marks are to represent the most accurate reflection of student work, based on what is reasonable and in the best interest of students during this time, and in recognition of performance prior to March 13th, teachers can adjust the weighting of assigned tasks in their determination of a final mark as needed.

Reporting on Learning Skills and Work Habits will reflect information gathered prior to March 13th and teachers will include comments on the final report card.

We thank you for your continued support, patience and cooperation during these difficult times. We will make every effort to provide continuity of learning, understanding that everyone’s lives have changed dramatically. Let’s continue to take care of ourselves and each other by respecting emergency measures and remember to thank, at every opportunity, our healthcare workers. We will communicate again once we have further information to share.