

Memo #2

Date: September 24, 2020

To: Members

Re: **Cleaning; PPE and Enhanced Cleaning; Students at Home (Self-Isolating); Brightspace vs Google Classroom**

Cleaning

In our current pandemic work environment, we have been fielding many questions around who is responsible for cleaning different items within the classroom/school.

Teachers are not required to clean their classroom, nor should they be asked to clean their classroom. However, disinfectant wipes have been provided to schools. The initial purpose for the wipes was for Special Education rooms and Kindergarten classrooms, but teachers should be able to ask their principal for wipes for their class, based on need.

Manipulatives: the advice the Board is providing is that manipulatives should be set up in bins for rotational use. After use they are to be “washed” at the end of the day or use using unscented liquid dish detergent – supplied by the school/Board – and taken out of circulation for 72 hours.

For urgent or immediate turn around, teachers are to use disinfectant wipes.

Cleaning of manipulatives has never been a custodial role. Therefore, if teachers are not comfortable cleaning or washing manipulatives, they can choose not to use manipulatives.

PPE and Enhanced Cleaning

Masks are the only mandatory PPE item that is required to be worn. **You must use board supplied equipment** (this question would be asked on any WSIB claim), not equipment bought on your own – this includes face masks, face shields etc. If you require a medical accommodation, please contact the Unit Office.

If you feel you want to wear a face shield, supplies are available for you to do so. You will not be denied any equipment. The direction – currently – is that if you cannot maintain the 2m social distancing guideline, you are encouraged to wear the face shield.

Disinfectant wipes are supposed to be available for all employees. If this is not occurring, please contact the Unit Office.

The Board has purchased and is using disinfectant sprayers as part of their enhanced cleaning process. They are to be used after staff and students have left the building. They use the same chemicals previously used for cleaning – diluted in a bucket. They are spray onto a surface and then are wiped down.

Students at Home (Self-Isolating)

This year we will be experiencing more students absent than we have ever experienced before, and for a longer duration, and with that comes the added responsibility of providing work for those students.

In the past, if a student was absent for a day or two, they could be expected to catch up upon their return to school. Now we are experiencing – or will be experiencing – students who are self-isolating or waiting Covid test results. We know that test results are taking longer – depending on the region – ranging from 4-10 days.

While students are self-isolating/in quarantine, teachers should be providing schoolwork for them to keep them “up-to-date”. This schoolwork is not meant to replace the quality or quantity of schoolwork the student would have experienced if they were in the classroom.

There is a realization that if students are off for a full two weeks, they may miss some important sections/strands, which may result in gaps in reporting. We have the ability to identify on report cards that there is not enough information to provide a mark/comment.

Provide meaningful work for the student based on their ability, age and independence. We suggest keeping it simple, as we are all extremely busy and filled with anxiety and stress, and we don't need to be adding more stress/anxiety/workload. Teachers could use their Google classroom to send work back and forth, but that is not a requirement – it is based on familiarity and comfort level.

Please know the following: (based upon the Board Reopening Plan with direction from SMDHU)

If the school screening directs a student to get a test and self-isolate, the parents can take that direction or just return after symptoms subside. In absence of a test, they must self-isolate for 14 days from the onset of symptoms and symptoms need to be improving over a 72-hour span – so the 14 days do not need to expire. In absence of the first two, they would need a note from a medical practitioner validating that although symptoms are present, it is not COVID-19. They could return within the 14 days two ways without a test.

The Board (school) cannot demand a parent obtain a Covid test for their child(ren), nor can they demand receipt of a Covid test before the student(s) return.

If a sibling of a child sent home with possible Covid symptoms does not have to go home if they are without symptoms. The parents are told to self-monitor the other child, and if they are without symptoms they can remain/return to school.

Brightspace (D2L) vs. Google Classroom

We are hearing that some principals are being proactive by informing teachers to prepare for movement to full online teaching/learning. Currently the Board is not preparing to move to full online teaching/learning, but with the recent spike in Covid cases in Ontario, some principals may feel this is going to happen sooner rather than later.

Adding to an already stressful situation, principals are also informing their teachers to be prepared to use Brightspace for online teaching. We have discussed this with the Board, and the direction to move to online and mandatory use of Brightspace has not been provided. The Board has been encouraging the use of Brightspace and accessing Google Apps from Brightspace, but there has not been an “official” message from the Board that teachers are required to use Brightspace. (Despite the requirement that all virtual school teachers move and use this platform).

Brightspace is a virtual learning environment landing page and suite, synched with PowerSchool for demographics etc.

Some points:

- Brightspace is fully funded by the Ministry of Education

- Brightspace is a virtual learning environment landing page and suite, synced with PowerSchool for demographics etc.
- What teachers/students can do from the landing page is integrate all Google Education products since the Board is a Google Education Board – i.e. Google Classroom, Google Meet, etc.

If you have any concerns, please contact the Unit office at 705-733-9625 or 1 800 558 4815