

Upper Grand District School Board announces plans over school closure

On Monday (Jan. 3) the provincial government announced that all Ontario schools will shift to remote learning from Jan. 5 to 17, with the possibility of a further extension.

"During the time of remote learning, we want to highly encourage families to continue to follow all current health and safety guidelines, as the board continues to enhance the layers of protective measures in place in our schools," said UGDSB Director of Education Peter Sovran.

"Please continue to screen rigorously for symptoms on a daily basis. If you have symptoms or are feeling unwell, stay home and isolate."

For students enrolled at the Upper Grand District School Board (UGDSB), as of Wednesday (Jan. 5), those in Elementary or Secondary Remote Programs will continue with their remote instruction as usual.

All students enrolled in in-person learning will shift to remote learning, through accessing their class's Google Classroom or Brightspace environment starting on Wednesday (Jan. 5).

In the coming days, schools will be reaching out directly to families with students enrolled in specialized Life Skills classes to provide information on learning opportunities, including where possible, some limited options for in-person instruction starting next Monday (Jan.10).

Device pick-up for students requiring technology will take place at UGDSB schools early this week. Schools will communicate school-specific details on device/technology pick-up to families directly.

"The UGDSB continues to be committed to reopening our schools for students and staff safely," said UGDSB Board Chair Linda Busuttill.

"Our schools will be receiving additional PPE for staff, upgraded masks for students, and staff will continue to optimize school ventilation including through the procurement of additional HEPA filter units."

On Monday the province also announced that school buildings would be permitted to open for third-party child care operations, including emergency child care. During this period of remote learning, free emergency child care will be provided for school-aged children of health care and other eligible frontline workers. Additional details on child care would be sent to families from the child care operators or province.

Families may be eligible for the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB). To find out who is eligible to apply, visit the federal website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/recovery-caregiving-benefit/crcb-who-apply.html>.

"We know that this has been a challenging time for students, families, staff and communities. We thank you for your ongoing support and will continue to communicate with families as the situation evolves," said the UGDSB in a recent press release.