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**To: Horizon Families and Staff**  
**From: Kevin C. Garinger, Director of Education**  
**Date: March 20, 2020**  
**Re: UPDATE School Closure - COVID-19**

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Good evening, Horizon families and staff.

I am writing with updates from our Ministry of Education and the education sector [Response Planning Team](#). The Response Planning Team has asked me and all other Saskatchewan school divisions to share a letter to all families.

[Please find that letter here.](#)

I want to take this opportunity to thank you so much for your understanding and support throughout this past week. It has been unlike anything any of us have experienced before, and I appreciate your patience very much as we work through these challenges and develop new ways to continue our supports for learning.

Even though our remarkable teaching staff is on a pause until March 27, I have already been receiving thoughts and submissions regarding supplemental learning, and this feedback will be a great help for our system and province in the weeks to come. After next week, I will be in contact with families and staff to discuss our next steps related to supplemental learning opportunities for your children. As we receive further direction and updates from the Response Planning Team, these will be shared with you.

Horizon's Central Office will be physically closed next week, but myself and my staff will be working from home and will remain accessible during this time. Please continue to use our Communications Centre Hotline for any questions or concerns, at **1-306-682-2558** (please ask for the Communications Centre).

Continue to visit [www.horizonsd.ca](http://www.horizonsd.ca) for regular updates. My previous communications on this issue are archived there, as well as links to other resources and supports. Once again, I will remind you of the resources available at [www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus](http://www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus), and the provincial HealthLine that can be reached by dialing **811**.

I also want to remind you of the following tips and resources to ensure we're looking after our mental health through this period:

- **Take care of yourself** – continue to engage in healthy, positive activities that you enjoy. Healthy adults create healthy children.
- **Model calm and be reassuring to your children** – let your children talk about their feelings, fears, and questions. Responding calmly will positively influence your child's emotional responses.

- **Maintain normal routines to the extent possible** – maintaining routines provides a sense of comfort and reassurance. Seek out and maintain fun activities as a family. A few examples include crafting, baking, board games, reading, movie nights, and enjoying outdoor activities together.
- **Monitor and limit media/social media exposure** – excessive exposure is linked to an increase in anxiety and worry. Limit your own exposure to reliable sources.
- **Share factual and age-appropriate information with your children** – consider both the age and individual characteristics of your child when determining how much to share. Emphasize actions that you can do to limit risk, such as following recommended hygiene practices.

**Tips for managing anxiety about COVID-19:**

[Canadian Mental Health Association](#)

[Anxiety Canada](#)

**Talking to your children about COVID-19:**

[Center for Disease Control](#)

[Kids Health](#)

On behalf of the Board of Education and everyone in Horizon School Division, I want you to know that we already greatly miss your students in our schools. I hope your families are staying healthy and safe. Enjoy reading with your children and spending time together as we all do our part to get through our current challenges.

Thank you,



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