



# Bluewater District School Board

Lori Wilder, *Director of Education*

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January 6, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

I hope you were able to have a safe, healthy, and enjoyable holiday season. As we welcome the new year amid a temporary provincial shutdown, I want to check in to provide some reassurance that our staff in Bluewater District School Board are understanding and supportive of you during this time.

The quick switch to remote learning has been an adjustment for many families, both locally and across the province. Though I know that your sacrifices will help keep our students, staff, and school communities safe in the coming months. The relatively low COVID-19 case numbers that we have experienced to date in our local schools and throughout our region are encouraging. Please continue your diligence, collaboration, and positive role modeling, and THANK YOU for all that you are doing to prevent and minimize the spread of this virus.

As we support one another during the temporary shutdown period, I would like to clarify a few things regarding remote learning. You have likely heard the term 'synchronous learning' used several times in recent months. Synchronous learning happens in real time, and involves the use of text, video, or voice communication, which enables educators to instruct and connect with students in a virtual 'face-to-face' environment. In Bluewater District School Board, synchronous learning may include a variety of formats, such as one-to-one, small group, or whole group instruction, and/or 'teacher office hours' using our Microsoft Office or Brightspace online platforms.

It is important to note that the current expectations around remote learning are different than they were in the spring when the pandemic first began. As directed by the Ministry of Education, students are expected to engage in remote learning daily during the temporary provincial shutdown. Work completed will be assessed and may be used to determine final grades.

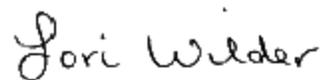
In saying this, I recognize that circumstances vary for our families in terms of balancing work and home responsibilities, access to reliable internet, and other factors. In uncertain times, it is best to keep calm and remember that staff are here to assist you and provide flexibility based on your personal situation when it comes to your child(ren)'s learning. Do not hesitate to reach out to your child(ren)'s school with any questions or concerns you may have. I believe in our students, staff, and families, and know that together we will once again get through this temporary adjustment in our learning environment.

There may also be some questions and anxiety regarding our students' return to in-person learning. Please rest assured that we will continue to follow all our well-established health and safety protocols upon our return, such as daily self-screening, proper hand hygiene, cleaning of high touch points, and wearing of personal protective equipment. These measures, combined with the guidance of our local public health officials, have been instrumental in our success in keeping schools open and operating safely in Bruce and Grey counties. We will not let our guard down in our ongoing efforts to ensure the safest conditions for our students and staff to learn and work.

If you have not already done so, I would encourage you to visit our board website to peruse the various resources that are available for students and families. Remote learning resources can be found at [www.bwdsb.on.ca/families\\_community/remote\\_learning](http://www.bwdsb.on.ca/families_community/remote_learning). Many thanks are owed to those staff members who developed and coordinated a large volume of online materials to assist our educators during the pandemic. For more information on supports related to student mental health and well-being, please visit [https://www.bwdsb.on.ca/students/mental\\_health](https://www.bwdsb.on.ca/students/mental_health).

I look forward to the return of our students to in-person learning soon. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Wilder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lori Wilder  
Director of Education