



MEMO

To: Administrators | Guidance Counsellors | Educational Psychologists
From: Directors of Student Services
Date: March 30, 2020
Re: Supporting Students & Assessments

We hope everyone is keeping safe and well while adjusting to the transition of working at home. It has been a challenging and unsettling time. We are hoping this memo will help clarify some of the expectations around your role in this new and unique situation.

Supporting Students:

As Mr. Stack shared in a recent memo to teachers on March 19:

"Families and students can expect contact from their classroom teachers in the coming days as we aim to maintain the connections and relationships we have developed. Our teachers will continue to be in regular weekly contact with our families, although this may look different depending on individual circumstances. Our teachers will be utilizing teacher-home communications through email or other electronic means. Your teachers will remain the link between your family and any supports (e.g., guidance services) available through schools and the District."

Guidance Counsellors are an invaluable resource and support to many families and students, particularly those who are most vulnerable. We expect that you will continue with any of your current practice(s) of communication - i.e., social media posts, Google classrooms, phone calls, text messages, creation of web pages, sharing of website resources, and email. There is no expectation at this time for counsellors to provide virtual counselling services.

Our priority is to continue to support students and families during this difficult time, while staying connected with colleagues and staff.

We recognize each school counsellor has their own set of unique circumstances. We encourage you to consider ways to support all your students and share best practices. *“Let’s focus on doing what we can, while looking after our own health, supporting each other, and attending to those in need around us.” (Mr. Stack).*

Exit Assessments:

In response to questions around exit assessments, the District has been in contact with Memorial University of Newfoundland, College of the North Atlantic and Canada Student Loans. Each has confirmed that NO STANDARDIZED INSTRUMENTS are required with regard to assessments to ensure that students receive accommodations at the post secondary level.

An assessment must have been completed in the last 5 years. However, this can include a comprehensive assessment as per Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD) guidelines. A comprehensive assessment may consist of a file review without the use of standardized instruments. The main requirements are that the clinician include recommendations, and that the report must be written by a guidance counsellor or educational psychologist.

In unique circumstances, guidance counsellors are asked to consult educational psychologists and programs staff.

Incomplete Assessments:

Follow up with parents/guardians to indicate the status of assessments in process and review next steps. Reports can be written based on testing completed where possible. In your report, you should provide next steps and recommendations - i.e., what follow up assessment may be required for completion.