

January 12, 2021

Hello MBCI families,

This pandemic school year introduced new challenges in late fall when schools were moved to Restricted Level Orange, and then when the province announced two weeks of remote learning after the Christmas break. Since the implementation of these changes, we have been moving forward with our plan to hold semester one exams for grades 9 – 12, even as we kept a careful eye on how these circumstances shaped the experience of both learning and teaching.

Today, the province has confirmed that schools will return to Restricted Level Orange on Monday, January 18. Students will return to school with the same schedule and protocols we followed immediately prior to the Christmas break, with MBCI students in grades 9 – 12 attending in-person/remote classes on alternate days. Monday is day 3.

With many factors in mind, we have made the decision to cancel semester one course exams for grades 9 -12.

This decision rests upon varied factors, including the following:

- Only today we received confirmation from the province that schools will return to Restricted Level Orange on Monday, January 18, which created much uncertainty.
- Occasional technical challenges, varying attendance rates due to Covid, and new pacing related to semester courses, have all had some bearing upon students and teachers.
- We are compassionately aware of the academic pressures related to distance learning as well as the anxiety and grief that many students experience due to the various losses associated with public health restrictions.

We remain confident that MBCI is providing meaningful, rigorous, and effective teaching and learning. Our students have worked hard to overcome many challenges, demonstrating tremendous resilience as they engage with course content.

We believe strongly in the value of summative assessments as an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning and understanding, as well as a way to bring meaningful closure to a course and provide training for future learning and assessment opportunities.

Within the exceptional circumstances of the past months, however, our students are best served by alternate forms of final assessments for semester one courses.

The schedule until the beginning of semester two will proceed as follows:

January 15

- Flex Friday. No live classes. Students in grades 9 – 12 have the opportunity to complete unfinished work.

January 18 – 29

- Students return to school within the protocols of Restricted Level Orange (on campus/off campus rotation for grades 9 - 12). Monday, January 18 is cycle day 3.
- These two weeks will be used for meaningful review and reflection on course content and/or alternate forms of final assessment that will not exceed 15% of the course grade.

February 1

- **No classes for grades 6 – 12.** This day is designated as one of the discretionary Professional Development days introduced by the province in the fall. We had originally assigned this PD day on April 22 which will now be an in-class day for all students. February 1 will have no classes, but remains cycle day 1.

February 2

- **No classes for grades 9 – 12.** Turnaround day in preparation for semester two. Classes for grades 6 – 8 will proceed as usual, cycle day 2.

February 3

- First day of classes for semester two. Cycle day 3 for all students.

Thank you for your understanding related to these changes. We look forward to supporting our students through the completion of semester one and on into a new start in semester two. While the twists and turns of this school year are unprecedented and challenging, we remain grateful for the opportunity to navigate this path together with our students and families.

Andrea Neufeld
Principal