



Central Okanagan
Public Schools

Together We Learn

March 12, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Student Strike 4 Climate 2019

A local student group, The Kelowna Youth Climate Strike Team, is organizing a Climate Change School Strike for Friday, March 15, 2019. Students are being asked to leave their schools and be at Kerry Park by 1:00 pm. The group will participate in a walk to Stuart Park and the event is planned to end at 3:00 pm.

The District supports the rights that citizens of the age of majority have in a democratic society to freely assemble and to express their views on issues. The District also values student voice and provides many opportunities for students to express their views. While we respect the rights of students to express their views regarding climate change, the proposed strike raises a number of concerns, particularly with regard to student safety and the loss of instructional time.

Safety is always our first priority. For safety reasons, all elementary and middle schools in the District are closed campuses and students are not permitted to leave the school campus during the school day. This Kelowna Youth Climate Strike is not a District sanctioned event. The District is not aware of what planning has occurred to ensure the safety of participants during the event. The District is not aware if safe travel to and from the event has been organized. While School Districts are responsible for the safety of students on school property, student safety cannot be guaranteed for students participating in the Climate Strike activity, even if it takes place during school hours.

Regular school schedules will be offered on Friday afternoon. Lessons are carefully planned to support students in meeting curricular competencies. The District encourages students to remain in school and attend to their lessons. It is suggested that if students feel strongly about the issue, they could contact their local Members of the Legislature or Member of Parliament to express their concerns.

As the climate change strike is being promoted online, without an identified group of organizers, we do not know if there are plans at individual schools for students to leave the building. We caution parents that, if their son or daughter is planning to participate, this will be happening without supervision by school or District staff.

Some parents might wish their son or daughter to participate. If parents wish to have their son or daughter participate, they should contact their school and excuse the absence. Parents should also arrange safe transportation to the event. Students who do miss school and attend the event without parent permission will be recorded as an unexcused absence.

If you have a son or daughter who is planning to participate in Friday's proposed Climate Change Strike, please discuss this issue with your son or daughter and encourage them to make good choices about their safety and education.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kaardal
Superintendent of Schools/CEO