



Shelburne County Families and Staff,

June 2nd, 2023

Our thoughts continue to be with you folks as you and your loved ones face unprecedented times. As a region, we've closely monitored the situation from both up close and afar, and while there are many operational pieces to be considered, the focus is on the health and safety of everyone impacted by the wildfires. In this incredibly difficult time, please don't worry about school. As a system, we'll be ready for you when you're ready. We want to reassure you not to worry about classes, exams and everything else in between. Now is the time to focus on safety, well-being, and your loved ones.

While the best place for our students to learn is in our schools, we have many factors to consider prior to reopening any of our schools in the area. The heartbreaking reality is that so many of our families - both students and staff - have either lost their homes, have been displaced from their homes or have been put on alert to leave at a moment's notice. Any such return would certainly take this into account, and we fully appreciate the fact that the schools won't be the same places we walked away from a week ago. Our worlds have drastically changed since then. We can't express just how much these families have been in our hearts.

As we begin to consider what a school reopening could look like, we want to acknowledge that this will look and feel differently depending on your situation. We are working diligently on a variety of scenarios and are taking lessons from "*Heart of Recovery*," a document out of Alberta, who have unfortunately, had extensive experience in these situations. We will have support in place to ensure both our students and staff are adequately supported with everything from food, materials, counseling, etc. We're also keenly aware that some will not be ready for a return based on circumstance and this includes both staff and students. In the event an individual school is reopened, it will be with the understanding that it's with a focus on wellness, health, and safety. At the very least, it may be an option for those who feel a familiar place with food and friends is what's needed on that particular day.

As we head into the weekend, rest assured that we'll communicate any changes early in the day on Sunday, as we await what kind of weather and wind we see over the weekend. For those who are ready, we'll work with you on what a return to school may look like and for those that aren't, we'll be here for you whenever you are.

The Canadian Red Cross helps vulnerable communities in Canada affected by emergencies and disaster and responds to the needs of communities around the world: <https://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/current-emergency-responses/atlantic-canada-wildfire-responses>

For information on provincial support, I encourage you to visit: <https://novascotia.ca/alerts/> and if your child(ren) require mental health support, please reach out to Kids Help Phone. This resource can be reached at 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or text CONNECT to 686868. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to children and youth who want confidential and anonymous care from trained responders in both English and French. Visit the Kids Help Phone [website](#) for online chat support or to access online resources.

With Love and Compassion,

Jared Purdy  
Regional Executive Director  
Tri-County Regional Centre for Education