



# NORTH SURREY

S e c o n d a r y S c h o o l

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April 30, 2020

Dear Class of 2020 and Families,

I am writing to all of you with a very heavy heart today. This is a very difficult message to send to you at a very challenging time in the world. Although this may not seem like a surprise to you, we now understand that your graduation dinner/dance and commencement ceremonies as we had originally planned are cancelled. Our Surrey Schools Superintendent, Mr. Jordan Tinney, sent out a video message to you last week: <https://vimeo.com/409645152>

We know from listening to Dr. Bonnie Henry, our Provincial Health Officer, that it will be a long time until we can have large gatherings. Thus, it is simply not possible to have a grad dinner/dance of more than 300 people and a Commencement of more than 1200 people.

The end of school is a significant life marker for you. We, at North Surrey, know that graduation and leaving public school only happens once in a lifetime. You, as the graduation Class of 2020, have been waiting, planning, and organizing for your moment. The pandemic has thrown all potential plans into uncertainty. Our hearts go out to those who have designed and who have worked hard for their moment. In the current context, it is difficult to imagine the province permitting gatherings, which would far exceed 500 people. We need to start making different plans. I know this is very disappointing for our graduates and your families.

You probably have many questions about what might happen:

**1. What might commencement look like and when might it happen?**

- a) We might consider a virtual Commencement. We are investigating how to possibly make this happen. This will allow your friends and family to view an on-line Commencement or celebratory video. We are considering this since we simply don't know when we might be able to plan for a full gathering in the next school year. Many of you might be in other countries or cities attending post-secondary schools or you might have moved away to work.
- b) We might also consider continuing with a traditional Commencement. We are considering booking a date in the fall but do not know if large gatherings will be allowed even then.



**2. Will we still get caps and gowns and grad folders with certificates?**

Yes, this is still our plan whether we have a virtual or traditional Commencement. Plans for how these are distributed to grads though have not yet been determined.

**3. Will dinner/dance be rescheduled?**

We can consider it but we simply do not know when large gatherings will be allowed.

**4. Can I get a refund?**

For Commencement – Not at this time. The \$35 fee covers the cost of the cap & gowns, the grad folder with the certificate and a grad composite (pictures of all the graduates). We will distribute these to graduates at a future date.

**5. What about the Dry Grad?**

This is organized by the Dry Grad Parent Committee. Stay tuned for information from this group of dedicated parents.

To compound the difficulty of planning any events, we do not know what school opening may look like in the fall. Any opportunity for a Commencement celebration means gatherings of hundreds of people. Again, that possibility seems far away in our current context. Again, the challenge is that we simply don't know what that would entail as we don't know the rules of physical distancing one month out or in the fall.

I am sorry about the impact this global pandemic is having on you -- the Class of 2020. You are an outstanding group of young people and have worked so hard to achieve your graduation in a situation that no modern grad class has faced. The resiliency and perseverance that you demonstrate now will serve you well in the future. At North Surrey, we will do our best to celebrate your accomplishments. Rest assured, the Graduating Class of 2020 will be honoured and celebrated in other meaningful ways in the future. Please watch for more information in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,

Mr. Darren Bedard

Principal