



Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Hello, current and prospective International Students, their families and/or guardians,

Considering the current situation presented to all of us due to the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the International Program at the Peel District School Board (PDSB) truly appreciates your understanding and patience as we determined how best to serve our students moving ahead during these times. As a result, the PDSB is temporarily altering policy to ensure our VISA students can still access their classes and take full advantage of the truly unique learning experiences and partnerships our school board has to offer.

**Our International VISA students will be allowed access to the same options all PDSB students have.**

Please see the PDSB plans that can be found at <https://www.peelschools.org/schools/reopening/Pages/default.aspx>

This means that our VISA students can select the **adaptive model** which is a blend of in-person and at-home learning. Our VISA students can also decide to select the **fully online learning** experience that will be taught by PDSB teachers using the Ontario Curriculum.

During the pandemic and while Canadian borders remained closed, the PDSB will allow current VISA students who have a valid study permit to engage in their learning from the county they are currently residing in. However, there are **important items** our VISA students, families and guardian must be aware of:

- All instruction will only be offered to students in Eastern Standard Time.
- The current schedule for Quadmesters is:
  - Quadmester 1: Sept. 8 to Nov. 13, 2020 (Civics/Career Turnaround – last day Oct. 9, 2020)
  - Quadmester 2: Nov. 16, 2020, to Feb. 5, 2021 (Civics/Career Turnaround – last day Dec. 18, 2020)
  - The above information is fluid and could change. Dates for Quadmesters 3 and 4 will be released as plans are firmed up.
- This is not the same learning as what occurred last spring. This online learning will be a FULL course and require students to be working approximately 5.5 - 6 hours a day on school work for five days a week.
- Learning will be split into Quadmesters and students will be taking two courses at a time.
- For the Adaptive Model - the learning will potentially occur on two platforms - Google Classroom and Brightspace.
- For the Online Model - the learning will primarily take place using the Brightspace platform.
- The fully online learning model will place very difficult challenges in front of English Language Learners (ELL). While we would be providing ELL support for students online, this support cannot truly replicate the powerful and rich support ELL learners have in the adaptive model.
- It is highly recommended that if students are already in Canada that they stay in Canada and do not return to their home country.
- Students will require a stable and reliable internet connection to successfully engage in fully online learning.

Please also note that:

- Our preference would be that students elect for the blended model; this would be of a benefit to our students and would be best for long term progression and learning.

- Current VISA students who are already residing in Canada are expected to stay in Canada. These students can select either of the two options.
- Given time zones and technical issues, completing the online learning from within Canada will be very beneficial for the students.
- **School could be recalled at any moment**, and if students are already here in Canada it will be easier to ensure they start any one of quadesters without delay.
- Students who returned to their home country or who have yet to arrive in Canada can stay in their home country and take online.
- Students must be ready to come to Canada if a full return to school is announced.

**We will be asking students to communicate to us by the same deadline all PDSB have which is August 17, 2020**, to inform our board regarding their decision.

For our students who have applied for a study VISA but have not received information from the Canadian government regarding either the issuing of a study permit or its decline:

- we can proceed with online virtual assessments as long as the student can demonstrate with receipts that they have applied for their study permit.
- Please note that once we move ahead with this testing, payment will be expected and there will not be a refund if a student elects to not join in learning with Peel District School Board.
- Refunds would be issued if the study VISA is declined.
- As students await official receipt of their study permit, the PDSB can engage them in learning for our first 2 quadesters. If the permit has not been approved by the end of the second quadester, we will not be able to allow the student to continue until the VISA has been approved.

Please contact our office at [studyinpeel@peelsb.com](mailto:studyinpeel@peelsb.com) for more information regarding our online virtual assessments.

If a student is currently enrolled but residing in their home country but wants to engage in the adaptive model of learning the **arrive with sufficient time to complete a 14-day quarantine**. For participation in our first quadester, students will need to arrive in Canada by August 25, 2020, at the latest to ensure you can do the mandatory 14-day isolation as required by the Canadian Government. **Students are responsible for ensuring they meet all of the Government of Canada requirements** for their quarantine. All of the stipulations and requirements of the Canadian government must be met to enter Canada, these are:

- You're exempt from the travel restrictions and are able to enter Canada if you're travelling for a non-discretionary or non-optional purpose AND
  - you're an international student who has a valid study permit or
  - you were approved for a study permit on or before March 18, 2020, or
  - you're coming from the United States
- When you travel to Canada Make sure you have proof that you're exempt from the travel restrictions and that you're travelling for a non-optional or non-discretionary purpose.
- When the border services officer greets you, they will look at several factors, including whether
  - you're already living in Canada

- If you're already living in Canada, your return is non-discretionary.
  - you're able to complete a 14-day quarantine period as soon as you arrive at your final destination
  - you begin studying after you complete your quarantine
  - you need to be in Canada for your program (for laboratories, workshops)
  - pursuing your studies online is not an option at your school or not possible from your home country (due to internet restrictions or bandwidth limitation)
- You must also bring:
    - a valid study permit, or
    - a port of entry letter of introduction that shows you were approved for a study permit, if you're coming from the United States, or
    - a port of entry letter of introduction that shows you were approved for a study permit on or before March 18, 2020, if you're coming from any other country

Above information taken from

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/coronavirus-covid19/students.html>

The International Program will release more information regarding our International Student Pre-Departure & Arrival Guide as it becomes available. We will post information to our program website found at:

<https://www.peelschools.org/international>

Thank you and if you have any questions please contact us at [studyinpeel@peelsb.com](mailto:studyinpeel@peelsb.com)

The International Program and our entire school board truly appreciates your patience and understanding as we work to ensure a truly unique and beneficial learning experience for our international students during this very fluid situation we currently find ourselves in.

Take good care and may we all be safe and healthy,



Greg Pearson

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<https://www.peelschools.org/international>

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