



SCHOOL DISTRICT No.69 (QUALICUM)

Happy New Year Parents and Guardians of SD69!

I hope you have all had an enjoyable holiday season.

As you may know, snow is forecast for the near future. Therefore, I am writing to let you know that the Qualicum School District will be launching a new communications tool that will be used to communicate important messages to our school community. It will be used when there are district-wide notices regarding extreme weather conditions, transportation disruptions or emergency events. After the initial launch, it will also be used to share important events happening at the schools and in your children's classrooms.

The tool is called SchoolMessenger Communicate by Intrado and when it is fully implemented, you will be able to manage how you receive school communications either through voice messages, email or SMS text messages to your mobile phones. Communicate is a third party tool that uses servers and data centres that are housed in Canada, and all data transferred to SchoolMessenger is encrypted.

Participation in Communicate is not mandatory and parents/guardians can opt out of part or all of the tool if they chose to. Detailed information regarding Intrado's privacy policy can be found [here](#).

Communicate will not replace current school communication methods. Principals will still be accessible for live visits and will continue to communicate via current methods including paper-based notices and the district's website. The district's implementation of the Communicate system is intended to extend its commitment to remain personally connected with parents by offering additional and timely communications.

If you wish to be opted-in, please ensure that your child's school has your current email/home and mobile phone information. Information will continue to be posted to the district website and shared through local media during the transition to school messenger.

In the meantime, here are some reminders as to how we communicate decisions on days of inclement weather:

- During times of inclement weather, conditions can be very different in the various communities that make up our school district. Before a decision is made about whether buses will be running, or schools will remain open or be closed, the Superintendent/Associate Superintendent consults with the General Manager of Operations. These staff take the current and forecasted weather into consideration, and are in communication with Highways Maintenance, our own crews and other community members who can verify local conditions.
- If appropriate, decisions regarding School District Operations will be made the night prior to the school day. Otherwise, the information will be forwarded as early as possible after 6:00 a.m. in the morning.
- There may also be slight route alterations for buses depending on conditions of side roads.
- Everyone is advised to take caution as some roads, sidewalks and school grounds are still snow covered.
- Parents are also reminded to keep battery operated radios handy, any land-line telephones plugged in, and mobile phones charged to prepare for power outages.
- Conditions vary across the district, and sometimes from school to school. If a decision is made by the district to keep schools open but parents are concerned about safety issues, they are welcome to keep their children home.

Gillian Wilson
Associate Superintendent of Schools