



September 19, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Call for a Global Climate Strike 2019

The District has been informed that there are three Global Climate Strikes organized for the Kelowna area during the week of September 20 – 27, 2019. The first event is a Global Climate Strike on Friday, September 20th from 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm at Kelowna City Hall. Next week, on Thursday, September 26th, UBCO will be hosting a Climate Strike from 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm in the UBCO Central Courtyard. Another Global Climate Strike will be held on Friday, September 27th from 12:00 noon – 2:00 pm at Kelowna City Hall.

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. We value student voice and provide many opportunities for students to express their views. The District recognizes that climate change is one of the most critical issues to face humanity. The intent of these strikes is laudable and we respect the rights of students to express their views regarding climate change.

We understand that a strike is a part of the protest, and remind parents/guardians that any strike for climate events are not sanctioned by the District. The District is not aware of what planning has occurred to ensure the safety of participants during these events. The District is not aware if safe travel to and from these events is organized. While School Districts are responsible for the safety of students on school property, student safety cannot be guaranteed for students participating in any non-sanctioned activity, even if it takes place during school hours. The District does not have the authority to excuse students' absences to attend non-sanctioned rallies, protests or gatherings.

Last year, I invited the organizers of the Kelowna Youth Climate Strike Team to meet and co-plan events where students could express their views, critically think about possible solutions and plan next steps. Some efforts were made but unfortunately we were unable to meet. It is suggested that if students feel strongly about this issue, they could contact their local Members of the Legislature or Member of Parliament to express their concerns.

If parents/guardians wish to have their youth participate in a Global Climate Strike, they should contact their school and excuse the absence. Parents/guardians should also arrange safe transportation to the event. Students who do miss school and attend an event without parent/guardian permission will be recorded as an unexcused absence. We caution parents/guardians that if their youth is planning to participate, this will be happening without supervision by school or District staff. If you have a youth who is planning to participate in any of the Global Climate Strike events, please discuss this issue with them and encourage them to make good choices about their safety.

Regular school schedules will be offered during week of September 20th to the 27th. Lessons are carefully planned to support students in meeting curricular competencies. The District encourages students to remain in school and attend to their lessons.

Sincerely,

Kevin Kaardal
Superintendent of Schools/CEO