



**Grande Prairie
Public School
Division**
Every Student Succeeds

   **GPPSD2357**

Dear Parents, Guardians, and GPPSD Staff.

Welcome to all new and returning members of our school division, we're looking forward to working together again this year to help every student succeed!

Today I am introducing a new communication practice, developed in part based on feedback from last year's surveys, to improve communication and to support our goal of prioritizing the health and well-being of our students, families, and staff. This year our division is introducing a practice commonly referred to as the *Right to Disconnect*. Simply put, the right to disconnect is a way of supporting both employees and families to be disconnected from the work of school outside the regular workday.

Communication practices have changed significantly over the years, and many digital tools are used to communicate between home and school. The ease of use of these tools can create the belief that communication is a 24/7 activity. Promoting the *Right to Disconnect* mindset is intended to respect the right of staff and parents to not be obligated to send or receive messages outside the workday. Sending or receiving messages in the evening can blur the line between work and personal life, making it harder for people to separate the two.

The need for effective communication with our families remains critically important in our division and we want our families and our staff to balance their work and personal lives. While people may choose to contact schools outside regular hours, this year we're asking our staff to respond promptly during their normal work hours. I appreciate your understanding that immediate replies may not always be possible during the day, when staff are teaching or supervising students during the day.

Our new *Right to Disconnect* approach is not a policy or strict rule. Emergencies, for instance, may still require immediate responses. This letter introduces the concept and explains how and when we are asking staff to communicate, to contribute to overall well-being in our school community. The *Right to Disconnect* is just one strategy we're using to support the health and well-being of both our employees and the families we serve, because we believe that prioritizing a healthy, family-focused environment will make a positive difference in our school community.

Thank you for your support.

Alexander McDonald
Superintendent of Schools