



PSII: Alternative measures During the COVID-19 Closure

During this extraordinary time, it is important that we stay connected, despite the advice to remain less-close physically for the next while. Fortunately, because of the unique way PSII operates and because of some of the tools we already use as part of our normal practice, we will be able to continue to offer a substantial program – well beyond using correspondence packages and worksheets.

At this time, we have all of the ingredients to move forward and a very good draft plan. On **Monday, March 23**, when our teachers are back from their breaks (despite some of them still being self-isolated), the staff will meet to flesh out the fine details, including schedules, detailed instructions for online tools, etc. Later in the day on Monday, we will share that more detailed plan with you, and things will start-up on **Tuesday, March 24**.

Overview of the Plan

We will create a new schedule that will be accessible through our usual online Google schedule, that can also be found on the school website at <https://learningstorm.org/current-psii-learners/psii-google-calendar/> (but view it through Google Calendar, as it is much nicer-looking that way; just click the “+ Google Calendar” button at the bottom of the calendar you see on the website). This schedule will include:

- **Org Group meeting times** (to help people plan their day and sort out the next steps in their inquiry planning, etc.)
- **Group Sessions** (standing weekly meetings with different topics assigned each week)
- **One-on-one meeting time slots** (learners will use Trello to sign up for meeting times with teachers and community mentors and experts, beyond the group meetings that they might choose to attend)
- **Learner-initiated collaborative group meetings** (these will need to be scheduled if people wish to use Zoom for a collaborative group meeting)

There will likely be two simultaneous group sessions offered three a day (for a total of six), allowing people to stay connected “virtually,” and not feel quite so isolated. One-on-one meetings will be scheduled around those group meetings that either teachers or learners are attending. This includes counselling sessions. Just like on normal days!

Tools We Will be Using

In addition to the tech-assisted tools we already use (especially **Trello** and **Portfolio**), the school has also acquired two licenses for **Zoom Pro**, allowing us to run group video and/or audio sessions with groups of any size for any duration up to 24 hours. People will be able to access these meetings with a code that will be given out on Monday, and can do so on any Connective device (laptop, Android phone or tablet, iPhone or iPad, ...) from anywhere they can access the Internet.

Many of us have used Zoom before, but this is the first time we will have used it so extensively, so we ask you to be patient with us as we test it out and make sure that we do it right. And I am sure we will make mistakes. That's what learning is.

The added bonus with Zoom is that it is free for the learners, and, once they have Zoom accounts set up, they can even use it to connect socially, outside of what the school has planned. It is a very nice, simple connective service.

Some learners have already sent in ideas about using Zoom to start book clubs or other kinds of discussion groups that could potentially be accessed by learners outside the school as well. We will be talking with staff on Monday about how to moderate those expanded spaces to keep them safe and productive.

How We Will Share Information

For learners:

All instructions for Zoom, Zoom meeting numbers, resources, and announcements will be posted to the "announcements" section of the learners' Portfolios at www.psiportfolio.com/portfolio.

It is very important that learners check this daily, as we will also be updating them about things like scholarship deadlines, post-secondary information, contests, opportunities, and other time-sensitive items. The good news is, they are already opening the Portfolio each day as they post their learning artifacts.

For parents/guardians:

We will continue to send information as email messages to the email address given at the time of registration, or a new one if you asked us to update your address. We rarely see 100% of our emails read, so we will be following up by phone to see if people have changed email addresses or would prefer to use a different one. We will be sharing the new schedule outline and some

details about Zoom so that you are fully informed about what is happening for your learner in these unusual times.

Collecting Belongings from the School

Though we are not permitted to open the school for instruction, we can certainly let people in to get any personal belongings they might need or want, now that they know they are going to be at home for an extended and indefinite time period. We know for a fact that many learners left their laptops, for example, and will certainly want those.

Monday afternoon, the school will be open to allow people to collect their things. We can also do this Tuesday morning. Please be aware of two limitations:

1. **The building (Nootka Court) will not be open.** For that reason, we will be more specific about a time window for entering the school, as we will need to watch for you from the school window and let you in. We will also give a number that you can text.
2. **We have limited staff for a week or so** as some of our teachers are self-isolating after returning from travel outside the country; so, our ability to watch doors and also offer online teaching and support is limited by sheer numbers of people. That is why we will be specific about windows for school access to collect belongings.

Thank you for your patience as we roll out this whole new way of doing business. Our priorities are to help people stay connected to limit the feeling of isolation, to keep all the learning balls rolling that were already rolling and the new ones that are just starting to roll, and to ensure that the vibrant inquiry-based learning method is kept alive. We know you will have lots of questions, and we hope we can answer those in our next few communications, but especially Monday's, where we will have established a complete and detailed plan and schedule.

Best,

Jeff