



August 26, 2020

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: September School Restart

Dear parents/guardians,

With the start of the school year only a couple of weeks away, we understand that there are a lot of questions and concerns. We have thoughtfully and carefully planned how schools will restart in September and are now able to share our plan, which has been approved by the Ministry of Education.

We tried to keep this letter as brief as possible while still trying to thoroughly provide you with all the information you need. This is only one part of our communication to parents – we have also attached a one-page summary of the key highlights and will be sharing a video on the district's YouTube channel, social media, and website.

We are looking forward to welcoming students back to safe and supportive schools on September 10 and hope that this information helps as you consider your family's personal circumstances.

DAILY HEALTH CHECKS

As a parent/guardian you will be required to complete a daily health check form for your child(ren) and return it to the school each day. We will need your help and diligence to make sure that your child stays home if they are feeling unwell or displaying COVID-19 symptoms. Your school will provide you with a supply of forms each month. Students and staff who suffer from seasonal allergies or other COVID-19 symptoms related to an existing condition can still attend school if they are experiencing these symptoms as normal.

BUILDING ACCESS

Building access will be limited. Parents and all other visitors are asked to call the school office ahead of time to schedule a meeting with the principal or speak with other school staff.

Elementary

Students will need to enter and exit the school through their classroom's outside door.

Middle

Middle school students will have staggered arrival and departure times and will be assigned specific doors to enter and exit the school. Your school will provide you with this information.

Secondary

Start and end times will be staggered based on class location to ensure that students remain within learning groups and to limit the amount of people in hallways and common areas.

FACE MASKS

All students will be provided with a reusable mask when they attend their orientation on September 10-11. Each staff member in the district is also going to be provided with a kit that includes a face shield, reusable mask, and hand sanitizer for their personal use. Single use masks will be available from the school office for visitors or should a student forget or lose their mask.

Elementary

As per the Provincial Health Officer's directive, elementary students are not required to wear a face mask because of the increased likelihood they will touch their face and eyes and may require assistance to properly put on and take off their mask (which means close personal contact from school staff). If parents choose for their child to wear a mask that will be respected, and younger students will still be given a reusable mask if parents would like to make that choice.

Middle and Secondary

All middle and secondary school students will be required to wear a face mask when they are in high traffic areas, such as hallways and or other common areas, and anytime they are outside their learning group and physical distancing cannot be maintained.

ENHANCED CLEANING

We have increased custodial support at all our schools and added daytime cleaning at elementary schools. High-touch surfaces will be disinfected at least twice a day and handwashing supplies and hand sanitizer will be kept available. We have also removed items that cannot be thoroughly cleaned and extra furniture and equipment to give as much space as possible for distancing.

HAND HYGIENE

Students will be required to either wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when they arrive at school. Regular hand hygiene will also be incorporated into the daily schedule, such as before and after lunch, before and after going to the library or using shared equipment, etc. We have installed running water and sinks in five portable classrooms to support these routines.

LEARNING GROUPS (OR COHORTS)

Schools have been organized into learning groups of students and staff to reduce the number of close, in-person interactions thereby reducing the risk of transmission and ensuring quick contact tracing by health authorities. Learning groups are formed between classes, which means that it may not be to the maximum number of people, depending on the number of students in each class and the number of adults that are assigned to those classes.

Other adults who provide support or interact with students (such as the music teacher) are not counted as part of the learning group but they will be required to wear a mask and/or face shield during their interactions with students if they cannot maintain physical distancing.

Students will interact mostly within their classroom, with learning groups coming together for such activities as recess/lunch, library, PE, or other shared instruction where there is an educational benefit to a larger group.

Elementary and Middle

Elementary and middle schools have been organized into learning groups to a maximum of 60 people, including the teacher and educational assistant(s). Again, it is important to note that because learning groups are formed between classes the learning group may be less than 60 people.

Secondary

Secondary schools are to have learning groups to a maximum of 120 people, including staff. However, our secondary schools are moving to a 1/8 course model with students taking one course at a time for five weeks. This will mean that secondary students will have a learning group of no more than 30 students. Additional time and support will be provided for students that need it.

OUTSIDE LEARNING

Teachers are encouraged to take their classes outside and/or to have their classroom windows and outside doors open as much as possible and when practical around weather concerns. Your child's teacher will provide notice if they will require jackets, boots, etc. for outside learning.

SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Students will have their own personal, labelled school supplies and will not share them. Before and after the use of any shared equipment students will be required to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Schools that bulk purchased school supplies will give each student their personal supplies. Office supply stores, like Staples, will have general lists of school supplies by grade. Your school will be able to answer any other questions about school supplies during the first week of September.



BREAKS

All students will have staggered breaks and lunch times to ensure that students interact within their learning group and to limit the number of people in hallways and common areas. For example, lunch times at middle school will be staggered into three groups with only one group (approximately 1/3 of the school's population) outside their classroom while the other two groups are eating lunch and the groups will be rotated during the lunch break. Your school will provide specific information about how breaks will work at your child's school.

BAND AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Band and extracurricular activities will be provided outside of learning cohorts by maintaining physical distancing. While competitive interschool sports leagues may not be likely, we are still looking for creative ways to have some school sports this year.

STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES/DISABILITIES

Parents/guardians of students with either an IEP or who were identified in March will be contacted to discuss a plan for their child's return to school. All students will be given the opportunity to return to their full-time program with the supports and services outlined in their IEP. Supports will be offered in-person for those attending school or virtually for those who are unable to attend. School based teams will review plans for all students with medical plans to ensure that they are updated or modified, as necessary.

IMMUNOCOMPROMISED STUDENTS

The school district will provide a home support plan for students who are immunocompromised and determined by their doctor that they cannot attend school. School based teams will review plans for all students with medical plans to ensure that they are updated or modified, as necessary.

BUS TRANSPORTATION

Bus transportation will be available to those students who are eligible based on walk limits, live on reserve or require special needs transportation. To be eligible for school bus transportation K-3 students must live further than 4.0 km and students in grades 4-12 must live further than 4.8 km from their designated school, along the shortest practical route.

Students who require bus transportation for this school year and are eligible based on the walk limits, as well as students who require special needs transportation, must register online at this link: <https://bit.ly/3jhzoaC> by September 4, 2020. Students who live on reserve do not need to register online as they will be registered for bus transportation in partnership with their band office.

Bus students will be issued a bus pass that they must present each time they board the bus to allow for contact tracing by public health should there be a case of COVID-19. Bus passes for special needs students will be kept on the school bus with the bus driver and an educational assistant will help with scanning the student's pass.

Bus ridership will require a daily health check before boarding the bus. We ask that elementary parents have a responsible adult wait at the bus stop with their child in the morning as children who are unwell will be required to return home.

Bus students should clean their hands before they leave home to take the bus, when they leave school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home. All bus students will also be required to wear a non-medical mask, unless they have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing one. Students that ride the ferry are also required to wear a mask when in the ferry terminal and on the vessel as required by BC Ferries.

A reusable mask will be provided to each eligible bus student and single use masks will be available from the bus driver should a student forget or lose their mask.

Bus routes for 2020-2021 are in the process of being finalized and will be posted to the district website as soon as possible. You will be able to find them here: <https://www.sd72.bc.ca/departments/Transportation/>



OTHER LEARNING OPTIONS

In accordance with the School Act, families will have a choice of one of three options this school year: in-class instruction, distributed learning or homeschool. We appreciate that there are a lot of considerations for parents and we support you in making the right decision for your family's personal circumstances.

Distributed Learning (eBlend K-9 or eBos 10-12 Programs)

eBlend is an online program for students in kindergarten to grade 9 that provides the flexibility of homeschooling, with teacher support and the option of interaction days. Optional interaction days can include physical education, field trips or group learning opportunities. The teacher works with the parent to deliver lessons and learning experiences based on the curriculum and the Ministry of Education's big ideas and curricular competencies.

Depending on numbers we may offer an eBlend hub at each of our elementary and middle schools, allowing students to remain directly connected to their current school.

eBos allows students in grades 10 to 12 to take courses fully online with the support of a secondary school teacher.

Should you choose to register your child for either eBlend or eBos we will guarantee their space in their current school next September. It is important for parents to know that we may not be able to accommodate mid-year changes unless space is available. Parents should consider any decision as a year-long commitment.

To learn more about these programs visit:

<https://www.sd72.bc.ca/school/distributedlearning/Pages/default.aspx#/=>

Registration details will be posted on this website on Friday, August 28 with registration opening the afternoon of Monday, August 31. Note these programs do not have an enrolment limit.

Homeschool

Through homeschool a family member delivers the entire educational program to the child at home. Homeschooling is not supervised by a teacher or provided with learning materials, however there are several homeschool support groups or programs available online. If you choose to homeschool, we cannot guarantee your child's space in their current school as this will have your child leaving the school district. For more information on homeschooling in BC visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/classroom-alternatives/homeschooling>.

If you choose to homeschool your child, you will need to register your child as a homeschooler by September 30 by contacting any one of our School District 72 school offices.

HOW TO GET MORE INFORMATION

The school district website (www.sd72.bc.ca) and your child's school website has a COVID-19 section that is kept up-to-date with all of the latest information from the school district, Ministry of Education and provincial public health, as well as links to important resources.

Your child's school will reach out to you before school opening to ask if your child will be returning to school or if you would like to speak with someone about other district options. You will also receive specific information on when your child is to attend on the September 10-11 orientation days and other school details directly from the school office. Should you wish to speak with someone at your child's school, school offices open the first week of September.

All students, except for kindergarten students and their gradual entry schedule, will be in school for full-day instruction no later than Monday, September 14.



Again, while schools will look different this fall, the one thing that has not changed is the enthusiasm we feel to welcome your children back for another year of learning and growth. Look for more information from your child's school very shortly.

Wishing you continued health in these last days of summer.



Dr. Jeremy Morrow
Superintendent of Schools

