



SEPTEMBER 2020 EDUCATION RESTART PLAN UPDATE

AUGUST 26, 2020

DEAR PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND STUDENTS,

I hope you have had a safe and healthy summer. I understand that these are difficult times for parents and students as you have been waiting to learn how our School District is preparing to welcome students back safely to classrooms in September. Since Minister of Education Rob Fleming announced on July 29 that students in B.C. would return to school for in-class instruction under Stage 2 of our Education Restart Plan in September, District staff and school administrators have been working hard to review the Ministry guidelines and safety protocols and have developed our own plan to ensure students and staff are supported in safe learning environments. This plan has been created under the guidance and direction of the Provincial Health Officer, and leads with a focus on the safety of all students, staff and families following guidelines from the Health Authority, B.C. Center for Disease Control, and WorkSafeBC.

School administrators will be communicating site-specific information to parents, guardians and students in the coming days, and we will continue to share the most up-to-date information available as we receive it on our district website.

Todd Manuel
Superintendent of Schools

TIMELINE

Date	Action
August 21	District submits plan to Ministry
August 26	District to share Ministry approved plan
August 28	Schools to communicate initial start-up for September 10 and 11 plans, with further communication to follow.

September 8 – 11 Orientation Week

September 8 and 9	School leaders collaborate with teaching and support staff to review Restart Plan and plan for the safe facilitation of learning
September 10 and 11	Schools will plan and implement a gradual entry to the school year. The first cohorts of students will commence on September 10. Gradual entry will enable school staff to provide students with an orientation to new safety practices that are being implemented within schools. School specific gradual entry plans will be communicated by Principals to parents and guardians.
September 14	Schools fully in session following Restart Plan



The Restart document outlines our Health and Safety protocols, as well as Learning Group structures that follow the Ministry of Education guidelines. Some of the key details of these protocols include:

Wellness – schools will continue to provide mental health supports for students. School based support services will continue to provide updated resources for students and parents.

Food programs – the District will continue to provide food and food-based education programs to students. Programs will be delivered in a safe manner and in alignment with the Provincial Health Officer directives and Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings. This will include the continuation of such programs as the Breakfast programs and lunch programs.

Cleaning and Disinfecting - cleaning procedures follow all requirements of the health and safety guidelines. General cleaning will occur once per day with sanitization of touch points occurring twice per day. Students will have access to sanitizer and soap for classrooms equipped with sinks. Additional staff will be hired to support increased cleaning protocols.

Personal Protective Equipment – the District has purchased 2 reusable masks for every staff member and middle and secondary student. Protocols for wearing masks, including on busses, will be reviewed with parents and students during our orientation week.

School Ventilation Systems – fresh air ventilation rates will be increased at all our District sites to bring in more outdoor air and allow for less recirculation air within the education space. Air filters on all HVAC systems will be replaced prior to September restart and replaced on a regular basis.

Transportation – bussing guidelines have been updated to require masks for middle and secondary students. Our transportation protocols follow all requirements of the health and safety guidelines.

Learning Cohorts – Elementary and Middle school students will attend full days of instruction and be organized in learning cohorts of no more than 60 as mandated by the PHO. Secondary students will be organized in a quarterly system with two long blocks per day. Student learning groups will be formed with the Block 1 classroom for the first term and their Block 2 classroom for the second term to ensure equitable instruction time. Grade 9 students will receive 100% in-class instruction. Grade 10 – 12 students will attend school 75% of the time, alternating between full days and half days.

Alternatives to in-class learning – parents can speak with their school Principal if they are interested in choosing an alternative model to in-class learning. This option involves transferring to our online school and out of the students' current school. Online learning and homeschooling options are available; however, may affect future options to re-enroll as an in-class student at the student's regular school at a later date.

Parent/Guardian shared responsibilities – parents and care givers are asked to complete a daily health check with students prior to sending them to school. Students should not come to school if they are experiencing any symptoms of illness not related to a pre-existing condition (e.g. allergies).

Additional information regarding our safety protocols and learning structures can be found within the remainder of our Restart Plan. Schools will provide learning plans and procedures specific to each school to parents, guardians and students, and staff will work with students in the orientation week to ensure everyone understands the new safety procedures.



LEARNING GROUPS

To get the most students back in full-time in-class instruction in September, the Provincial Health Officer has recommended the use of cohorts (Learning Groups) to reduce the number of close, in-person interactions. This will reduce the number of people each student or staff member comes into contact with, thereby reducing the risk of transmission and ensuring quicker contact tracing by health authorities.

Within a Learning Group, minimized physical contact is required, but physical distancing does not need to be maintained at all times. Those outside of the learning group must practice physical distancing when interacting with the learning group.

A Learning Group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout the school quarter, semester, or year, and who primarily interact with each other.

Examples include a single class, multiple classes that occasionally meet for additional learning activities, or a group of secondary school students with the same courses.

Extracurricular activities will likely involve students interacting outside of their Learning Groups and will require appropriate physical distancing in those circumstances.

PREVIEW OF OUR RESTART PLAN

ELEMENTARY

Elementary schools will be re-organized to limit students to Learning Groups of no more than 60 students and staff.

Day 1 Start Up and School Entry – Each school will contact families prior to September 10 with clear communication on their plan to facilitate the first day of school process for entry into the building. Depending on the size of the school, some are asking students to convene on the field in a designated area prior to being called to their class / cohort while others are having students line up at their classroom exterior door on the first day.

With careful consideration, students will be divided into their learning cohorts ahead of time and will be assigned an entrance / exit to the building. Classroom teachers will greet their students at the designated time and entrance and welcome the students into the school.

New students will be met at the front entrance and escorted to the gym where the School Administration will greet them and implement the registration process. These students will be added to their new cohort once appropriate considerations have been given.

Arrival / Departure – Parents will be asked to remain outside, physically distance and wear a mask upon arrival and departure. Parents and students are asked to depart the campus once the school day completes to avoid crowding or gatherings.



Recess and Lunchtime – Cohorts will be assigned a time and play area space for recess and a similar routine for lunch. Depending on the size of the school, this may require staggering times outside and reversing lunch time routines.

Physical Space – As a means of preventing learning cohorts from intermingling, all common areas, bathrooms, and playground spaces will be assigned schedules / routines and clearly outlined for staff and students.

Elementary Cohort Example:

Cohort 1: Grade 4/5 classes	Teacher A 23 / Teacher B 22 (51 with adults)
Cohort 2: Grade 4/5 classes	Teacher C 24 / Teacher D 23 (53 with adults)
Cohort 3: Grade 3 classes	Teacher E 22 / Teacher F 22 (50 with adults)
Cohort 4: Grade 2 and 2/3 classes	Teacher G 22 / Teacher H 19 (47 with adults)
Cohort 5: Grade 1 classes	Teacher I 22 / Teacher J 19 (47 with adults)
Cohort 6: Kindergarten classes	Teacher K 20 / Teacher L 20 (46 with adults)

MIDDLE

Middle schools will be re-organized to limit students to Learning Groups of no more than 60 students and staff.

Day 1 Start Up and School Entry – Each school will contact families prior to September 10 with clear communication of their plan. As a means of managing physical distancing and supporting student wellness, a gradual restart plan will be communicated that allows for smaller groups to be welcomed to the school, meet their teacher, and learn the school’s health and safety protocols.

With careful consideration, students will be divided into their learning cohorts ahead of time and will be assigned an entrance / exit to the building. Students who have yet to register at the school will be met at the front entrance and escorted to the gym where the School Administration will greet them and implement the registration process. These students will be added to their new cohort once careful consideration has been given to their learning needs.

Arrival / Departure – Parents and students will be asked to remain outside, physically distance and wear a mask upon arrival and departure. Parents and students are asked to depart the campus once the school day completes to avoid crowding or gatherings.

Nutrition Break and Lunchtime – Cohorts will be assigned a time and social area space for Nutrition Break and a similar routine for lunch. Depending on the size of the school, this may require staggering times outside and reversing lunch time routines.



Physical Space – As a means of preventing learning cohorts from intermingling, all common areas, bathrooms, and playground spaces will be assigned schedules / routines and clearly outlined for staff and students.

Middle Cohort Example

- Cohort 1: Division 1 / Division 2 classes Teacher A 23 / Teacher B 22 (51 with adults)
- Cohort 2: Division 3 / Division 4 classes Teacher C 24 / Teacher D 23 (53 with adults)
- Cohort 3: Division 5 / Division 6 classes Teacher E 22 / Teacher F 22 (50 with adults)

SECONDARY

Secondary school students will continue to be organized in classrooms; however, school timetables will be organized to limit students to Learning Groups of no more than 120 students and staff.

Specifically, students in Grade 9 will be in a cohort and receive full-time instruction in a quarter, two course per day instructional model. Grades 10 -12 students will work in a cohort in their first “A” class of the day. As a means of allowing for student choice in elective areas of their specific grad programs, a hybrid model of learning will be established in their second “B” block. Following the quarter format, block B will see 50% alternating in class instruction for 5 weeks. At the 5-week mark, a term change will occur where block B will move to the morning block and become the learning cohort of 100% attendance, while block A will move to the afternoon with alternating 50% in class instruction.

Day 1 Start Up and School Entry – Each school will contact families prior to September 10 with clear communication on their plan to facilitate the orientation week process and safe entry into the building. Students will be divided by grade and cohorts to accommodate a gradual restart to allow staff to properly welcome students and learn the school’s health and safety protocols.

With careful consideration, students will be divided into their learning cohorts ahead of time and will be assigned an entrance / exit to the building.

New students will be met at the office where Administration will greet them and implement the registration process. Then these students will be added to their new cohort once careful consideration has been given to their learning needs.

Arrival / Departure – Students will be asked to remain outside, physically distance and wear a mask upon arrival and departure. Students are asked to depart the campus once the school day completes to avoid crowding or gatherings.



Break and Lunchtime – Cohorts will be assigned a space for breaks and lunch. Depending on the size of the school, this may require staggering transition times as well as lunch time routines. In most instances, student breaks will take place within their classrooms with individual breaks spread out during the morning and occurring according to the school health and safety routines.

Physical Space – As a means of preventing learning cohorts from intermingling, common areas may be closed off and bathrooms may be assigned to cohorts. These routines will be clearly outlined and displayed for staff and students. Students will be allocated specific spaces to congregate with their cohort during break times.

Secondary Model Structure:

In Grades 10-12, when full-time in-class instruction with a learning cohort is not an option and to ensure health and safety and student graduation requirements, we will implement the following structure:

Term 1 (5 weeks) Note: Period/Block 1 is the cohort group attending full mornings

Schedule	Day 1	Day 2
Morning	Period/Block 1 (In Cohorts, In-class) e.g. Math 11	Period/Block 1 (In Cohorts, In-class) e.g. Math 11
Afternoon	Period/Block 2 (Blended cohorts with physical distancing or self-directed if necessary) (Group A attends) e.g. Art 11	Period/Block 2 (Blended cohorts with physical distancing or self-directed if necessary) (Group B attends) e.g. Art 11

Term 1 (5 weeks) Note: Period/Block 2 becomes the cohort group attending full mornings

Schedule	Day 1	Day 2
Morning	Period/Block 2 (In new cohorts, In-class) eg. Art 11	Period/Block 2 (In new cohorts, In-class) eg. Art 11
Afternoon	Period/Block 1 (Blended cohorts with physical distancing or self-directed if necessary) (Group A attends) eg. Math 11	Period/Block 1 (Blended cohorts with physical distancing or self-directed if necessary) (Group B attends) eg. Math 11



STUDENT ISOLATION OR QUARANTINE

In the event a student or a learning cohort is required to self-isolate or quarantine, the District is prepared to maintain a continuity of learning. Depending on the situation, this may require additional mobile device support and a coordinated approach from the District and school level.

Additional consideration will be given to students and families with diverse abilities and needs and may result in collaboration with outside agencies.

STUDENTS WITH DIVERSE ABILITIES / DISABILITIES

During Stage 2, school support teams will continue to work towards providing students with diverse abilities / disabilities with the on-going supports required so they may access learning in a safe and inclusive manner, while incorporating the health and safety guidelines outlined by the BCCDC. Priority will be placed on early and frequent parent consultation to ensure plans for supports are clearly communicated. For students with complex needs, individualized plans of supports and safety measures will be carefully developed by the school team prior to the arrival of students.

Students will be able to attend school full time or have a plan to ensure supports and learning continue if a student needs to learn at home.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING

Supporting the health and safety of students, families and staff is a top priority during a pandemic event. In addition to taking measures to protect physical health, we also need to attend to social and emotional well-being.

Schools teams will look for and respond to changes in student behaviours, including trauma-related behaviours which may include fear; hyperactivity; aggression; body aches and pain; depression; self-harming behaviours; excessive shyness; or withdrawal.

Not all students will have experienced trauma as a result of the pandemic. However, in a time when anxiety and stress are increased, educators at all grade levels and in all subject areas are encouraged to incorporate social and emotional learning (SEL) throughout all learning opportunities, to build resilience and to enhance healthy, supportive communication. Schools will continue to engage in a whole-child approach and recognize that students may need additional supports as they transition into new or different routines. Learning environments that are designed to ensure that students feel safe, respected, valued and meaningfully engaged will support students' social and emotional well-being.



Educators and staff also need to feel well supported in addressing the challenges they are facing both at work and at home, and through various transitions during a pandemic. School and School District leadership teams will continue to consider the well-being of adults in the school system and ensure supports are in place for all employees. This is a unique time for everyone, and the positive mental health of adults will have a direct impact on students.

We know that this is a lot of information but hope it helps clarify some of your questions and concerns with regards to our September 2020 Education Restart Plan. Your school Principal will be communicating further site-based specific plans with additional information to you and are available if you have any questions about your child's education program.