



Frequently Asked Questions during COVID-19

For parents:

Are schools closed?

Schools are not closed, in-class learning is suspended. The decision to suspend in-class instruction for all kindergarten to Grade 12 schools was announced on March 17, 2020 by the provincial government following advice of the Provincial Health Officer.

How will my child's education continue?

The Vancouver School District is committed to the continuation of students' learning. Learning will look different and take various forms – some digital and others non-digital. As plans evolve, they will continue to be grounded in four guiding principles:

- Health and safety of staff and students
- Communication
- Connections
- Commitment to continued learning

This means sharing information in a timely manner and school staff checking in with families to assess their needs. It also means students continuing to feel part of their school communities, and continuing to learn, all with health and safety top of mind.

Why will it take until mid-April to give my child homework? This is too long without instruction.

While instruction will not be the same as it has been, there will be instruction in different ways through assignments and communication with teachers. Administrators, teachers and support staff are working to solidify what this will look like. The direction from the government to school districts is that supports for continued learning be in place for students by mid-April. The Vancouver School District is committed to doing this by mid-April, if not sooner. In addition, there are many opportunities to learn and strengthen skills outside of homework or school assignments, including in everyday activities like cooking, budgeting, and gardening. There are dozens of online resources for all ages available on the [District's website](#) to keep students engaged.

How do I manage to homeschool my child when I am required to work?

The Vancouver School District does not expect parents to become teachers. All planning and assignments will be done by teachers. Depending on their grade level, students will need differing levels of guidance (where a younger student may need instructions explained to them, an older student may be able to work independently). Teachers will communicate frequently with students and families and will be there to offer assistance virtually or over the phone.

I am an essential service worker and am unable to care for my child at home. How do I access child care?

Under an arrangement unique to Vancouver, all child care spots in Vancouver are being through an [online form](#) via Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre (WCCRC).

One parent in our household is an essential service worker, the other is not. Can I access child care?

The composition of families, and the urgency of their need for child care will assist in prioritizing who receives this service. For example, a single parent who is an essential service worker and has no other options for care may be prioritized over a two-parent family where one parent is an essential service worker and there are other care options.

Will children of essential workers be tested for illness before entering a child care facility?

No. Parents are asked to monitor their child's health and report whether their child has health symptoms. If a child is sick, parents will be asked to keep their child at home. For answers to questions related to health, call your doctor or Health Link 811. Every health and safety precaution will be followed by District staff to protect everyone's wellbeing. Signage is posted to remind people accessing child care programs about what steps they should take to keep themselves and others healthy.

My child accesses meals at school. Will they still be able to get meals there?

School staff are reaching out to students who usually access basic nutrition for free through meal plans at schools. Those students, who are amongst the most vulnerable, will be provided with this essential need.

We don't have access to a computer. How can my child participate in online learning?

Learning from home will take on many forms and vary via grade level, school, courses and students. Online learning will be one of several ways teachers work with their students to ensure their learning continues. School staff will gather information from students and their families about what technology they have access to at home. With that information on hand, staff will work to ensure students have the resources they need for success. This may include

device lending, assisting families accessing internet service through providers and determining alternative delivery of learning.

My child has diverse learning needs. What supports are in place?

Teachers, administrators and support staff are working to ensure students with diverse learning needs have access to the resources they will need. Plans will be in line with the goals of their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Specialists who generally support a student at school (such as occupational therapists and speech language pathologists) will be involved in developing those plans. The services may not be replicas of those provided at school, but will be activities appropriate for your child.

My child receives specialized learning supports. What can we expect for this service continuing?

School teams are considering alternate ways of delivering specialized supports and will be communicating with families of students to develop plans.

Will Individual Education Plans (IEPs) continue?

Yes. The IEP already in place for a student will be followed in planning for that student's continuity of learning.

What other supports are there for parents of students with disabilities?

Families are encouraged to reach out to organizations they have accessed before the pandemic. Most organizations that offer support to families are continuing to do so, although it may look a little different.

I'm concerned about my child missing social connections. How can this be helped?

A focus of the Vancouver School District in its planning is ensuring students continue to feel connected to their school communities. Aspects of these communities are changing with this unprecedented situation, but every effort is being made to ensure that feeling of connection remains. Teachers will continue to reach out to their students and their families in the days and weeks ahead. There are also many ways for students to connect with one another, including video chats or phone calls and sharing the activities they are doing during this time. Resources for parents to help them support their children are also available on the District's [continued learning hub](#).

Are school grounds open?

Fields are open to the public, but physical distance must be practiced by staying two metres away from others, and not gathering in groups. Similar to actions taken by the Vancouver Park Board, the Vancouver School District put measures in place to encourage physical distancing. Playgrounds are closed until further notice and play equipment like nets and hoops have been removed from basketball courts, tennis courts and portable soccer goals.

Who decides when in-class instruction will resume?

On March 17, the provincial government decided to suspend in-class learning under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer. The government will decide when in-class instruction will resume.

Will the school year be extended into the summer?

That decision would be made by the provincial government, but there has been no directive at this time.

Will the first few months of next year be spent catching up?

Students start any school year at different places in their learning, and teachers are able to assess and adjust their programs accordingly.

What videoconferencing application are teachers in the Vancouver School District using as they plan for the continuation of learning?

Following the government announcement to suspend in-class instruction, District staff immediately began plans to provide opportunities for students' continued learning. Microsoft TEAMS Classroom was selected as the online collaborative space for teachers and students, should teachers' plans include online collaboration. It is a safe, secure environment that provides a common experience and symmetry of learning. It is also the platform used by the District for some time and therefore will be a smoother transition supporting students' continued learning.

For students:

What about grades? Will my current grades be my final grades?

No. Teachers will determine final letter grades for students based on work completed to date and the assessment of learning that will occur over the coming months.

Will I still receive a report card in June?

Yes, there will be report cards in June.

Will I move on to the next grade level in the fall?

All students on track to move on to the next grade will do so. Graduation assessments that were scheduled in April for Grade 10 and 11 students will happen at a later date. Your teachers will share more information with you, and they are there to help you in the days and weeks ahead.

I am set to graduate Grade 12 this spring. Will I still graduate?

Yes. Every student on track to graduate will graduate. The only required graduation assessment is the Grade 10 numeracy assessment. If you have not completed this assessment and are on track to graduate, you will have an opportunity to meet the requirement. Your teachers will be in touch and are available to help you.

What about my post-secondary plans for next September?

The provincial government is working with post-secondary institutions and will also be working closely with the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training to ensure a successful transition. Students can access transcripts through the Ministry of Education's Student Transcript Service. When schools can report final marks, transcripts will be updated.

Will graduation ceremonies still go ahead?

At this time, public gatherings larger than 50 people are banned in BC by the Provincial Health Officer. Any ceremonies planned are cancelled or postponed. Ceremonies will not proceed unless the ban on large gatherings is lifted by health officials.

When will I know what assignments from my teacher will look like?

Teachers, support staff and administrators are working hard to develop supports for students, but this will take time. Teachers will be in frequent contact with students and families. In addition, there are dozens of online resources for all ages available on the [District's website](#) to help you stay engaged in learning.

I have some things at school I would like to retrieve. Am I able to do that?

Families and students will be contacted by staff to discuss what resources will be needed. Arrangements will be made to pick-up belongings from schools and other materials your teachers want to provide to you.

Everyone:

What should I do to prevent infection from spreading?

At all Vancouver School District sites, the advice and orders of the Provincial Health Officer are being followed. Preventing the spread of infection can be done by washing hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes with an elbow or tissue (followed by immediate disposal and hand-washing), avoiding touching your face, and staying home if you are sick. Anyone who travels outside Canada must stay in self-isolation for 14 days upon returning. If you have health-related questions, call your doctor or 8-1-1. A new non-medical information line was launched by the provincial government for British Columbians who have questions about COVID-19. It can be reached at 1-888-COVID19, and lines are open seven days a week between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Information is available in more than 110 languages.