



July 30, 2020

Back-to-school planning continues

On Wednesday, July 29, Minister of Education, Rob Fleming and BC's Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, [announced](#) the provincial plan for the return of school in September. Students will return to class in Stage 2 of the provincial government's [five-stage education plan](#). Students will return to in-class learning at their schools.

Everyone in schools across the District looks forward to welcoming back students in September. As always, the health, safety and well-being of students and staff remain the District's top priority.

Learning Groups

As the provincial government announced, learning groups will be a part of the new school year. They will be made up of students and staff who will remain together. This helps ensure students are supported academically, as well as socially and emotionally. Learning groups will be no more than 60 people in K-7 schools and no more than 120 people in secondary schools. Several classrooms may make up a learning group. However, this will still limit the number of people each student or staff member comes into contact with. Public health officials indicate this will reduce the risk of transmission and will also ensure quicker contact tracing if necessary. The creation of learning groups will affect some school schedules, particularly at the secondary level. Detailed information and school schedules will be developed and shared with students and families in the coming weeks, ahead of the start of the new school year.

Health and Safety Measures

In addition, District staff are reviewing the enhanced health and safety protocols prescribed by the government to ensure measures are in place when students return to classes. Students, their families and staff can expect the continuation of health and safety practices that were put in place in June. These include:

- Enhanced cleaning
- Frequent washing/sanitizing of hands
- Reducing physical contact and maximizing physical distancing when possible
- Reminders about respiratory etiquette
- Daily self-health assessments by staff and older students as well as for children by caregivers
- Staggered pick-up and drop-off times, recess, lunch breaks and bell
- Limiting entry into schools by those other than staff and students

District staff began planning for back-to-school in late June, ahead of the ministry's announcement and updated five-stage plan. With these details provided by the provincial government, District staff will in conjunction with teachers, administrators and other key partners continue to refine plans in order to fully implement educational programming and all health and safety measures prescribed by experts. Students, their families and staff can expect more information in the coming weeks.