



## **FAQs: In-class instruction resumes**

On May 15, 2020 the provincial government announced a partial resumption of in-class instruction beginning June 1. Please note that in-class attendance is voluntary and the decision rests with students' families.

### **Is it safe for children to attend school?**

Guidelines issued by the Provincial Health Officer indicate that most children and youth are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection. COVID-19 virus has a very low infection rate in children and youth. In BC, less than 1 per cent of children and youth tested have been COVID-19 positive.

### **How will the District ensure the health and safety of students and staff?**

All schools will follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer. These include limiting the number of children attending, staggered pick-up and drop-off times as well as recess, lunch and time outdoors. Upon arrival at school, everyone will wash and/or sanitize their hands. Opportunities for frequent handwashing will be provided. Classrooms with sinks will be stocked with soap and paper towels. Classrooms without sinks will be provided with hand sanitizer. Students will be reminded about the steps they can take to keep themselves and others healthy and staff will model these behaviours throughout the school day.

### **How will physical distancing be implemented in schools?**

Adolescent children should physically distance themselves where possible when outside the family unit or household. For younger children, maintaining physical distance is less practical and Provincial Health Office guidelines focus on minimizing physical contact instead.

The following physical distancing strategies will be implemented where possible in the K-12 school setting:

- Students will be reminded to avoid close greetings (e.g., hugs, high-fives, handshakes, etc.).
- Students will be reminded about keeping their "hands to yourself".
- People will be spread out into different areas via different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
- Students will be organized into smaller groups so that they stay together throughout the day. Staffing assignments will minimize the number of different teachers and support staff that interact with groups of students throughout the day.
- Pick-up and drop-off times may be staggered.
- Recess/snack, lunch and class transition times may be staggered to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.

- Students will have more outside time including learning activities, snack time and place-based learning
- For younger students, group activities will be adapted to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
- For adolescent students, group activities will be minimized and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Traffic flows will be managed to limit the number of people in common areas, including hallways.
- Parents, caregivers and other non-staff adults will not be allowed to enter the school building without a pre-arranged appointment.
- Staff will remind children and each other to practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Assemblies and other school-wide events will be held virtually.
- Students will be reminded about washing their hands frequently, about coughing and sneezing etiquette as well as keeping physical distance from each other.
- Students will be reminded not to share food, drinks, utensils or belongings.

#### **Will students go through screening measures when arriving at schools?**

Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. Staff and students who are ill will not be permitted to attend school. Provincial Health Office guidelines indicate schools do not have any role in screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health care professionals.

#### **Will children and staff wear masks?**

According to the guidelines provided by the Provincial Health Officer, wearing a cloth or homemade mask, particularly by children, is not recommended. However, wearing a mask is a personal choice. It is important that people who decide to wear masks are treated with respect. Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

#### **What measures are in place to ensure schools are disinfected?**

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Schools will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC Centre for Disease Control's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document.

This includes:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises should occur at least once a day.
- Frequently-touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day.

#### **How will textbooks and other school supplies be cleaned?**

According to the Provincial Health Office guidelines there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper-based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

**Are there sufficient sinks, soap and hand sanitizer?**

Since March 2020, 124 new faucets have been installed to replace old faucets in school washrooms. Children will be reminded to wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Where/when sinks are not available hand sanitizer will be provided. Sufficient hand sanitizer and dispensers has been distributed to schools.

**What is the schedule for in-class instruction?**

Students in kindergarten to Grade 5 will be offered in-class instruction two days a week. Students in Grade 6 and 7 will be able to attend school 1 day a week. For students in grades 8-12 we are currently determining how the 20 per cent requirement will look. As details are worked out information will be shared with families by school administrators.

**How will the days of the week for my child/ren to attend be decided upon?**

School administrators have provided a survey to families with elementary aged children to complete so they can determine how many students will attend. Based on that, and following the guidelines provided by the Provincial Health Office, schedules will be shared with families.

**Will schools accommodate families' schedules?**

Unfortunately, to ensure the Provincial Health Office guidelines are adhered to, including ensuring small groups attend, the schedule will be fixed. This also helps ensure students and staff have limited contact with fewer individuals, protecting everyone's health and safety.

**Will siblings of different age ranges/grade groupings be able to attend on the same day/s?**

Schools will do their best to accommodate siblings on the same days. The school schedule will be set so the guidelines by the Provincial Health Officer are adhered to. Depending on the school's size and how classrooms are configured, it may not be possible to have siblings attend on the same day if they are not in the same grade grouping (K-5, Grades 6-7 and Grades 8-12).

**Will my child's learning suffer if they do not attend?**

Attending in-class instruction is voluntary and the decision will vary from family-to-family. Whether students attend in-person or continue learning remotely, their learning will continue to be supported.

**If my child/ren attend in-person, will they also be expected to complete assignments and work from home?**

Teachers will continue to plan lessons and provide learning opportunities for students whether they attend in-person or online.

**Will my child have the same teacher as they did before?**

Every effort will be made to keep students with their usual teacher. However, this may not be possible for every class. Staffing decisions will be made in consideration of the health and safety of students and staff.

**I'm an essential services worker. What support is available for my child?**

The announcement to resume in-class instruction on a part-time basis by the government provides for up to 100 per cent in-class support at school for [Tier 1 and Tier 2 Essential Service Workers](#). The children of school staff would be accommodated.

**My child has special needs and a ministry designation. How will their learning be supported?**

Children with exceptional learning needs will continue to be supported in their learning. As such, they may have an opportunity to attend school each day, continue learning remotely or a combination of both. Planning is currently underway to determine schedules and supports for in-class learning. As details are worked out, school staff will be in contact with families of students with exceptional learning needs who may benefit from additional in-class support.

**Will there be before- and after-school care available?**

Before and after-school care may be available through regular program providers. If a program was offered at your child's school, it may continue to operate. Please contact the child care provider for more information.

**Is there child care for younger children, not enrolled in schools?**

Child care providers that operate on school property may continue to operate. Please contact the child care provider for more details. Information about child care providers can be found online through the [Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre](#).

**My child/ren attended child care run by the District. Will they still be able to attend if I decide not to have them attend in-class instruction?**

Children of essential service workers who were attending in-school child care programs will be reassigned back to their regular school for in-class instruction. If a family decides to not have their child attend in-class instruction, their learning will be supported remotely. Information about child care providers can be found online through the [Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre](#).

**How will students' marks be impacted if they attend versus if they continue with remote learning?**

Students will receive marks based on their learning progress regardless if they attend in-class instruction on a part-time basis or continue to learn remotely. All children who were on track to move to the next grade prior to the suspension of in-class instruction in March will do so. Students will also not receive a mark lower than they had prior to spring break. Students who were looking to the remainder of the school year to improve marks will be supported to do so by their teachers.

**Will students be able to use playgrounds or play sports?**

The guidelines issued by the Provincial Health Office do not prohibit playground time nor sports. However, to minimize physical contact, these activities may be limited. Students may

instead have more unstructured play or place-based play. Under the guidelines, additional outdoor time will be incorporated into each school day.

**Will there be field trips for students?**

Unfortunately, field trips will not take place for the remainder of the school year. However, increased time outdoors will be incorporated into each school day.

**Now that students are able to go to school, will graduation ceremonies and celebrations take place?**

All District in-person graduation ceremonies and dinner dance/banquet celebrations for the 2019-2020 school year have been canceled. Graduation is an important life milestone and a special time for everyone involved with education. School and District staff have been working with graduation committees to recognize this important occasion. Plans will be based on two parts: a virtual pre-recorded video presentation of the graduating class and a special acknowledgement of grads as they come to the school to pick up grad items at a time scheduled by the school by walking down an honorary grad hallway. Specific plans will be shared in the coming weeks as schools work with their graduation committees to finalize the details.

**Will the school year schedule be extended to run through the summer?**

No, the school year calendar will not be extended, as indicated by the provincial government announcement about the resumption of in-class instruction on a part-time basis.

**Can students take summer school courses?**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Vancouver School District changed how summer school will be offered. This year, summer school will be:

- Offered online only
- Limited to grades 10-12 academic completion courses
- Six weeks in length from July 2 to August 5, 2020
- Available only to students currently enrolled in a school of Vancouver School District.

Registration is on a first come first served basis, via online only. Registration is currently open and closes on June 12, 2020.

Additional learning opportunities for students is available through the [Vancouver Learning Network](#).