

August 26, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of Elementary Students,

I am pleased to share that the Ministry of Education has reviewed and approved the *North Vancouver School District Stage 2 Restart Plan*. Toward the end of this update, you will find links to the plan and to highlights for Back-to-School September 2020. I encourage you to take some time over the next few days to review the information with your family.

Schools as Safe Learning Environments

Our Restart Plan was designed under the [guidance of the Ministry of Education and Provincial Health Officer](#). By following these guidelines, we are able to ensure students and staff return to a safe and healthy learning environment.

I'd like to take some time to explain in greater detail why schools are able to safely re-open under Stage 2 of [B.C.'s Five Stage Framework for K-12 Education](#) in September. It is important to make the distinction between the school environment and other community settings.

First, schools are considered "controlled environments," meaning schools have a consistent and limited group of people accessing the building. At any time, schools are able to produce a log (date, name, contact information) of anyone who has entered the building on a particular day.

Second, through the use of learning groups, we are able to help our school community of students, teachers and support staff realize the benefits of safe levels of interactions, while reducing the risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Third, and much like what students and staff who returned to school in June would have experienced for themselves, schools are required to have in place a comprehensive set of health and safety measures, some of which are included here:

- Designated entrances, floor markings and/or signage to manage traffic flow.
- Staggered pick-up and drop-off times.

- Staggered recess/snack, lunch and class transition times.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces at least twice in 24 hours, including once during regular school hours (e.g. doorknobs, light switches, hand railings).
- Making non-medical face masks available to staff and students.

A successful return to school also involves you. I would therefore like to ask for your support as we return to school in the fall. Some of the actions you can take to help protect those around us include:

- Monitoring your child daily for symptoms and not sending them to school if sick.
- Following the schedules provided regarding staggered drop-off and pick-up times and modified lunch and recess breaks.
- Not entering schools. Families are to phone the school's main office to make an appointment.
- Labeling their child's personal items and reminding children not to share their items.
- Reminding children of the importance of minimizing physical contact and maintaining physical distance.
- Encouraging good hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene and personal hygiene.

Enrolment Options

During Stage 2 of B.C.'s Five Stage Framework for K-12 Education, our plan will see the majority of our:

- Elementary students return to in-person, in-class instruction.
- Students in grades 8 and 9 return to in-person, in-class instruction.
- Students in grades 10, 11 and 12 return to in-person, in-class instruction in the morning, and a blended model of in-person and online learning in the afternoon.

For families of the NVSD, who for their own personal reasons, are not prepared to send their children back to school, the learning options available include:

- Registering your child for an elementary-level [online and distributed learning program](#) outside of the NVSD. Currently, our [Distributed Learning program](#) only offers core academic courses in Grades 8 - 9 and academic and elective courses in Grades 10 - 12.

- Registering your child for [homeschooling](#). Before registering for homeschooling, which must occur by September 30th, families are encouraged to read the important information shared on the Ministry of Education website. Furthermore, families should consider that registered *homeschoolers who then choose to return to the NVSD public education system, while able to return to a school within the NVSD system, are not guaranteed a return to their current NVSD school.*

Students with Immune Suppression

According to the Provincial Health Officer and the BCCDC, *most children with compromised immune systems can return to school when safety measures are in place.*

For families with children who are immune compromised or where the parent/caregiver is immune compromised, please consult with your healthcare provider to determine the level of risk regarding a return to in-class instruction.

Families seeking an alternative to in-class instruction, and who do not wish to register their child in a distributed learning program or homeschooling, will be required to obtain a doctor's note indicating the need for accommodations due to health-related risks. Subsequently, parents/guardians should reach out to the principal of their current school to discuss available options and support.

Survey to Families

We acknowledge that we have heard from families who would like more learning options available to them at the elementary level. We recognize that despite the highly positive feedback we received from families whose children returned to school in June, for some families, there exists a high degree of anxiety with a return to in-class instruction in September.

To support families as they make decisions about what school will look like for their child, we have created a survey. While exploratory in nature, participation in this survey will enable families to make an informed choice and give the school district a better sense of the interest in other options to maintain educational continuity for students.

Please click [HERE](#) to complete a short survey. The survey will close on Saturday, August 29th at 11:59 PM. Please note that if we do not hear from you, we will make the assumption that your child will be returning to school in September.

As I had explained in last week's update to you, the North Vancouver School District will continue to work under the Ministry of Education's [Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities](#) and [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#), and we will adapt and implement any changes to our plan that may come from the Ministry of Education or Provincial Health Officer.

Plan Details and Communications

Before I conclude, I would like to share with you this [LINK](#), which will take you to the following resources:

- North Vancouver School District Stage 2 Restart Plan documents
- Elementary School (K to 7) Highlights
- Secondary School (Grade 8 to 12) Highlights and timetable example
- Health and Safety Highlights
- Facilities and Planning Highlights

I would also like to share what you can expect in terms of communications going forward:

- Permission forms. Each year, parents/guardians must complete various forms for their children for the upcoming school year. Three of these forms must be completed online. Next week (week of August 31st), and over the course of three days, parents/guardians will receive an email for each of their children from the school district with detailed instructions on how to complete the online forms. Please complete them right away to ensure a smooth start to the school year. Your child's school will also provide paper-based forms that need to be completed promptly and returned to school.
- School-level communication. Starting later this week and leading up to the first week of school, you can expect to receive communications from your child's school. Your school principal and/or teacher will be sharing information concerning return-to-school information that is school-specific, including information regarding class and/or course placement.
- District-level communication. You can expect to receive communications from me, including regularly scheduled Superintendent's Updates in the coming weeks.

Should you have any questions, concerns or comments regarding the information provided with this update, please reach out to your child's school (principal) for assistance.



In closing, as we learn to live in the new reality of 2020 in mitigating the risk of COVID-19, the 2020/21 school year will be demonstrably different from what any of us have previously experienced. We anticipate that until there is treatment, a vaccine, or community immunity to COVID-19, our school norms will need to adapt and change. It is my perspective that these new norms will form the basis of planning for future school years. This reality is something we all need to factor into the decisions we make as we go forward in this “new normal”.

Having said that, I’d like to leave you on a positive note. With a few weeks left to the start of school, I hope you are able to enjoy the rest of summer with loved ones. *We look forward to welcoming back our community of students and staff in September!*

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Pearmain".

Mark Pearmain
Superintendent of Schools

Translation Options

To view this update in a language option of your choice, please review and enable the message translation options available through your email provider. While not exhaustive, we have provided links to popular email providers: [Microsoft Outlook](#) and [Gmail](#).