

August 21, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Staff,

Earlier today, I submitted the *North Vancouver School District Restart Plan* to the Ministry of Education for review.

Today's update is intended to provide a high-level overview of the plan, with a focus on our proposed learning model. Additional information concerning our learning model, health and safety measures, enrolment options and our plan for ongoing communication with you will be shared on or before August 26th, once the Ministry has approved the full restart plan.

The North Vancouver School District Learning Model

Our plan was designed to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff, while maximizing in-class instructional time by:

- Keeping [learning groups](#) as small as possible (and well below the established maximums set by the Ministry of Education).
- Limiting physical contact within established learning groups.
- Encouraging physical distancing outside of established learning groups.
- Making [non-medical face masks](#) available to students and staff.

We see the learning model presented to the Ministry as a real opportunity to provide for a rich learning experience that:

- Positively impacts student learning, including social and emotional learning and mental health.
- Ensures all students have equal access to supportive educational programs.
- Prioritizes the needs of students with diverse abilities, disabilities and those requiring additional support, by ensuring supports and services are in place at the start of the school year.
- Maintains student course requests as much as possible to preserve student choice and ensures students in grades 10 - 12 are making progress towards completion of graduation requirements.

- Places a renewed focus on outdoor learning opportunities.
- Supports teachers as they work to build a strong sense of community with their students.
- Considers teachers' expertise and preferences when creating teaching assignments.
- Allows for a seamless transition between stages, should we be required to move into Stage 3 or 4.

At the elementary school level (K to 7):

- Students will return to in-class instruction.
- The classroom—a single class of students with their teacher—will be the learning group.
- Learning groups will be small in size, ranging from 20 to 29 students, plus the teacher/support staff.
- There will be an increased frequency and encouragement of outdoor learning opportunities.
- Learning that would have taken place in common spaces (e.g. library, music room, computer lab, gym), will instead take place in the classroom or outdoors.
- Non-medical face masks are:
 - Not required for elementary students, but students may wear them as a personal choice.
 - Required to be worn by staff in high traffic areas, common areas, or when staff are interacting with people outside of the learning group and cannot maintain physical distance.

At the secondary school level (Grades 8 to 12):

- The timetable will be based on the quarter system, with each student taking two courses, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, for approximately 10 weeks.
- At the end of the school year, students will have taken 8 courses.
- Each course will allow for approximately 140 minutes of instruction per day.
- There will be a dedicated block of time each day for students to meet with their teacher for 1:1 support.
- Non-medical face masks are required to be worn by staff and secondary students in high traffic areas, common areas, or when staff or students are interacting with people outside of their learning group and cannot maintain physical distance.

For students in Grades 8 and 9:

- Students will return to in-person, in-class instruction.
- Students will be placed in learning groups of approximately 30 students.
- Wherever possible, the same group of students will stay together for the morning and afternoon courses, with some exceptions (e.g. elective courses).

For students in Grades 10, 11, 12:

- Students will be offered in-person, in-class instruction in the morning and a blended model of in-person and online learning in the afternoon.
- Students in the morning class will be in a different learning group from students in the afternoon class; physical distancing between these two groups will be required.
 - For the morning course, students will be placed in learning groups of approximately 30 students.
 - For the afternoon course, approximately 30 students who share the same teacher will be further divided into two sub-cohorts of 15 students. These two smaller cohorts will experience a blended model of in-person and online learning, but on alternate days of the week.

I can appreciate that once school begins, we will all need time to adjust to the new learning models and safety protocols. I can also appreciate how you will undoubtedly have questions. We ask that you hold on to those questions for now, as they may be answered when you see the full plan details on or before August 26th. In the interim, we have prepared an FAQ that you can access [HERE](#).

At this time, I would like to express my deep gratitude to our partners, with whom we have engaged in consultation in designing this restart plan, and with whom we will continue to consult in the coming weeks, as we further refine and adapt our plan. These partners include:

- Skwxwú7mesh Nation and Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- Métis Nation British Columbia
- North Vancouver Parent Advisory Council (NVPAC)
- North Vancouver Teachers' Association (NVTA)
- North Vancouver Administrators (NoVA)
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 389



I would also like to sincerely thank all of you for your patience and trust in your school district, and for giving us the time needed to develop a plan for the safe return to in-class instruction for the majority of our students and our staff.

Like you, we fully recognize and appreciate that for our students and staff to realize the many benefits of in-class instruction, our back-to-school plan must continue to prioritize the health, well-being and safety of students and staff. We are confident that this plan will help us achieve that.

We also acknowledge the concerns, suggestions and requests for more options that some families have provided to the district and Ministry of Education. We 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.

We are excited to open our doors to our students and staff once again in September!

With appreciation,

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

Mark Pearmain
Superintendent of Schools

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