

September 3, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians of Grade 11 and 12 Students:

Re: *Labour Day weekend activities*

This year marks the start of our Grade 11 and 12 students' most exciting and, undoubtedly, defining years of secondary school. Staff throughout the North Vancouver School District look forward to supporting students as they pursue their passions and continue on a path of personal growth. We hope to inspire success for every student and in turn, be inspired by their achievements.

With the final long weekend of the summer approaching, I would, however, like to share an important safety advisory for parents and guardians of our senior students. The Labour Day long weekend has typically been a time when some youth, and particularly those entering their "grad year," participate in unauthorized social gatherings that quite often involve alcohol, drugs and vandalism.

These types of social gatherings are harmful to the young people involved for several reasons:

- Underage drinking and drug use are known to negatively impact thoughts, moods and judgment.
- Alcohol and drugs can create a sense of invincibility and immunity that serves as a prelude to other risk-taking behaviours.
- If these events are captured on cellphones and later shared on social media, there is the potential for such images to resurface and negatively impact a student's future (e.g. post-secondary application, career opportunity).

These gatherings are not only harmful to the youth involved but also disruptive to neighbourhoods and damaging to the social fabric of our community—a community that everyday, is learning to live with the reality that is COVID-19. Unauthorized social gatherings go against everything we have been asked to do as responsible citizens to move forward together while also protecting the most vulnerable members of our community.



As we have done in the past, we will continue to support local law enforcement in its work to keep our communities safe. The RCMP has expressed strict enforcement of all laws and regulations pertaining to social gatherings over the Labour Day weekend, including new measures outlined in the Emergency Program Act, in support of the province's approach to COVID-19 and BC's Restart Plan. Penalties for youth who violate the Act range from \$200 for participants to \$1,000 for organizers of gatherings and events in excess of 50 people. For an update from the RCMP, please click [HERE](#).

We rely on our Grade 11 and 12 students to be the positive role models and community leaders our younger students look up to. We anticipate this year's senior students will help set an encouraging, welcoming and inclusive tone for their schools, but we also realize there is a lot of excitement surrounding the graduating year. While we all look for the right balance between the need for social connection and responsible behaviour, we ask our students to consider the impact their choices will have both on their school year and on others in the community.

Thank you for your attention to this important safety message. I hope it sparks a healthy dialogue with members of your family about youth social responsibility and safe celebrations.

We look forward to welcoming our students back to school next week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Pearmain".

Mark Pearmain
Superintendent of Schools

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