



BC Confederation of
Parent Advisory Councils

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May 28, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

Over the past two months, we have all been working together - but apart – to stop the spread of COVID-19. All our sacrifices are paying off as we are flattening the curve in B.C.

We recognize you and your families have faced many challenges through these uncertain times; we also know how much your children have been missing their teachers, school staff and their friends.

As you've heard, our government, under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), will offer a safe and gradual return to part-time, in-class instruction.

YOU CHOOSE WHAT'S BEST FOR YOUR FAMILY

You will have the choice whether you would like to send your child to school part-time for the remainder of the school year. If you choose to send your child to school, it will not be the same as before. In order to meet the guidelines, set out by the (PHO), Dr. Bonnie Henry, we will need to limit the number of students in schools during a normal day.

Kindergarten to Grade 5 students will have the option to attend half-time (for example: 2 or 3 days a week). The school population will be limited to 50% of its normal capacity to lower density and increase safety for students and staff.

Grades 6 to 12 students will have the option to attend school approximately one day a week.

Children of essential service workers and students who require additional support will have the option to attend class full-time.

Each school district and independent school authority has been given the flexibility to set weekly schedules and plans that work best for their school community.



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STUDENT & STAFF SAFETY COMES FIRST

All boards of education and independent school authorities will be required to implement measures in accordance with Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC health and safety guidelines to reduce the risk COVID-19 transmission, including:

- Students will be spaced apart and groups or gatherings of students in hallways or other common areas will be avoided.
- Regular cleaning of high-contact surfaces like door knobs, toilet seats, keyboards and desks at least twice a day, and cleaning the school building at least once a day.
- Students, educators and staff will be required to clean their hands before entering school property. And there will be more hand-sanitizing and cleaning stations available.
- There will be staggered drop-offs, lunch and recess breaks, with increased outside time.
- Staff and students (or their parents/guardians) will be asked to assess themselves daily for symptoms of COVID-19. If any student or staff member has even mild symptoms, arrangements will be made for that person to be returned home.
- Students or employees will be asked not to share food or personal items like phones, pens or pencils, and clear protocols will be in place for the safe and healthy handling of all food items.
- Learn more about PHO and WorkSafeBC guidelines at www.gov.bc.ca/SafeSchools

We know the gradual return to school will be stressful for some children and families. Please connect with your child's teacher or school leadership if you have concerns. There are programs and services available and we must work together to identify and offer extra support to children who are having a difficult time under these challenging circumstances.

Our goal is to return to full in-class learning in September, as part of [B.C.'s Restart Plan](#) announced by Premier Horgan on May 6. It's a cautious and measured approach to safely get kids back to school and to help parents/guardians return to work.

Throughout this health crisis, we have been working with all 60 school districts, independent school authorities, First Nations schools, teachers, school leaders, support staff, public health officials and all our education partners to coordinate and collaborate as plans unfolded.

We have appreciated our other vital partners in education – you – parents and guardians. You have been helping with remote learning, many of you while working from home. You have been keeping kids active and engaged and safe and calm. Your efforts are noted and appreciated.

If you choose not to send your children to school, there will still be options to continue with remote learning. Plus, the Ministry has developed a web-based parent resource called Keep



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Learning BC at www.openschool.bc.ca/KeepLearning with free, educational activities for every age, designed to support the B.C. curriculum.

If you haven't yet heard from your school about plans and schedules yet, please contact your child's principal.

Each school district and independent school authority must have their health and safety plans posted on their websites for families to access before June 1.

Remember, schools aren't going to look the same as they did the last time your children were there, so we still need to be kind and be calm as we find our new normal. We are in this together, and we **are** getting through this.

Sincerely,

Rob Fleming,
Minister of Education

Andrea Sinclair, President
BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils

More Information

- Accurate, timely information about schools, programs and educational services, including regularly updated frequently asked questions in multiple languages, is available at: www.gov.bc.ca/SafeSchools
- For the provincial health officer's orders, notices and guidance, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance
- The best source of COVID-19 health information can be found at the BC Centre for Disease Control website <http://www.bccdc.ca/>
- For mental health and online safety support, all families have access to ERASE – Expect Respect and a Safe Education – available here: www.erase.gov.bc.ca
- If your child is struggling with a problem big or small, they can also call the Kids Help Line, a free resource available to them at: 1-800-668-6868.