

Dear Families,

Welcome back to the 2020/2021 school year! This year is going to be unlike any we have had before, but we know our students are up for the challenge. As you know, we have been working all summer to come up with a back to school plan in alignment with direction from the Ministry of Education and Public Health Office. We're happy to share it with you today with the hopes of helping to ease your worries. Here is a broad picture of the district's plan. Each school will share specific details for their site with you in the coming weeks.

In order to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff, while maximizing in-class learning, we have come up with a plan that will:

- keep learning groups as small as possible;
- limit contact between learning groups; and
- establish physical distancing measures outside of learning groups.

LEARNING GROUPS

A learning group, or cohort, is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout the school term (1/8 semester or year) and who primarily interact with each other. Under Stage 2 of the government's framework, the maximum size of learning groups is 60 people in elementary and middle schools and 120 people in secondary schools.

AT ALL SCHOOLS

There are a number of things that will take place at each SD62 school. While some schools may be laid out or seem different from other schools, the education each student receives remains the same. Each school will determine the following:

- Whether or not they will stagger their start and dismissal times.
- The traffic flow throughout the school, including specific entrances and exits and play/break areas.
- How the learning groups will be determined.

SCHEDULE

Elementary: Monday-Friday, all day with 100% in-class instruction
Middle: Monday-Friday, all day with 100% in-class instruction
Secondary: Monday-Friday AM or PM class on 1/8 system

HEALTH & SAFETY

Under guidance from the provincial government, Provincial Health Officer, the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and our local health authority, SD62 schools have strict health and safety measures to ensure the safety of our staff and students. These include:

- frequent hand washing
- added sanitization stations
- hand sanitizers in all portable classrooms
- physical distancing for students outside of their learning groups

- mandatory masks or face coverings in high traffic areas where physical distancing cannot be met (middle & secondary schools, school busses). *Exceptions will be made for people who cannot wear masks for medical reasons
- increased cleaning and disinfecting of schools, classrooms and high touch areas
- designated entrances, floor markings and/or signage to address traffic flow
- limitations on assemblies and other gatherings
- visitor access only for people entering to support activities that benefit student learning and well-being
- isolated rooms should someone fall ill while at school
- below learning group maximum at secondary level
- quick contact tracing through the learning group model
- trust in parents, students and staff to stay home if they feel ill

SCHOOLS

School administration will contact families in the coming weeks with details pertaining to their individual schools.

Elementary

Kindergarten – Grade 5

- Learning groups of 60 people (example: teams of two classrooms will join for common times such as recess and lunch)
- Monday-Friday, regular school hours
- 100% in-class instruction
- Specified zones for cohorts during recess, lunch and common times
- Staggered start and dismissal times are possible
- Controlled traffic flow throughout the school
- Masks optional

Middle

Grades 6 – 8

- Learning Groups of 60 people (example: teams of two classrooms will join for common times such as recess and lunch)
- Monday-Friday, regular school hours
- 100% in-class instruction
- Staggered start and dismissal times are possible
- Controlled traffic flow throughout the school
- Masks must be worn in all high traffic areas (hallways, school buses, etc.)

Secondary

Grades 9-12

- 1/8 system: One class subject, Monday-Friday for approximately five weeks
- Learning groups of 30 (staff being the connection between the AM & PM classes)
- Class scheduled to attend AM or PM each day
- Supplemented self-directed learning
- Options to remain at school to continue independent work outside of class time
- Controlled traffic flow throughout the school
- Masks must be worn in all high-traffic areas (hallways, buses, etc.)

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SERVICES

All students with disabilities or diverse abilities who need extra support in school will continue to have full-time access to in-class instruction and the supports and services they are eligible to receive.

COMPLEX MEDICAL CONDITIONS

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. Protective self-isolation is only recommended for children with severely compromised immune systems, on a case-by-case basis. Conditions include organ transplant, chemotherapy, receiving high doses of steroids or severe immune deficiency diseases.

Parents/guardians of children with complex medical conditions or underlying risk factors should consult with their healthcare provider to determine their child’s level of risk regarding returning to school. Subsequently, parents/guardians may wish to reach out to the principal or support teacher (case manager) of their current school to discuss available options and support.

EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

We know some families have choices to make. Here is a chart based on the government’s Return to School Stage 2 model that may help you make the decisions that are right for your family.

	In-Class Instruction	Student with Complex Medical Conditions	Distributed Learning (DL)	Homeschool
Student	Enrolled in SD62 School	Enrolled in SD62 School	Grades 9-12: Enrolled in SD62’s Westshore Centre for Learning K-Grade 8: Enrolled in other school district’s DL program	Registered at catchment school as a homeschooling student.
Learning Groups	Yes	Depends on accommodation	No	No
Method of Instruction	Full time in-class instruction within learning group limits	Parents/Guardians work with school to develop educational plan. May include remote learning.	Online	Parent provides and supervises entire educational program.
Must Meet the Learning Outcomes of BC Curriculum	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Student Progress Evaluated by a Teacher	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Once school begins, we know families, students and staff will all need time to adjust to the new plan and safety protocols. Undoubtedly, you will have questions. Please take a look at our FAQ on our [website](#).

We acknowledge the requests for more options that some families have suggested to the Ministry of Education. We continue to work under the Ministry's [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for k-12 Settings](#) and [Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities](#). We know that things can change quickly and we are ready to adapt and implement changes to our plan that may come from the Ministry of Education or Provincial Health Officer.

As always, you can find this information and more on our website www.sd62.bc.ca, SD62 [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Thank you to our families and staff for your patience and trust in SD62 for giving us the time needed to develop a plan for safe return to in-class instruction. We are excited to welcome students and staff back into our schools!

Sincerely,

Scott Stinson
Superintendent of Schools