



Bringing Learning to Life!

# Vancouver Island North School District No. 85

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August 26, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Re: Return to School Restart information

I trust you have all had a good summer and have had the opportunity to relax and recharge with your children and families.

During the summer break we have been working with the Ministry of Education and the Public Health Office to make sure our schools are safe, welcoming buildings for all students and staff to return to.

We are aware that there is a lot of rumour and speculation on social media and this can be alarming and confusing. Try not to let what you read and hear cause any anxiety. We have regular meetings with Dr. Bonnie Henry, her team and the Ministry of Education so that we can bring you the facts as we know them and can work together to keep your children safe.

We will be returning to school in stage 2 of the Ministry of Education’s restart planning table (see below or check the Ministry of Education website for a clearer version):

STAGE 1 IN-CLASS	STAGE 2 IN-CLASS	STAGE 3 HYBRID	STAGE 4 HYBRID	STAGE 5 REMOTE
<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary: <i>No limit</i></li> <li>Middle: <i>No limit</i></li> <li>Secondary: <i>No limit</i></li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time all students, all grades</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary: 60</li> <li>Middle: 60</li> <li>Secondary: 120</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not applicable</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time instruction for all students for the maximum instructional time possible within cohort limits.</p> <p>Self-directed learning supplements in-class instruction, if required</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary: 30</li> <li>Middle: 30</li> <li>Secondary: 60</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>50% for all schools</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time instruction for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children of essential service workers</li> <li>Students with disabilities/diverse abilities</li> <li>Students who require additional supports</li> </ul> <p>In-class instruction for all other students for the maximum time possible within cohort limits and density targets.</p> <p>Self-directed and remote learning supplements in-class instruction.</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary: 30</li> <li>Middle: 30</li> <li>Secondary: 30</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>25% for all schools</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time instruction for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children of essential service workers</li> <li>Students with disabilities/diverse abilities</li> <li>Students who require additional supports</li> </ul> <p>In-class instruction for all other students for the maximum time possible within cohort limits and density targets.</p> <p>Self-directed and remote learning supplements in-class instruction.</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elementary: 0</li> <li>Middle: 0</li> <li>Secondary: 0</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0% for all schools</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Suspend in-class instruction for all students.</p> <p>Self-directed and remote learning in place of in-class instruction.</p>

For your child it will depend what age they are and which school they attend as to how many learning groups (cohorts) are in their building. If a student is in the secondary age group then they will be in a learning group of no more than 120 people including staff. If they attend elementary then the learning group will not exceed 60 people. That is again to include staff. The reason the elementary groups are smaller is because it is often harder for younger children to socially distance and follow strict hygiene protocols all day. The groups are kept to these maximum sizes because the public health office can manage these numbers if someone within the learning group should develop signs or symptoms of Covid-19. This does not mean that class sizes are increasing. They are not. It means that the maximum number of students another student can meet socially or in the learning environment in a school in School District 85 or any other school in the Province of BC is either 120 (Secondary school) or 60 (Elementary or Middle school) in any one learning period (a term or semester or year).

Your school Principal will be posting the school restart plans on their school website. Each school will look a little different to one another due to size, age of students and location. Your Principal and their teams will also be reaching out to you all to let you know which learning group your child will be in.

School start up is going to look different from a normal September start up. Teachers and support staff will be returning to their buildings on September 8 and will be doing Health and Safety training and orientation on September 8 and 9. This will also give them the opportunity to finalise any last minute plans.

The students will be instructed by their Principal or one of the school team as to which day they should return to school and for how long on day one. September 10 is the first possible day that students will be returning to school. This may only be for part of the day as the students will be given an orientation session regarding Health and Safety protocols and what to do if they are feeling unwell etc...

If your child is unwell then do not send them to school. Schools will be unable to keep a sick student in the building. If you are worried that the symptoms may be covid-19 related then you must phone your health care provider as soon as possible. The Public Health Office will determine who has been in close contact with anyone with a positive Covid-19 test and will notify those people as to their next steps.

We have an updated Health and Safety plan which is on our district website as well as a start up plan for the district. These plans and other supporting documents have been checked and approved by the Ministry of Education and their teams.

All Middle and Secondary aged students will be provided with a re-useable mask on their first day back in school. Younger students are not expected to wear a mask. Staff will also be provided with re-useable masks.

Masks are not mandatory for staff or students, it is a choice as to whether or not your child wears their mask all day or not. We will be respecting the decision of the individual families or staff member regarding this unless instructed otherwise by the Public Health Office. The only places that masks are mandated is on school busses/ferries (younger students are not expected to wear a mask on the bus or in school) and when learning groups may come into contact with one another, for example walking to

class in the hallways. All learning groups will have breaks and their entry/exit points in the building will be staggered so that they do not cross learning groups wherever/whenever possible. Social distancing markers and protocols are still in place in buildings and extra disinfecting and hand wash stations are in every building. All students and staff will be expected to use these. There are plexi glass screens in front of every secretary office space and portable ones for some itinerary staff (Teachers on call, Learning Assistant Resource Teachers (LARTs) and school counsellors etc...) These are expected to be used and no one will be allowed to bypass them.

No visitors, including parents will be allowed in the buildings without making prior arrangements with the school Principal. If you need to drop off or pick up your child outside of regular school hours then you will be asked to make arrangements with the school. If you are entering the building you will be expected to wear a mask and wash and disinfect your hands prior to entering the building. You will also be asked to sign in and follow the instructions of the office staff. This is so we can give information to the Public Health office if they need to follow up with contact tracing. It is also to keep the staff and students safe from extra people outside of their usual leaning or home groups.

Thank you for your understanding with all of this. Together we will get through this difficult period. It is important that our students get the opportunity to socialise and learn at school again and it's important for the economy for parents to be able to return to work without worrying about where their children are and if they are safe.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to talk to your school Principal in the first instance. Check our school district website regularly for any up to date information and the school websites or face book pages too.

A letter with instructions about week one will be on its way to your home very soon. There is still plenty of time so don't worry if you don't hear from your school straight away.

This is a new experience for everyone but it need not be the cause for any further anxiety. We are really looking forward to welcoming your child back into school on September 10 or 11.

Take care of yourselves, stay safe and well.

Yours truly,



Carol Robertson

Superintendent of Schools/CEO  
Vancouver Island North/SD 85