

Wednesday, August 25, 2021

Re: Back to School Plan for the 2021-22 School Year

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The province has unveiled its plans for the upcoming school year.

On September 7th, we will be welcoming all students back to the classroom for fulltime in-person learning. As part of that return, we will be implementing updated health and safety measures for K-12 school settings. The safety of our students, staff and families is our top priority. We will be releasing an updated COVID-19 safety plan prior to school start-up.

We recognize that there are questions about the upcoming school year. Our District will continue to employ preventative measures and extensive safety protocols that will best protect our students, staff and families. Some of these preventative measures include:

- Daily health checklists
- Staff and students staying home when sick
- Mask wearing indoors for all K-12 staff, visitors and students in grades 4 to 12, including at their desks and on school buses
- Mask wearing indoors strongly encouraged for students in Kindergarten to grade 3
- Focus on hand hygiene
- Building air ventilation
- Cleaning and disinfecting

The most important thing that we can do to protect children is to make sure the adults around them are vaccinated. According to public health officials, 90% of the new cases are amongst those who are not fully vaccinated. We must continue to do our part in keeping our schools and communities safe.

What will look different in the 2021/22 school year?

- Students will no longer be organized in learning groups/cohorts
- Students/staff will not be required to social distance by 2 metres, but will work to implement measures such as respecting others personal space and learning outside more often
- Extra-curricular activities and sports will resume in alignment with Public Health Orders (PHO)

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

- Gatherings and events can occur within PHO guidelines
- Visitors and community use/rentals will resume
- Vaccinations for volunteers in schools are required, except for those unable to be vaccinated for medical reasons

For more details on the back to school plan, please visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021EDUC0058-001663>

We understand that some of our families may be feeling anxious about the upcoming school year with rising COVID-19 case numbers. Be assured, we will continue to prioritize student and staff safety while meeting the learning needs of all our learners.

We will be providing staff, students and families with resources for mental health and physical well-being through school and district communication, including our District *SNAPSHOT*. We are also currently working with our Online Learning School – The Link – to offer learning options for students who are immunocompromised. We will have more details in the coming weeks. If you have any other concerns in the meantime, please reach out to your School Principal.

As we head into this school year, I would like to express my appreciation for your ongoing efforts to ensure we have a safe and successful school year. Our collaborative work has allowed us to quickly adapt, innovate and be flexible when challenges arise while keeping the students' learning experience at the center.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back for the 2021-2022 school year.

Sincerely,



Deb Whitten
Interim Superintendent of Schools

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One *Learning* Community

