

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I hope all families are doing well, enjoyed the holidays and the snow.

As we near the January 10th restart, we've implemented additional Health and Safety protocols including schedule adjustments and structures to minimize student congestion. As well, teachers are developing Continuity of Learning plans to ensure student learning continues in the event we are directed to temporarily close the school and move to online learning.

Please take the time to read the following changes and the revised bell schedule. This information will also be posted to the school website.

NOTE – These protocols are temporary, and we will move back to our original bell schedule as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. These temporary changes are aimed at ensuring student and staff safety to the best of our ability in a large building with over 1200 people. The main goal is to ensure our school stays open in a safe manner while the new COVID variant is present in our community. It will take every staff member and student being diligent in following all health and safety protocols to place our school community in the safest position to continue face to face learning.

SCHEDULE CHANGES:

1 – Temporary Shortened Lunch

- Reduce to 35 minutes plus 5 minutes of transition time
- Lunch is the main time for student congestion and students need to remove masks to eat/drink – reducing this time will reduce the main time for congestion
- Open gym will be temporarily cancelled
- The shortened lunch will result in an end of day dismissal time of 3:05.

Our new bell schedule is:

Period 1	9:05 – 10:25	(no change)
Period 2	10:30 – 11:50	(no change)
Lunch	11:50 – 12:25	(10 minutes shorter)
Period 3	12:30 – 1:45	(10 minutes earlier)
Period 4	1:50 – 3:05	(10 minutes earlier)

Please discuss these changes with your child prior to their return on Monday. We are working with the bus company to shift afternoon pick up times where possible, reducing wait time for students.

ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS & REINFORCEMENT of CURRENT PROTOCOLS

2 – Outside Time

- Similar to last year, students will be outside at the start of the day, until 8:45, at lunch, and after school. This reduces congestion in hallways and times students gather inside with or without masks. Students should dress appropriately for the weather. On days with extreme weather, alternate arrangements will be made for an inside lunch.

3 – Temporary Transitions/External Doors/Lockers

- Students will temporarily enter and exit the school via the nearest external doors to their locker or classroom to reduce hallway congestion.
- Students will be asked to minimize their locker use as much as possible during the day (Ex. gather materials needed for both morning classes at the start of the day)

4 – Temporary Limited Visitor Access

- Is now limited to individuals impacting student learning and well-being (student teachers, VIHA personnel, community supports, etc.). We ask parents to contact teachers via email and the office by email or phone.

5 – Extra Curriculars

- Sports tournaments are paused – single games and individual sports can continue
- No spectators are allowed
- Clubs and practices are still allowed

6 – Masks

- Reinforcement of the mask mandate will be emphasized throughout these additional protocols
- Proper mask wearing is essential in ensuring our school stays open and students/staff are safe
- We ask that you discuss this with your child to ensure they have their mouth and nose covered throughout the day (exception of eating/drinking) while present anywhere in the building
- Students are to minimize eating/drinking in the classroom; many classrooms will have a “no eating, drinking” policy as part of additional classroom protocols, with small nutrition breaks provided during class time.
- Disposable medical masks will continue to be handed out in the office
- We do have a small number of students with mask exemptions

7 – Daily Health Checks

- Please complete a daily health check with your child. If any symptoms are present, please keep them home
- Any students who exhibit symptoms while at school will be placed in our quarantine/isolation room and home contacted to pick them up ASAP

8 – Extended Student Absences

- If your child is sick, tests positive or is required to self-isolate please contact your child’s teacher via email for any learning resources and assignments to ensure your child stays engaged with their classes as much as possible.
- If the absences extend beyond two weeks please contact your child’s vice principal or counsellor to discuss options.

We know these changes will have an impact on staff and students; please remember they are temporary and we will return to our regular schedule as soon as it is deemed safe. We believe these changes will help us navigate the new variant and any future changes as they present themselves during the pandemic. Some of the additional protocols were used at our school last year (outside time, external entrances/exits, shorter lunch, staggered releases) and were successful in providing a safe learning environment for student and staff while ensuring face to face instruction continued uninterrupted. We will be constantly reviewing and updating these changes as we progress through the remainder of semester one which ends January 27th.

CONTINUITY of LEARNING PLANS:

Each staff member has been tasked this week with developing a continuity of learning plan. This plan will be implemented if we are directed to conduct a closure of the school due to any of the following:

- Provincial Health Order
- Regional (Island) Health Order
- Functional Closure - Widespread staff illness affecting the school's ability to offer instruction safely to all students

Staff will spend the early part of next week informing students how instruction will be delivered if we need to move to online learning.

I would like to thank our staff, our students and student's families for their diligence throughout this year in maintaining a safe and healthy school. As we continue to navigate this pandemic and it's ever-changing nature, we will need to continue to be flexible and adaptable to ensure we can consistently offer face to face learning. We appreciate your on-going support and understanding with these new changes which will begin Monday, January 10th.

If you have any questions, concerns or require clarification please contact one of the school administrators.

We look forward to seeing students back in our building on Monday.

Thank you and enjoy the weekend,

Vanier Administration Team