

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 and teachers have been 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 (attached). This information will also be posted to the school website by tomorrow.

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 building with over 750 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 Removal of Teacher Advisory (TA)

- This reduces the daily number of class transition times from five to four
- This reduces the daily number of student groups/classes per student from five to four
- The 10 mins from TA will be redistributed to the morning teaching blocks

ADDITIONAL PROTOCOLS & REINFORCEMENT of CURRENT PROTOCOLS

2 – 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.

3 – Extra Curriculars

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

4 – 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; some classrooms may have a “no eating, just drinking water” policy as part of additional classroom protocols
- Disposable medical masks will continue to be handed out at the start of the day and start of lunch and are available in the office

8 – 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

9 – 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 to discuss options. Ms. Stephanie Baker for Gold House and Mr. Don McRae for Blue house.

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The new temporary bell schedule is attached. Please discuss these changes with your child prior to their return on Monday.

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

Administration Team

Highland Secondary School