



School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

Board of Education of School District No. 71

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Office of the Superintendent of Schools

August 7, 2020

Dear Families of SD71,

On July 29, 2020, the Ministry of Education along with the Provincial Health Officer announced the plan to return to school for September 2020.

The plan is to begin the 2020-2021 school year in Stage 2 of the 5-stage Framework for K-12 Education. This stage will see the return of full-time instruction for all students.

Returning students to school full-time, in-class is based on the principle that in-person learning, as a part of child's education, provides maximum opportunity for peer engagement. Having students in the classroom helps to minimize learning gaps and provide the academic, social and emotional support essential for learning.

Stage 2 will entail the return of all students using a cohort model. The intention of this model is to reduce the number of in-person, close interactions a person has in school without requiring physical distancing to consistently be practiced.

At the elementary and middle levels, a cohort can be composed of up to 60 people, which includes both students and staff. The cohorts will remain consistent for all activities that occur in school which include learning and break times. This may lead to possible staggered recess and lunch breaks and limited assemblies etc.

At the secondary level, the cohort limit is 120 students and staff. Schools may need to restructure schedules so that all students stay within the cohort limitations.

Our schools will be working on developing school specific plans over the next few weeks using the guidelines developed by the Provincial Health Officer. Our intention is to release our finalized detailed plans to our community by August 26, 2020. The first day of the 2020-2021 school year is Tuesday, September 8th.

We encourage parents to visit both the school and the District website for up-to-date information and plans regarding September start up.

As we anticipated in June, when we reopen schools, a return to full-time in-class instruction will be received with mixed emotions. Some parents and caregivers are happy to see some degree of normalcy with the return of full-time in-class instruction on the horizon. At the same time, some might feel some anxiety about whether school spaces are safe.

In accordance with the School Act, parents who do not want their child to attend in-person classes at a school will always have the option to home school their child or register their child for online and distributed learning (DL).

We are fortunate to have a comprehensive DL school, [Navigate NIDES](#), which will serve as the provider for online/DL options for students. Some families are wondering if their child will continue to have a space in their current school if they choose the DL or home school option, we are currently working on the logistics behind these and other options and will have details in the next few weeks.

Full details of the BC Governments Stage 2 Return to School can be found on the provincial website at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school> , which is posted on the school district COVID-19 Information webpage at www.comoxvalleyschools.ca.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'T. Demeo', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Demeo
Superintendent of Schools