

For immediate release

26 August 2020

District releases the Return to School 2020 Plan

Comox Valley, B.C. – Comox Valley Schools is in a good position to begin the 2020-2021 school year in Stage 2 of the 5-stage framework for K-12 Education.

The school year will commence the week of Tuesday, September 8 as an orientation week to familiarize students, staff and families of the Health and Safety protocols and procedures to ensure learning environments are safe and fully prepared for in-class, full-time instruction.

The elementary and middle level students will be back to full days while operating within a cohort model of a maximum of 60 students for breaks and unstructured time. At the secondary level, the cohort size is a maximum of 120 students and teachers.

Tom Demeo, Superintendent of Schools stressed that the plan was prepared in consultation and collaboration with our educational partners, school administrators and Island Health.

“Our plan was developed using the direction from the Ministry of Education’s [B.C.’s Back to School Plan](#) and the guidelines developed by the Provincial Health Officer,” explained Demeo. “Our plan is presented under the cohort/learning group model and clearly lays out the delivery of instruction for elementary schools, secondary schools and for students with diverse abilities and disabilities.”

Key highlights of the plan include:

- Elementary school cohorts will be made up of two divisions to keep numbers below 60. Cohorts will work together on projects, interact and play together during recess and lunch break.
- Elementary schools will have designated zones for cohorts which will rotate so that students have access to multiple play areas throughout a school week.
- Maximum use of outdoor activities so students should come prepared for the weather.
- Secondary schools will follow the Copernican Model (quarter system).
- Secondary students will have 2 blocks a day of approximately 2.5 hours each for 10 weeks.

- Students will have the choice to wear a mask in the classroom.
- Students 11 years of age and older are required to wear a non-medical mask while riding the bus.
- Ventilations systems in all school site have been updated and comply with COVID protocols for schools and universities. Buses will operate with mechanical and natural ventilation at all times.
- All staff will be trained and must pass a knowledge test on the updated District Health and Safety Requirements and Protocols.

The District anticipates that the majority of students will attend school and have face-to-face instruction, however, some families may opt for home schooling or distance learning.

At the Board Meeting held August 20, trustees passed a resolution that school placement will be held for students while they opt for an alternative delivery of education. A student's placement will be held at the school until September at the start of the 2021-2022 school year.

“Families that chose an alternative delivery model and then decide to return to school are always welcome back at anytime during the school year,” assured Demeo. “We ask that families connect with their school first before pursuing another option and have a conversation with the principal.”

Many questions from the community have been asked in the days leading up to the release of the plan. They have are compiled in a Frequently Ask Questions (FAQs) document available on the District web page, [Return to School 2020](#). FAQs will continue to be updated as new information becomes available.

This web page is also populated with relevant and current information that has been provided by the BC government, including the Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent Schools, the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings, Comox Valley Schools Health and Safety Reoccupancy Requirements and Protocols, WorkSafeBC education protocols, and the BC Centre of Disease Control COVID site.

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Full details of the Comox Valley Schools Return to School 2020 plan available at <https://www.comoxvalleyschools.ca/ReturntoSchool2020/>

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