

For immediate release

10 August 2020

District prepares for a full-time return in September

Comox Valley, B.C. – Planning is underway following the Ministry of Education and Provincial Health Officer announcement July 29 of the intentions to return students to school in September 2020.

The plan is to begin the 2020-2021 school year in Stage 2 of the 5-stage framework for K-12 Education and is set to commence Tuesday, September 8.

Stage 2 stage will see the return of full-time, in-class instruction for all students within cohort limitations.

At elementary and middle levels students will be back to full days while operating within a cohort model of a maximum of 60 students for breaks and unstructured time. It may also include staggered recess and lunch breaks, and limited assemblies or similar group gathering.

At the secondary level, the cohort size is a maximum of 120 students and teachers. Secondary school administrators are considering whether schedules will need to be restructured so that all students stay within the 120-student cohort limitations.

“Our schools will be working on developing school specific plans over the next two weeks following the guidelines developed by the Provincial Health Officer and the Ministry of Education,” said Tom Demeo, Superintendent of Schools. “Our intention is to release our finalized plans to our community by August 26.”

Demeo acknowledged that the District’s Reopening Framework developed in the spring was a very robust plan that followed health and safety policy and procedures and was prepared in collaboration with the Comox District Teachers Association (CDTA), CUPE 439 and District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC).

“Will continue to use this model and collaborate with our education partners for the new school year,” added Demeo. “Enhanced health and safety measures remain at the forefront of our school reopening plan including a stringent cleaning regime.”

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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. Registration is open and new applications are being accepted. Visit <https://www.navigatenides.com/>

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.

A letter addressed to parents and families was shared with the District August 7 explaining where Stage 2 plan developments are currently and to encourage parents to visit the District website at www.comoxvalleyschools.ca for accurate, complete and up-to-date information regarding the September start-up.

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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>

For more detailed information about COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings visit <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools>

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