



School District No. 71 (Comox Valley)

Board of Education of School District No. 71

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Office of the Superintendent of Schools

May 22, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of Comox Valley Schools,

Comox Valley Schools will transition from Stage 4 to Stage 3 of the five-stage [Ministry of Education K-12 Education Restart Plan](#) - where in-class learning, in varying degrees opens to all students. This new development for the delivery of education was announced by Premier of B.C. John Horgan on May 15th in a [joint press conference](#) with the Provincial Health Officer and the Minister of Education.

The Stage 3 reopening of schools commences June 1 and will look different for many students.

1. K-5: Students will have access to in-class instruction two days a week, with up to 50 percent of students at a time in schools. Classes will be divided into 2 groups, one group will attend Monday and Tuesday, while the other group will attend Thursday and Friday. Wednesday will continue to be a connections day for home learners to connect with their teachers.
2. Grade 6-7: As our District schools have various grade configurations, we will be seeking approval from the Ministry to align grade 6 and 7 with K-5 and provide in-class instruction two days a week with up to 50 percent of students at a time in schools, up from the Restart Plan which identified one day a week and 20% of the students in schools. We will seek this approval while ensuring all Ministry health and safety protocols will be maintained and for the educational benefit of having consistency throughout the school. The schedule would align with K-5 and we will communicate the decision before June 1.
3. Grades 8 to 12 students will have up one day per week available for all students. At risk and vulnerable learners will have further time provided to them either through Parent or teacher request. Next week, schools will be in contact with their families to outline specific details about their schedules and associated return to school protocols.

The return to school is optional. Parents and guardians will have the choice of bringing their children back to class on a part-time basis this school year or continuing with the remote and online learning options. Should parents choose to switch from the online remote learning option to face to face after June 1st, we ask that they contact their school principal to make arrangements as planning needs to occur to ensure all Health and Safety protocols are met.

Last week some of our school sites welcomed vulnerable learners back to school. We are happy to report that we are now delivering in-class instruction in several classrooms in our schools under the rigorous protocols sanctioned by WorkSafe BC and the Provincial Health Officer.

Before schools reopen to all students and staffs, the District will continue to implement health and safety protocols to ensure all learning environments are safe and thoroughly disinfected with continued ongoing cleaning measures. All full-time, part-time and on-call staff must undergo training from their respective school site Joint Health and Safety committee as part of the District's School Re-opening Framework. Our plan is constantly evolving to reflect new direction provided by the Provincial Health Office and Worksafe BC.

Our School Re-opening Framework is a very detailed plan that came together in a very short period of time in collaboration with our education partners. The framework methodically lays out the class configuration standards, health and safety protocols and in-class instruction delivery model for all grades and learners including students with complex learning needs.

The plan will be shared with the Ministry of Education on May 25, an obligation of all BC school District's to meet before reopening school sites. Schools will be sharing their specific plans with their respective communities.

Childcare centers currently operating in four of our school sites for ESW's will no longer continue after May 29 as a result of this new mandate. School-aged children being cared for in our centres can return to in-class instruction 5 days a week. The District continues to work with private operators to open their child care centres.

Families will receive personal contact from their child's school before June 1 sharing details of what the first day back to school will look like and lay out expectations for both the student and parent/guardian. To illustrate to our school communities what the return will look like, we are creating a School Reopening Framework video and will have that available on the District website in advance of the first day back into the classroom.

Student transportation on buses will resume, however, capacity will be reduced to 50 percent allowing only one child per seat. Only siblings may sit together. First Student, the contracted busing company for the school district will clean and disinfect buses in accordance with the BC Centre for Disease Control protocol: [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#). Given the reduced capacity on buses, where feasible, we encourage parents/guardians to transport their child to and from school.

We thank you again for your continued patience, kindness and understanding as we navigate through these complex times of unprecedented decision-making. We are moving forward using a measured and safe approach with the health and wellbeing of all at the forefront of our plan. 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>

Please take care of yourselves and each other.

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

Respectfully,

Mr. Tom Demeo
Superintendent of Schools