



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 8, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians of Comox Valley Schools,

Comox Valley Schools will begin the work to prepare for the return of elementary school students following the direction of the Premier of B.C. John Horgan and his five-stage [BC Restart Plan](#).

The return to in-class instruction for students in kindergarten to grade 5 will be staggered and on a part-time basis as identified in Phase Three of the plan. Grades 6 to 12 will return partially and only on an as needed basis. Remote and online learning continues to be available for students.

No date has been set by the province as to when that will commence, however the District is planning for the end of May/ beginning of June.

In the period leading up to the reopening of elementary schools, teachers and District staff will address the learning needs of complex learners to determine how best to accommodate these students immediately.

Preparation has begun to open school sites to vulnerable learners with the first schools opening the week of May 11.

To ensure the safety of all, the District will follow rigorous protocols sanctioned by WorkSafe BC and the Provincial Health officer including daily screening, social distancing among adults and stringent hand washing for students and staff.

Before any student and staff return to schools, the District will ensure all learning environments are safe and thoroughly disinfected with continued ongoing rigorous cleaning measures.

Since in-class instruction was suspended on March 17, District custodial and maintenance staff have maintained vigilant sanitization regimes ensuring all spaces occupied during the day undergo a thorough cleaning. On weekends, a deep cleaning process is conducted in all school facilities.

We anticipate this news will be received with mixed emotions. Many parents and caregivers are happy to see some degree of normalcy with the return of classroom instruction on the horizon. At the same time, it will be met with anxiety about whether school spaces are safe.

We want parents, staff, students, and the community to feel confident and assured that the first priority is the health and safety of students and staff. Reopening our schools will be guided by the directions of the Provincial Health Officer and the Minister of Education.

Returning to school will be optional – a choice that the parents and guardians can make based on their comfort level. The Board of Education want parents and families to feel confident before sending their child back to the classroom environment.

To help District parents ease into the transition, the District has organized an online presentation by [Kim Barthel](#), *Sending our Children to School: What does that mean after the Pandemic*. The presentation is open to all District families Thursday, May 21 from 6:30 to 8 p.m. via Zoom. Kim Barthel is a renowned author, teacher and speaker and an occupational therapist whose specialties in workshop instruction include Trauma Informed Practice, mental health and other disciplinary services. Watch for presentation details on the District website and on our social media channels.

Please take care of yourselves and each other.

Respectfully,

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

Mr. Tom Demeo

Superintendent of Schools