

Dear families,

We are looking forward to welcoming your child for another year of learning. As you know, students will begin to return to classrooms on September 10 and 11 for a full orientation on the implemented health and safety protocols and for an introduction to their cohort.

As we prepare for a return to school, I am writing to provide you with our school district's ministry-approved [Restart Plan](#). This plan includes information about the health and safety measures implemented in our schools and district facilities, the organization of learning groups in our elementary and secondary schools, as well as the steps we have taken to ensure continuity of learning should we need to transition between stages. Your child's school will provide you with more school-specific details.

Moving to the quarter system

Secondary school students and staff will be assigned to learning groups of no more than 120 people. However, perhaps the biggest change we are making at the secondary level is moving from linear programming to a quarter system. The quarter system involves students completing only two courses at a time and switching courses at each quarter of the school year. Secondary school principals in our school district have added refinements to the quarter system so that student elective choices and access to supports are maximized as much as possible. If the Provincial Health Officer must scale back attendance due to worsening conditions, it is much easier for students to manage the requirements of just two courses at a time in the context of more limited in-person school attendance.

All of our high schools have agreed to primarily use one online learning platform so that students do not have to manage numerous platforms.

Students in grades 8, 9, and where possible grade 10 will be scheduled for daily, full-time in-classroom instruction. Learning groups in these grade categories will consist of no more than 80 people. In cases where multi-grade electives and support blocks are offered outside of the learning group, physical distancing will be required. Additionally, classes with students from more than one learning group will run as semester or linear programs with physical distancing rules in place. Your child's school will provide school-specific information.

Students in grades 11, 12, and in some instances grade 10 will be organized in learning groups of no more than 120 people. In some instances, afternoon classes will be scheduled in **blended format** to accommodate elective choice. In a blended format, students will be scheduled for in-classroom instruction twice a week with one day dedicated to online learning. Daily in-class instruction will be available to students who cannot manage the blended model. In cases where electives and support blocks are offered outside of set learning groups, physical distancing will be required.

Students with diverse abilities/disabilities

Students with diverse abilities/disabilities will be provided full-time in-class instruction unless alternate programming is otherwise determined in consultation with parents through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. For students who need a partial or blended program, a plan will be established within the student's IEP. The school team will ensure that the student has access to technology and other items as required for instructional programming and therapy. For additional information, please contact your school principal.

Screening and when to stay home

Parents/guardians will be required to do a daily health assessment of their child(ren) every morning using a [district-provided checklist](#) before sending their child(ren) to school. Students who have any symptoms of illness must not attend school. District staff will need to perform this same daily assessment and will also be required to stay home should they have any symptoms of illness.

Practicing hand hygiene

Alcohol-based hand sanitizing stations have been installed throughout our schools and at the entrances of all district facilities, and hand hygiene signage has been placed throughout all district buildings. We have installed touchless faucets where possible and provided paper towels in all bathrooms.

Keeping a safe distance from others

Secondary students in a learning group do not need to stay two metres apart but should limit personal contact. Classrooms will be configured to allow for distance between students and adults as needed. Physical distancing will also be supported through the staggering of school start times, dismissal times, and lunch breaks; through separate dedicated entrances, exits, and eating areas; and through entry and exit procedures with learning groups using assigned doors, washrooms, and classroom spaces.

Wearing a mask and/or face covering

Masks are not required within learning groups (cohorts) but are mandatory for secondary students and staff when they are outside of their learning groups and in high-traffic areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g. in buses, hallways, and classrooms). The school district will provide two reusable cloth masks to all secondary students. Staff who interact with multiple learning groups will be required to wear a mask and face shield when they are unable to maintain physical distancing.

Ventilation and enhanced cleaning and disinfection routines

Ventilation systems in all school district facilities will meet WorkSafeBC requirements, and all air filters will be replaced on a regular basis. All schools will be cleaned in accordance with the *Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings*. General cleaning (including single-use surfaces like student desks) will occur once every 24 hours, while frequently touched surfaces as well as all shared equipment, appliances, manipulatives, and tools, will be cleaned and disinfected twice every 24 hours. The school district has hired additional custodians to meet the demands of these enhanced cleaning routines.

Alternate options

As you can see, our secondary schools are creating a number of unique and diverse blended learning models to support student learning and honour the cohort guidelines created by the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Health Officer. Students who are registered in high school and choose to take a course with an online school such as the school district's Connected Learning Community (CLC), however, will be cross-enrolled. You can find additional information about CLC at <https://clc.sd42.ca/>.

If your child is considering this option, they should first have a conversation with their home school principal or counsellor to ensure they are aware of all available options at their home school.

For additional information on our school district's *Restart Plan*, including information about the district's preparedness for transitioning between stages, new bus routines, and information about Continuing Education, Alternate Education, and our trades programs, visit the district website at <https://www.sd42.ca/sd42-restart-plan/>.