



August 21, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

Re: COVID-19 Information Bulletin – September 2020 Education Restart Plan Update

I hope all of you are having a healthy, safe and meaningful time with your families. I understand how difficult these weeks have been on all of you waiting anxiously to hear details regarding the return to school. Our goal has been to communicate information when available and help reduce stress levels during this unprecedented time. Our District staff and school administrators have been working hard reviewing Ministry guidelines and developing our own plan to ensure students are able to reach their full potential in this new normal in education. I would like to update all of you with a preview of our Education Restart Plan which we are expecting to share with you on **August 26**.

**Please understand our proposed plan is pending approval from the Ministry of Education. It is important to note, as our education landscape continues to evolve due to COVID-19, our District could make changes at any time. Our commitment is to share the most up-to-date information available.**

### Timeline

Date	Action
August 21	District submits plan to Ministry District shares preview of plan
August 26 or earlier	District to share Ministry approved plan
August 26 – September 4	Schools to share site-based specific plans and any additional information

### ORIENTATION WEEK

September 8/9	Only school-based staff on site at schools to learn safety measures and protocols
September 10/11	Students attend school to learn safety measures and protocols <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please Note: School administrators will be sharing details regarding start times/length of day/end times and other school specific information. Parents should expect students to only be in attendance for a portion of one day depending on the school</li><li>• Kindergarten students are not in attendance on these days</li></ul>

### IN-CLASS INSTRUCTION BEGINS

September 14	All students are in-class for instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please Note: School administrators will be sharing details regarding start times/schedules/end times and other school specific information.</li></ul> All Kindergarten students begin gradual entry today <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Please Note: School administrators or Kindergarten teachers will be sharing details regarding start times/length of day/end times and other specific information. Parents should expect students to only be in attendance for a portion of time on certain days depending on the school.</li></ul>
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## What is Guiding our District?

Our District continues to take direction from the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Health Office. Health and safety continues to be our priority. We are guided by the following provincial guidelines:

[Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities](#)  
[Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Setting](#)

Our staff are continuing to develop the local versions of these plans and will be sharing these with you next week.

We understand you have questions. As part of our Education Restart Plan, we will be sharing a guide with answers to common questions in the coming days.

## Most Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why is there no remote learning option at my child's school at this time?**

As stated by the Ministry in its Operational Guidelines for School District and Independent School Authorities (pg. 7), "remote learning can meet the urgent need for continuity of learning during suspension of in-class instruction; however, this mode of instruction is not ideal for all students. The majority of students learn best in a classroom with direct contact with teachers, other professional staff and peers." As mandated by the province, our District is committed to maximizing in-class instruction for all students with the current health and safety guidelines for schools however, we understand that there are many families that are anxious about the restart. We value our families and do our best to support their needs. In the coming weeks, our District will continue to explore opportunities to assist those families.

### **What are my child's options at this time?**

1. Your child can attend their catchment school under the Education Restart Plan implemented by the school and supported by the District. The plan will be approved by the province. This plan will be shared with the community by August 26. The District suggests you consider hearing your child's school plan before making any decisions.
2. Your child can enroll in one of our distributed learning programs:
  - For Grades 10-12  
Langley Education Centre (LEC) offers a range of programs including: a blended type, semester type, and a self-paced full-time onsite or online program. The process to enroll includes a school counselling session and interview. For more info: <https://lec.sd35.bc.ca/>
  - For Grades K-12  
U-Connect offers a blended program for students in Kindergarten thru Grade 9. In this program students are required to be in class two days per week. The rest of the learning is completed at-home. The process to enroll includes a program info session and interview.  
There is also a blended and a full-time online program for Grades 10-12. The process to enroll includes a program info session and interview. For more info: <https://simonds-uconnect.sd35.bc.ca/u-connect/intro-to-u-connect/>

3. If your child (or someone in your household) is immune suppressed as defined by the BCCDC's [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and Children with Immune Suppression](#), a learning plan that meets your child's individual needs will be available.

By definition "immune suppression means that your child's immune system is weakened by medications or a medical condition. A weakened immune system may not be able to protect as well from infection." Our District will have a process in place to accommodate these students. We will be communicating this information when it is available. As part of the process, please be prepared to do the following:

- Consult with your child's medical health provider to determine the level of risk regarding your child going back to in-class instruction at their current school.
  - Obtain a note from your medical health provider indicating the need for an accommodated at-home learning program supported by the District.
  - Contact your child's school administrator to discuss the process.
4. Your child can be homeschooled. In this option, you are still required to register your child at your catchment school and inform the administrator that your child will be homeschooled. It is important to note that the catchment school and District has no authority to approve or supervise the educational program of a homeschooled child and your child will not have a placement at their catchment school. The school is only able to provide evaluation and assessment services and loan of education materials. For more info please refer to the Ministry's webpage:  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/classroom-alternatives/homeschooling>

**If my child leaves their catchment or choice school, will their placement be saved for the following year?**

At any point, if a student leaves their catchment school or choice school, they must re-register to attend the following year during the usual registration time set-up by the District; there are no guarantees there will be a placement. For choice schools, registration is generally in the month of October. For catchment schools, registration begins in January and extends to March. We understand the unprecedented situation due to impacts of COVID-19 and the request from parents for flexibility in this regard however, our District aims to maintain procedures to ensure equity for all students. If a student departs, we will not be holding placements for any students at any of our District sites.

**What if a student or staff member is found to be a confirmed case of COVID-19 at my child's school?**

If a student or staff is confirmed to have COVID-19, the Fraser Health Authority will do an investigation to confirm if any staff or students have been in close contact with that person and need to self-isolate. The health authority will inform the school and District if there are close contacts of a confirmed case within a learning group or school. The District will take direction from the health authority regarding operations and communications.

## Preview of Restart Plan

Our District's goal is to develop a plan that is consistent and ensures equity across the system. With more than 40 schools, there will be some variations due to diverse populations and building sites. As part of the development of this plan, we have been collecting feedback and consulting with administrators, unions, DPAC (parents), First Nations and the public (through our online feedback form).

With the changing nature of the pandemic, our District staff continues to remain flexible and adjust plans when needed. We appreciate your patience and understanding and ask you to be prepared for any changes. We will do our best to communicate new information in a timely manner.

In developing our plan, our District aims to:

- Follow the provincial health and safety guidelines
- Maximize in-class instruction
- Keep students in their learning groups
- Limit the movement of students on-site
- Manage traffic flow on-site

*Learning Group: A learning group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout the school quarter, semester or year and who primarily interact with each other. Learning groups were recommended by the Provincial Health Officer to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Learning groups can also include teachers and support staff.*

### **Secondary Schools**

- Quarter system (10 weeks per quarter)
- Students take 8 courses in a year
- Students take two classes per quarter
- Students in learning groups under 120
- Students in smaller class sizes
- Staggered break/lunch/end time (varies among schools)
- Separate entrance and exit points (varies among schools)

### Junior Students

In-class instruction for all students; students have two classes per day.

### Senior Students

Blended Model: Students will have an in-class and online component for the quarter. Halfway through the quarter (5 weeks), students will switch the morning block with the afternoon block to ensure there is an equal amount of face-to-face learning in all courses. Our goal is to maximize face-to-face learning in all courses.

AM: All students are in-class daily for the morning block and are separated by their learning groups.

PM: Students alternate days between in-class and online for the afternoon block except Wednesday is designated as online for all students. Half of the students are in-class, mixed with students outside of their learning group but classes are small enough that physical distancing will be achieved. Half of the students are at home for self-directed learning.

Please see the sample table below:

Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
AM Block	In-class Instruction (All Students)	In-class Instruction (All Students)	In-class Instruction (All Students)	In-class Instruction (All Students)	In-class Instruction (All Students)
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
PM Block	In-class Instruction (Students A-M)  Self-Directed (Students N-Z)	In-class Instruction (Students N-Z)  Self-Directed (Students A-M)	Online Instruction (All - Students A-Z)	In-class Instruction (Students A-M)  Self-Directed (Students N-Z)	In-class Instruction (Students N-Z)  Self-Directed (Students A-M)

\* Please Note: Grade 8 students in a middle school will follow the model used at their middle school and not what is outlined above.

**Middle Schools - \*Grades 6-8**

- In-class instruction for all students
- Students take explorations
- Students in learning groups under 60
- Students in classes no more than 30
- Supervised break/lunch/outdoor time
- Separate entrance and exit points (varies among schools)

\*Please note: The structure of Grades 6 and 7 for students in our elementary schools will follow the elementary school model and not what is outlined above.

**Elementary Schools - Grades K-7**

- In-class instruction for all students
- Students in learning groups under 60
- Students in classes no more than 30
- Staggered start time/break/lunch/end time (varies among schools)
- Separate entrance and exit points (varies among schools)
- School administrators do their best to keep:
  - start time consistent for siblings
  - family schedules reasonable by consulting with middle school administrators about start time

Please note: School administrators will be taking lessons learned from the return to school last June, modifying and enhancing plans to incorporate an increase in students. Our administrators are working together to develop plans for schools that are similar in size. There will be similar plans for small schools (0-300 students), medium schools (300-450 students), and large schools (450-700 students). Other factors impacting plans include building site and configuration.

We recognize this is a lot of information. We will be sharing more details next week regarding our plan, transportation and health and safety guidelines including daily health check and mask wearing protocols. Please continue to visit our main COVID-19 webpage [here](#) for updates.

The start of the school year is always an exciting and busy time. I acknowledge this September will look, feel and be different for all of us. I want to let you know that our District staff are doing what we can to support all of you within the parameters set for us by the province. We care deeply about our students, staff and community. I am confident our students, staff and parents will work together to have a successful start to the school year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gord Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

Gord Stewart  
Superintendent of Schools