



# K-12 Education Restart Plan

Ministry of Education



## September Return to School

In September 2020 all schools in British Columbia will start up in Stage 2 with the goal of **maximizing in-class instruction for all students within the revised public health guidelines** to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Having students in the classroom helps to minimize learning gaps and provide the academic, social and emotional supports essential for learning. Schools and school districts will also have the necessary plans in place to be able to shift quickly between stages if and when required.

The Ministry of Education Five Stage Framework for K-12 includes comprehensive COVID-19 health and safety measures and aligns with **B.C.'s Restart Plan**. Based on new public health guidance for K-12 schools from the Provincial Health Officer, the Five Stages have been updated to outline expectations for B.C. elementary, middle and secondary schools for the 2020/21 school year. This includes organizing students into cohorts (Learning Groups) to help limit contact and potential exposure.

The September start-up will be supported by the four foundational principles established at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:



- Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families, teachers and staff
- Provide the services needed to support the children of our essential workers (ESWs)
- Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance
- Provide continuity of educational opportunity for all students

STAGE 1 IN-CLASS	STAGE 2 IN-CLASS	STAGE 3 HYBRID	STAGE 4 HYBRID	STAGE 5 REMOTE
<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elementary: <i>No limit</i></li> <li>▪ Middle: <i>No limit</i></li> <li>▪ Secondary: <i>No limit</i></li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not applicable</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time all students, all grades</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elementary: 60</li> <li>▪ Middle: 60</li> <li>▪ Secondary: 120</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not applicable</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time instruction for all students for the maximum instructional time possible within cohort limits.</p> <p>Self-directed learning supplements in-class instruction, if required</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elementary: 30</li> <li>▪ Middle: 30</li> <li>▪ Secondary: 60</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 50% for all schools</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time instruction for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children of essential service workers</li> <li>▪ Students with disabilities/diverse abilities</li> <li>▪ Students who require additional supports</li> </ul> <p>In-class instruction for all other students for the maximum time possible within cohort limits and density targets.</p> <p>Self-directed and remote learning supplements in-class instruction.</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elementary: 30</li> <li>▪ Middle: 30</li> <li>▪ Secondary: 30</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 25% for all schools</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Full-time instruction for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children of essential service workers</li> <li>▪ Students with disabilities/diverse abilities</li> <li>▪ students who require additional supports</li> </ul> <p>In-class instruction for all other students for the maximum time possible within cohort limits and density targets.</p> <p>Self-directed and remote learning supplements in-class instruction.</p>	<p><b>COHORT SIZE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elementary: 0</li> <li>▪ Middle: 0</li> <li>▪ Secondary: 0</li> </ul> <p><b>DENSITY TARGETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 0% for all schools</li> </ul> <p>In-Class Instruction Suspend in-class instruction for all students.</p> <p>Self-directed and remote learning in place of in-class instruction.</p>



## Safety Measures

On September 8, 2020, all schools in B.C. will begin the new school year with the goal to maximize in-class learning for all students. To support the return to school, a comprehensive suite of COVID-19 safety measures are being implemented in B.C. schools to help protect students and staff:



Students and staff will be required to clean their hands frequently, cover their faces when they cough/sneeze and not share food, school supplies or equipment. They will also be required to stay home when sick.

## Learning Groups

To get the most students back in full-time in-class instruction in September, the Provincial Health Officer has recommended the use of cohorts (Learning Groups) to reduce the number of close, in-person interactions. This will reduce the number of people each student or staff member comes into contact with, thereby reducing the risk of transmission and ensuring quicker contact tracing by health authorities.

Within a Learning Group, minimized physical contact is required, but physical distancing does not need to be maintained at all times. Outside of a Learning Group, physical distancing of 2m will remain the expectation for middle and secondary school students, and for all staff.

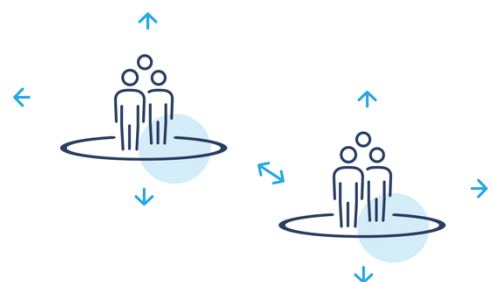
### WHAT IS A LEARNING GROUP?



- 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.
- Examples include a single class, multiple classes that occasionally meet for additional learning activities, or a group of secondary school students with the same courses.
- Extracurricular activities will likely involve students interacting outside of their Learning Groups and will require appropriate physical distancing in those circumstances.
- Learning Groups are recommended by the Provincial Health Officer as an effective way to limit the number of interactions between people in schools and subsequently reduce potential exposures to COVID-19.

### LEARNING GROUPS PROVIDE A RANGE OF BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

1. Learning – Allow full-time attendance instead of on-line/remote
2. Social – Increase peer interaction, avoid isolation
3. Emotional – Increase peer support and connection
4. Psychological – Decrease mental health impacts



## WHAT COULD A LEARNING GROUP LOOK LIKE IN DIFFERENT SCHOOL TYPES?

The majority of elementary and middle schools will return to full-time, in-class instruction with minimal modifications to school structures and timetables. Many secondary schools will require adjustments to timetables and school schedules in order to maximize in-class instruction.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



- Elementary schools will still be organized into classrooms as students' primary environment.
- Elementary schools will have the option to create Learning Groups of up to 60 students and staff who can interact more regularly. This could be two classes that work together on shared projects, or up to three primary classes that go outside together on a regular basis.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL



- Middle schools that follow an elementary school model (e.g., one classroom, one teacher) will be organized like elementary schools.
- Middle schools that follow a "junior high" model (e.g., students move from class to class to take a range of subjects from different teachers) will be re-organized to limit students to Learning Groups of no more than 60 students and staff.

### SECONDARY SCHOOL

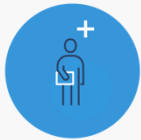


- Secondary school students will continue to be organized in classrooms; however, school timetables will be organized to limit students to Learning Groups of no more than 120 students and staff.
- For example, students in a secondary school Learning Group might take some of their courses together, and then take separate electives, where they would need to practice physical distancing from the students outside of their Learning Group.
- Some secondary schools may also:
  - *Re-organize to system where students take two courses at a time for 10 weeks and then continue a rotation of two courses every 10 weeks*
  - *Supplement in-class instruction with online, self-directed or remote learning where course offerings cannot be delivered through cohorts or physical distancing strategies.*
- Secondary schools will be able to re-organize Learning Groups after each semester.





There are 266 secondary schools in B.C. attended by 196,000 students and they are as diverse as the province itself.



SMALL

- There are 96 public secondary schools and 49 independent schools that have less than 800 students and these schools will likely require only minor modifications to their bell schedules or timetables to ensure a safe, full-time return to the classroom for all students.



MEDIUM

- There are 104 public secondary schools and one independent school with between 800-1,500 students and they will need to consider modifications to their bell schedules and timetables to accommodate students in the classroom full-time.

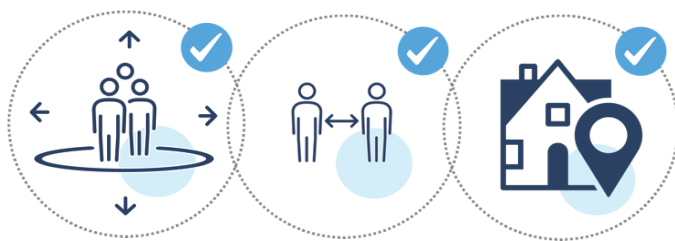


LARGE

- There are 16 public secondary schools with between 1,500 – 2,000 students, located primarily in the Lower Mainland and the Okanagan.
- For these larger secondary schools, school districts are looking at a variety of options to maximize in-class learning and, in rare cases, may need to offer a hybrid approach with a blend of remote online and self-directed learning.
- Students with disabilities, those who need extra support in school and children of essential service workers will continue to receive full-time, in-class learning.

#### WAYS TO KEEP SAFE

1. Keep in your Learning Group.
2. If it is not possible to keep in your Learning Group, then practice physical distancing.
3. If it is not possible to keep in your Learning Group or physically distance, your school may choose to use remote, online or self-directed learning.



## What Can Parents & Students Expect in Stage 2?

Given the permitted sizes of Learning Groups, it is expected that elementary and middle school students will return to full-time, in-class instruction with minimal modifications to school structures and timetables. Many secondary schools will require adjustments to timetables and school schedules to ensure all students can attend school on a full-time basis and maximize in-class instruction. Parents and students can also expect:

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### REGULAR COMMUNICATION

- Contact from school or school district/authority to confirm educational program options for September.
- Regular information updates on school and district websites.

### IN-CLASS INSTRUCTION & SUPPORTS

- Full return to in-class instruction provided that all required health and safety measures can be accommodated.
- Full-time instruction for students with disabilities/diverse abilities and students requiring additional support.
- Focus on mental health and well-being supports for students returning to school.
- Options for students with underlying complex medical needs.
- Alternative methods of delivery, to be jointly determined by boards of education and First Nations, for students from First Nations that remain closed and will not be sending students back in September.

### CURRICULUM, ASSESSMENT & REPORT CARDS

- Provincial curriculum for all students at all grade levels.
- Regular report cards as per the Student Reporting Policy.
- Regular assessments at the classroom and provincial level.

### ENHANCED HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES

- Parents will be asked to monitor their children daily for symptoms and not to send them to school if they are sick. Anyone who is sick will not be allowed in school.
  - Students will be asked to wash their hands frequently, including before coming to school. They will have access to hand sanitizer when hand washing is not available.
  - Schools will continue to be cleaned more frequently, including classrooms and high touch areas.
  - School and classrooms might look different:
    - *Organizing students into Learning Groups*
    - *Increased spacing between students in classrooms and more individual and smaller group activities*
    - *Limitations on assemblies and other large gatherings*
  - Wearing non-medical masks will be a personal choice for students and teachers and will be made available and provided upon request.
  - Students will be asked to label their personal items and not to share them.
  - Parents may need to remind children to minimize physical contact with their friends.
  - See COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings for more information on K-12 health and safety measures.
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## Next Steps

### AUGUST 10, 2020

- Release of September Return to School Planning & Reporting template.
- School districts and independent schools will continue to develop a Restart Plan outlining their approach to providing full in-class instruction for all students in September.
- Each Restart Plan will outline:
  - *How in-class instruction will be offered in elementary, middle and secondary schools using Learning Groups.*
  - *Collaboration and consultation with community partners and local unions that occurred in the development of the district/school approach to Learning Groups.*
  - *Revisions to district and school health and safety plans to meet the requirements of the updated COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Settings (BCCDC).*
  - *Consultation and engagement with First Nations governments and parents/caregivers about the educational choices and transportation available for First Nations students attending public schools.*

### AUGUST 17, 2020

- Release of updated K-12 Operating Guidelines for COVID-19 and final Steering Committee materials.

### AUGUST 17 - 21, 2020

- School Districts and FISA Member Associations finalize their Restart Plans and submit to the Ministry of Education for review.
- Boards of education and independent school authorities should ensure their Restart Plans allow them to be able to shift quickly between stages if and when required.
- Under the jurisdiction of individual First Nations, some First Nations independent schools may remain closed. They will also not be required to submit a plan to the Ministry.

### AUGUST 21 - 26, 2020

- Ministry reviews Restart Plans and confirms School District and FISA Member Association approaches.
- School districts and schools begin to communicate information to parents on health and safety guidelines, learning groups, scheduling and enrolment options under Stage 2 plans.

### AUGUST 26, 2020

- School Districts and schools communicate information to parents on Stage 2 Plans and post final versions online.

### SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

- Stage 2 of the K-12 Restart Plan starts.

