

August 13, 2020

Dear students, parents and staff:

I hope that you are enjoying your summer so far in our strange new world of Covid-19. The weather has been wonderful and my hope is that you have a chance to explore our area and the province safely and have enjoyed time with your family and friends.

In September, 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.

To support the return to school, a comprehensive suite of COVID-19 safety measures are being implemented in our schools to help protect students and staff. Please be assured that we will be following all of the Ministry guidelines and will be ready for school opening.

Most K-12 students will have access to full-time, in-class instruction in September and schools will be ready to welcome them back.

- Parents of children with complex medical conditions or underlying risk factors should consult with their health care provider to determine their child's level of risk regarding return to school.
- Protective self-isolation is only recommended for children with severe immune compromise, on a case-by-case basis.

Parents will continue to have choices regarding their child's educational program.

- Parents who do not want their child to attend in-person classes, at a public or independent school, have the option to register their child for [online and distributed learning](#) (based on program availability) or [homeschooling](#).

Here are some key points on how we are organizing our schools:

- Schools will be organized in Learning Groups/Cohorts.
- Elementary school students will be in their regular classes for the vast majority of the day and will be organized to a maximum of 60 including staff in the Learning Group.
- Middle school students will be organized to a maximum of 60 including staff in their Learning Group as well. (This will also be for our high schools with grades 7 – 9).
- Secondary schools' student timetables will be organized into Learning Groups to a maximum of 120 including staff.

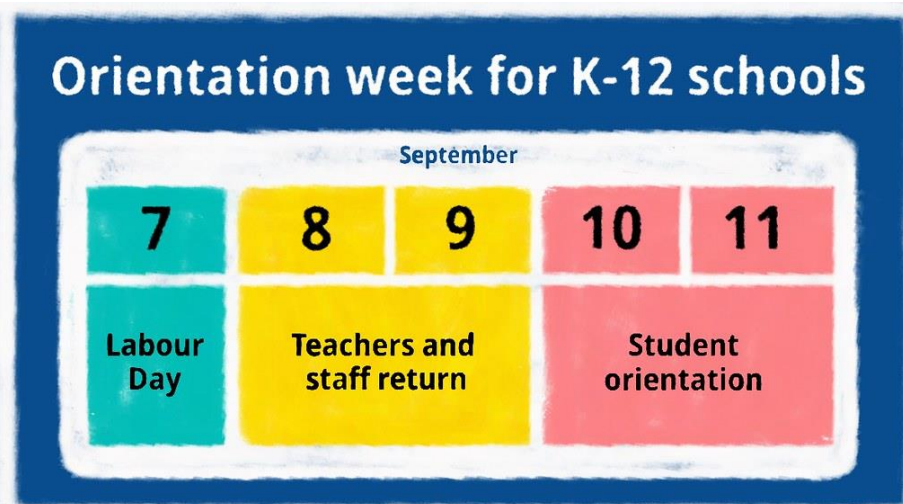


The Ministry has provided increased funding for:

- More cleaning supplies
- More cleaning staff
- Masks for staff and students.

We are following the safety regulations for transporting our students on busses. ***We are encouraging private vehicle use and active transportation (e.g. biking, walking, etc.) by students and staff where possible to decrease transportation density.***

The Ministry of Education also announced ([press release](#)) that staff will return on September 8 and 9 for orientation and that students will return on September 10 and 11 for orientation.



I wanted to assure you that our district working group, which includes parents, teachers, CUPE, district management, operations as well as principals/vice principals in schools are all planning for a safe start to the 2020/2021 school year.

We will be meeting with our Board of Education on August 21 to go over our plan and will then send it to the Ministry for approval. Once the plan is approved, we will share out to parents and staff. Schools are also creating their plans that will be posted on their websites. More information will be available on August 26.

Please continue to check our website ([www.sd5.bc.ca](http://www.sd5.bc.ca)) for the most up to date information from the Ministry of Education.

Here are a couple of websites with further information:

- [BC Ministry of Education: Schools Restart Plan](#)
- [Covid-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)

Take care and stay safe,

Silke Yardley

