



August 17, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

I hope this letter finds you well and that you have had an opportunity to relax and rejuvenate with your family. We are looking forward to welcoming our students back, and I am writing to provide you with an update on how the Chilliwack School District is preparing for Stage 2 of the [K-12 Education Restart Plan](#) announced on July 29 by the Provincial Government.

The Ministry of Education announcement at the end of June, coupled with wide-ranging media coverage of the return to school plans across B.C. and other provinces in Canada, has caused anxiety and trepidation for some families regarding their students returning to school fulltime in September. We understand your concerns. Although we may not be able to alleviate all of your apprehensions, please be assured that the health and safety of students and staff are paramount. We will continue to be diligent in ensuring that all [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) co-developed between public health officials, a stakeholder led steering committee, and the Ministry of Education are met or exceeded when students and staff return to school in September.

Enhanced Safety Measures:

The Provincial announcement included an additional one-time investment of \$45.6 million to support and ensure the health and safety of students and staff. These funds will be utilized for a variety of purposes, including providing additional custodial staff, purchasing extra cleaning supplies, and hand-washing stations where necessary. We will continue to implement public health infection control measures, including: staying home when ill, physical distancing, minimal physical contact, hand hygiene, and frequent cleaning/disinfection.

District Stage 2 COVID Planning:

District staff have been working diligently during August to prepare for September school startup. This work includes creating a model that aligns with the learning groups (cohorts) of up to 60 students for elementary and middle grades, and up to 120 students for secondary grades. We are currently in the process of consulting with our partners, and we will submit our final plans to the Ministry this week. We will provide a comprehensive review of our Stage 2 plans on our district website no later than Wednesday, August 26. Please note that all schools in Chilliwack will also have their Stage 2 school plans published on their school websites on August 26.

Physical Distancing & Mask Use:

Under the updated health and safety guidelines, masks will be required for staff and middle/secondary students in high traffic areas. This includes buses, common areas and anytime outside of their learning cohort. Even when wearing a mask, staff and students will still be required to maintain physical distance from people outside of their learning cohort.

Parents/Guardians, please speak with your child about the importance of wearing a mask and physically distancing when outside their cohort. It is important that we collectively ensure safety for our school community.

Bussing:

All middle and secondary students who ride district buses to and from school in Chilliwack will be required to wear a mask.

Staff and Student Orientation:

Last week the Ministry [announced](#) a gradual restart to the 2020-2021 school year. This will allow extra time to orient students and staff on the new health and safety measures. In Chilliwack, students will be welcomed back to class for orientation on Thursday, September 10. This will be a partial day, where students will be introduced to their cohorts and the new health and safety protocols. Friday, September 11 will be a full day of instruction for all students.

Helpful Links:

- [B.C.'s Back to School Plan](#)
- [Five Stages Framework for K-12 Education](#)
- [Expectations for the K-12 Sector at Each Stage](#)
- [K-12 operational guidelines set requirements for masks](#)
- [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)

Finally, it is important to understand that as we welcome back students and families on September 10, any increase in community or regional transmission of COVID-19 and case counts may require us to pivot to a different stage under the advisement of the Provincial Health Officer and the Ministry of Education.

Thank you for your patience as we work through the planning process for Stage 2. We will continue to provide updates on our district websites and social media.

We look forward to welcoming students back to school in September and hope you enjoy the rest of your summer holidays.

Sincerely,



Rohan Arul-pragasam
Interim School Superintendent