

## Frequently Asked Questions: BC's Restart Plan - K to 12 Return to School

On May 15, the provincial government announced [plans](#) to re-open schools in British Columbia: The re-opening of schools is part of a gradual return to in-class instruction in BC. Students have been invited to return to school for in-class learning opportunities starting Monday, June 1. Please note that parents continue to have the option of keeping their children at home to engage in remote learning.

This document is intended to answer questions that parents may have regarding the optional return to school for K to 12 students. It is largely informed by the following list of resources:

- [BC's Restart Plan](#)
- [K - 12 Education Restart Plan](#)
- [Safe & Healthy Schools > Restarting BC's Schools](#)
- [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K - 12 Setting](#)
- [WorkSafeBC COVID-19 FAQ](#)
- [FAQs on Continuity of Learning in the K - 12 Education system](#)

### **Q: Is it safe for my child to return to school?**

**A:** The health and safety of our students, staff and families will continue to be our top priority. The government has released two documents that you may wish to review as you are making a decision about sending your child to school in June. Please see the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#) from the BC Centre for Disease Control and the [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) from the Ministry of Education. These documents outline in detail the health and safety requirements that all schools will be required to follow as more students and staff return to schools. The district will adhere very carefully to the health and safety guidelines set out in these documents in order to ensure that students and staff remain safe.

### **Q: What happens if I decide not to send my child(ren) to school on June 1?**

**A:** Returning to class is optional and families have the choice to send their children back to school or keep them at home. If you decide your child will not be returning for part-time in-class instruction, remote learning opportunities will continue to be available in June.

### **Q: What will it look like for my child(ren) to return to in-class instruction on June 1?**

**A:** Plans are currently being made and you can expect to hear more information directly from your school. You can expect schools and classrooms to look different with:

- Increased spacing between students in classroom and smaller group activities.
- Increased time outside.
- Limitations on assemblies and large gatherings.

### **Q: Can adults such as parents or other family members enter the school?**

**A:** In order to limit the number of people that students and staff come in contact with while at school, parents/guardians will be asked to not enter the school at any time unless they have made arrangements with the principal before coming to the school. Students will need to bring their own lunches and snacks with them as parents will not be able to enter the school to drop off lunches during the school day.

**Q: What steps are being taken to ensure the health and safety of students and staff?**

**A:** All schools will follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO). Based on the requirements of the PHO and WorkSafeBC, district staff will work directly with each school to ensure a safe and healthy school environment. Additional measures include:

- Routine and frequent cleaning of schools, especially for frequently touched surfaces
- Limited number of students attending school at any given time.
- Daily health declaration processes that all staff, students and parents must undertake before coming to school each day. Anyone who has symptoms of a cold, flu or COVID-19 will not be permitted into the school.
- Opportunities for frequent handwashing will be provided. Classrooms with sinks will be stocked with soap and paper towels. Classrooms without sinks will be provided with hand sanitizer.
- Smaller class sizes, seating separation, rotating school attendance, and staggered start and end times for school days, as well as breaks.

**Q: How will physical distancing be implemented in schools?**

**A:** The following physical distancing strategies will be implemented where possible in the K-12 school setting:

- Students will be reminded to maintain distance between themselves and other people.
- Students and staff will be spread out into different areas around the school.
- Students will be organized into smaller groups so that they stay together throughout the day in order to minimize the number of contacts with others.
- Staffing assignments will minimize the number of different teachers and support staff that interact with groups of students throughout the day.
- Pick-up and drop-off times may be staggered.
- Recess/snack, lunch and class transition times may be staggered to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Students will have increased time outside.
- Group activities will be adapted to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
- Traffic flow will be managed to limit the number of people in common areas, including hallways.
- Parents, caregivers, and other non-staff adults will not be allowed to enter schools without a pre-arranged appointment.
- Signage regarding physical distancing will be posted in schools

**Q: Will students go through screening measures when arriving at schools?**

**A:** Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. Staff and students who are ill will not be permitted to attend school.

**Q: Will masks and other forms of personal protective equipment (PPE) be necessary for children and employees who will be in the classroom?**

**A:** Students and staff will not be required to wear masks, however anyone who wants to wear a mask may do so. Wearing a mask is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect. More information about mask use is available on the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

**Q: How will textbooks and other school supplies be cleaned?**

**A:** According to the Provincial Health Office guidelines there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks or other paper-based products. As such, there is not a significant need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper-based educational resources to students because of COVID-19. Shared student access to other materials will be limited or eliminated completely. These other materials, such as IPADS, that may be required to be shared by students, will be cleaned as needed before a different student uses the item.

**Q: If I send my child(ren) back to school will they be in the same class with the same teacher?**

**A:** Where it is possible, students will return to the same class with the same teacher; however depending on the number of children whose parents send them to school and availability of staff, children may not have their regular classroom teacher or classmates.

**Q: If I don't send my child back to school the week of June 1<sup>st</sup>, can I send my child the following week?**

**A:** Yes, parents may choose to send their child back to school once they have further information. Parents are required to contact the school principal ahead of time if they wish to change their child's attendance arrangements. Depending on the organization and current student numbers, it may take a day or so for arrangements to be made for a student to attend. Please give the school as much lead time as possible if you change your mind about your child's attendance.

**Q: Will siblings of different age ranges/grade groupings be able to attend on the same day(s)?**

**A:** Schools will do their best to accommodate siblings on the same days when possible. Depending on the school's size, the number of students whose parents choose to send them to school and the availability of staff members, it may not be possible to have siblings attend on the same day. All school schedules will be organized in a manner that prioritizes provincial health and safety guidelines.

**Q: Prior to the suspension of in-class instruction, my child(ren) attended your StrongStart program. Will the program resume on June 1?**

**A:** StrongStart will not resume in June.

**Q: My child is using a tech device on loan from the district. Will I need to return that device, when and how?**

**A:** At the end of the school year you will need to return any technology devices on loan. Your school principal will be in touch to make arrangements.

**Q: Now that some teachers are returning to school to provide onsite instruction, will they continue to provide the same amount of remote learning opportunities to their students?**

**A:** Teachers who have returned to onsite instruction will not have the same amount of time available to provide remote learning opportunities as they did prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Parents will likely see a reduction in the amount of remote contact from teachers beginning the week of May 25<sup>th</sup> as teachers balance preparing lessons and teaching students at school with continuing to provide remote instruction for students who are not attending. In some cases, a different teacher may provide the remote learning.

**Q: Will teachers continue to engage in the same amount of assessment of my child's learning during the month of June?**

**A:** Teachers have been assessing students all year and will likely reduce the amount of assessment that occurs during the month of June. In some cases, teachers may put a greater focus on social-emotional opportunities given the emotional stress that has resulted for many students and families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Q: Will June report cards contain the same information this year as they normally would?**

**A:** This spring's unusual circumstances have made assessment and evaluation of learning different than usual, and the information in the June progress reports will reflect that. Using their professional judgement, teachers will combine the teaching and learning that occurred between September and March with the complex learning situation that has been in place since Spring Break in order to determine a final grade/scale for each student.

Progress reports prepared under these circumstances may not provide the same amount of rich, detailed feedback that usually goes into a report card. This is in recognition of the fact that depending on individual family circumstances, not every student may have been able to engage in learning the way they typically would. The Ministry of Education requires teachers to provide a year-end final grade/scale for all areas of learning. On the report cards this will be reported as the same mark/scale in term 3 as the final grade/scale.

The focus since the suspension of in class instruction, in elementary school in particular, has been on literacy, numeracy and core competencies. Report card comments in other areas of learning will reflect that the assessment in that area is based on work completed prior to spring break. As always, teachers will use their professional judgement based on the learning they have seen either pre-spring break or a combination of pre- and post-spring break to determine a final grade/scale for students.