



## **BVCS Return to School Plan (Fall 2020)**

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### **Contents**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Introduction.....                               | 2 |
| Stage 2: What is it all about? .....            | 2 |
| Student Safety.....                             | 2 |
| Student Transportation on Buses .....           | 2 |
| Cohorts.....                                    | 2 |
| Hand Hygiene/PPE Use.....                       | 3 |
| Students who are sick or self-isolating.....    | 3 |
| Enhanced Cleaning .....                         | 3 |
| Increased Ventilation.....                      | 3 |
| Limiting Access to the School.....              | 3 |
| Separate Entrances and Traffic Flows.....       | 4 |
| Staying home when sick .....                    | 4 |
| Going home if you are sick.....                 | 5 |
| Other notes .....                               | 5 |
| COVID-19 in a Learning Group or at School ..... | 5 |

## Introduction

As per Ministry of Education announcements at the end of July 2020, we are planning for a full, Stage 2 return to in-class instruction on Tuesday, September 8th. The BVCS School's Restart Plan has been developed in accordance with the [Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities](#) (August 17, 2020), BC Centre for Disease Control's [Public Health Guidance for K-12 Settings](#) (July 29, 2020), the [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) (August 17, 2020), and WorkSafe BC's [K-12 Education: Protocols for Returning to Operation](#) (August 11, 2020). Parents and caregivers are encouraged to read this document carefully.

## Stage 2: What is it all about?

The updated (July 29, 2020), Ministry of Education five-stage framework for K-12 education during the current COVID-19 pandemic can be found [here](#). In Stage 2, the focus is on maximizing in-class instruction for K-12 students through the initiation of learning groups (cohorts). The size of our school allows us to offer a full-time return for all K-12 students in September, with an updated Health and Safety Plan. We are able to reduce the cohort size to fewer students than suggested by the Ministry.

We are making adjustments to our procedures and protocols while maintaining a high level of normalcy for all students. It is essential that we balance our concern with safety for students and staff and maintaining an environment conducive to learning.

## Student Safety

The Minister of Education, the Provincial Health Officer, and the administration of BVCS feel strongly that returning to school at this time is safe for students. It's important to note the very low level of active cases in the north and the low impact of COVID 19 on children and youth. Add to this, the advantages of a small school with excellent ventilation and many learning spaces, and we are confident that students can return safely to BVCS.

## Student Transportation on Buses

Busing to and from school is provided through School District 54, who follow specific protocols and procedures to ensure student safety. BVCS school buses are used for field trips only. Health and Safety measures will be stated in permission forms for approved field trips. Bus drivers will be given a checklist of procedures to follow, and cleaning/disinfecting materials. Only cohort-based field trips will be approved in Stage 2.

## Cohorts

The cohort model is being employed to minimize the number of overall contacts and assist with contact tracing in the event of infection. Note that contact tracing is the responsibility of public health authorities. BVCS will assist by providing contact information, upon official request. Students and staff in a cohort will learn and take breaks together, and interact with other cohorts only in contexts where strict (2 metre) physical distancing can be maintained. You can read more about the Ministry prescribed cohort or "learning groups" [here](#).

- a. Elementary students and staff will be organized into cohorts of less 60 persons. Cohorts will be organized in grade-based clusters (K-3, 4-5, 6-7). Elementary students will be almost entirely in their classroom group for learning activities.
- b. High school students will be one main cohort (approximately 70 persons each). For all educational activities and in most situations, Grade 8 and 9 will be separated from Grade 10-12
- c. Some staff, will work with multiple cohorts. As such, they will adhere to strict (2 metre) physical distancing in their work with students and staff outside of their main cohort and/or wear PPE
- d. Teachers are encouraged to use other learning spaces within the school to further limit group sizes. Teachers are also encouraged to use outside learning spaces when appropriate.
- e. DL students who join the Bricks and Mortar school for activities will be considered part of the cohort at their grade level.

### **Hand Hygiene/PPE Use**

Students will be expected to wash their hands before school and during transition time. As well, all Grade 6-12 students will wear masks if they are in situations where they cannot maintain social distancing with students outside their cohort. This will not have a significant impact on students due to the small size of our school. Any student or staff may wear masks at any time if they choose.

### **Students who are sick or self-isolating**

BVCS staff and administration will provide support for all students who must miss school because of COVID symptoms or because they are self-isolating so to ensure that students will not be behind when returning to school.

### **Enhanced Cleaning**

It is important to remember that current research suggests that COVID 19 is not primarily spread via surfaces. This being said, all areas of the school used by students/staff need to be cleaned daily by our janitorial staff while high touch areas will be cleaned midday by staff.

### **Increased Ventilation**

We are increasing the amount of air flow by adapting our modern ventilation system.

### **Limiting Access to the School**

We are encouraging most parent-staff interaction to be virtual. Parents or any visitor should report to the office when coming to the school. All visitors will be required to mask. There will be no spectators for sporting events.

## Separate Entrances and Traffic Flows

Cohorts will enter at different entrances and we will manage traffic flow throughout the school to minimize interaction between cohort groups.

## Staying home when sick

### *Daily self-assessment*

Staff are required to perform daily self-assessment for common-cold, influenza, and COVID-19 like symptoms prior to coming to work. Parents/Caregivers must assess their child(ren) daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. Staff or Parent/Caregivers that are unsure how to interpret symptoms, are encouraged to use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool or consult with their physician.

A 14 day self-isolation period for staff and students is mandatory for those identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or an outbreak of COVID-19, OR if they have recently returned from travel outside of Canada.

If your child has a symptom consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (such as asthma, allergies, etc.) and this symptom is not unusual for your child, they may come to school. No assessment or note is required from a health care provider.

2) If your child has mild symptoms without a fever, monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve or remain mild, they can return to school without further assessment. Students with mild symptoms may be encouraged to mask.

3) If your child has a fever, or if other symptoms continue after 24 hours, seek a health assessment. A health assessment can include

- Calling 8-1-1
- ConsulPng with a primary care provider like a doctor
- Or having a COVID-19 test

### **If a COVID-19 test is recommended by a health assessment:**

a) ) If the test is positive, your child should stay home unPI they are told by public health to end their self isolation in most cases around 10 days.

b) If the test is negative, the student may return to school once symptoms have improved and they feel well enough. Students may return to school if symptoms are mild and improving.

c) If a parent chooses not to have a COVID-10 test for their child, the child should stay home from school for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, and then may return if feeling well enough.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, the person can return to school when symptoms have improved and they feel well enough.

BVCS will not require a health-care provider note to confirm the health status of an individual.

## **Going home if you are sick**

*Staff members and students will be sent home if symptomatic.* Students who become sick will wait in a separate, supervised setting until notified parents/caregivers can pick their child up. Students will be provided a non-medical mask if they do not have one. Older students (with permission) and staff who become sick are to go home immediately.

## **Other notes**

- Teachers will be encouraged to use shared learning spaces to reduce the size of learning groups
- Teachers are encouraged to use outdoor spaces when appropriate
- There will be an increased emphasis across the grades on mental health and social/emotional learning

## **COVID-19 in a Learning Group or at School**

- If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school, they may be given a non-medical mask and will be separated from their classmates or colleagues.
- The individual's parent or guardian will be contacted to discuss next steps
- Custodial staff will clean and disinfect the areas the person used
- Schools will immediately inform public health of a potential case

Public health will then:

- Reach out and identify any potential cases
- Get in touch with close contacts
- Recommend 14-day isolation if necessary
- Provide follow-up recommendations if necessary
- Schools will provide learning support to students required to self-isolate
- Together, schools and public health officials will determine if suspending in-class learning is necessary
- You will be notified if your child has been in contact with a COVID-positive person. If that happens, your child is required to self-isolate.