

December 30th, 2021 Email sent to families

Dear families and caregivers,

Last night we received information from the Ministry of Education about the requirements for increased safety measures for schools. Throughout the next several days, our staff will be preparing for the phased re-opening of schools on Tuesday, January 4th. You can anticipate that during the week of January 4th, school staff will be supporting students of essential workers and students with diverse needs and updating school safety plans to prepare for the full re-opening on January 10th.

During the phased start to school, schools will begin to implement enhanced health and safety measures. Enhanced safety measures include:

- Strategies that prevent crowding during class transition times, such as staggered breaks.
- Holding school gatherings and events (e.g., assemblies, etc.) virtually; if they must be in-person, limit the number of people to no more than 50% operating capacity.
- Limiting visitors to those who are supporting activities that directly benefit student learning and wellbeing (e.g., teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.)
- Pausing extracurricular sports tournaments.
- Holding staff-only gatherings (e.g., meetings, training, professional development activities) virtually where possible.

The guidelines build on existing protocols that have succeeded in minimizing the spread of the virus in schools such as:

- Doing daily health checks, and staying home when sick
- Using available space to spread out, and to respect others' personal space.
- Wearing masks in accordance with the Provincial Health Officer Order on Face Coverings
- Cleaning hands regularly
- Cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces at least once a day

The delayed opening will also allow more students to be vaccinated – which remains the best protection against severe outcomes from COVID-19.

The updated materials from the Ministry are listed on our [website](#):

- [DM Bulletin – December 29, 2021](#)
- [Ministry of Education – COVID-19 Safe Schools Website](#)
- [Addendum - Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)
- [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools – BCCDC Addendum](#)

A list of [FAQs](#) has been posted to our website. As we receive more information from the Ministry of Education through the week of January 4 – 10, 2022, the FAQs will be updated.

Kind regards,

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