

Hi all,

We welcome you to a New Year – 2022! We hope your holidays have been positive and that time with family and friends has warmed your heart. We also hope you are ready to face the new challenges that are in front of us – in particular, the new COVID 19 variant, Omicron. No matter what, our priorities remain the same for the next week:

1. Ensuring our schools are safe, welcoming environments,
2. Fostering positive relationships, district-wide, with students at the centre (ensuring communication with all – adults and students),
3. Ensuring the continuation of learning,
4. Preparing for the potential of a “functional closure” of a classroom or school. A “functional closure” may mean that at some time in the future we may have to pivot and take learning online.

We know some of you have been away and we hope the following questions and answers help to bring you up to date.

Q & A for parents:

Why is there a delay of learning?

Our Provincial Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, has ordered that schools not fully open until January 10th. The delay will allow the province to better assess the impacts of Omicron – the latest COVID variant. It will also allow district and school staff to prepare to implement further health and safety measures and ensure the continuation of learning.

Are schools open?

Yes, as in the 2020-2021 school year, children of essential service workers, in particular, those in health care, and those requiring inclusion and student support services, may attend school beginning January 4th. Programming for attending students will be determined at the school level.

How do parents know if they qualify as an “Essential Service”?

The provincial definition and list of “essential services” is posted on the district website (under Quick Links) and attached here. Again, we will prioritize those in health care, and those requiring inclusion and student support services.

https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/family-and-social-supports/covid-19/list_of_essential_services.pdf

If your student needs to attend school between January 4th and 7th for some, or all of that time, and if you are an essential service worker and you require supervision for your children through the hours of a regular school day, or if you have any questions, please contact your school's Principal as soon as possible to coordinate the appropriate support for your student/s and family.

Will busses be running?

Yes, our busses will continue to run as per normal.

Do all school district staff return to work January 4th?

Yes, all staff return to work on Tuesday, January 4, 2022. This includes district staff, teachers, education assistants, ISWs, noon hour supervisors, bus supervisors and drivers, Strong Start coordinators, all clerical, and enhanced cleaners. The additional time is for Principals to meet with all staff to plan and implement new safety protocols, as well as, to prepare for system readiness, should we have the need for functional school or classroom closures in the event of extensive staff illnesses.

Can children of SD22 staff go to school next week?

Yes. You are an essential worker.

When do all students return to school?

All students return on Monday, January 10 2022.

When will formal learning begin?

Regular classes and all formal learning begin on Monday, January 10th.

Do we continue daily health checks?

Yes. Parents and students are reminded of their responsibilities to complete a Daily Health Check and are provided with resources on how to complete one (e.g., the K-12 Health Check app).

<https://www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca/healthcheck?execution=e1s1>

Do staff and students need to stay home when sick?

Yes. Staff and students are reminded to stay home when they are sick.

Does my child still need to wear a mask?

Yes. Everyone at school (without exemptions), must wear a mask in accordance with the PHO Order on Face Coverings. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-face-coverings.pdf>

Schools work with those with mask exemptions to explore potential strategies to reinforce and enhance other safety measures, as described in the COVID-19 Planning Resource: Mask Exemptions.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/covid-19-planning-mask-exemptions.pdf>

Masks are available for those who have forgotten theirs.

Will there still be contact tracing and notifications if there are exposures?

No. This is not sustainable. The situation is no longer the same. Many more people will get the new variant. The good news is that most people are now protected from serious illness through vaccination.

Does my child still need to get vaccinated?

Yes, Public Health says vaccines are still essential. People who are immunized will be infected. However, it would be much worse if they were not vaccinated.

Can parents still enter the school?

Unfortunately, visitors will be limited to those who are directly supporting student learning and well-being (ie: teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.).

Will extracurricular sports tournaments continue?

No, not at this time. Inter-school sports and performances will continue but without spectators.

If you have further questions, kindly contact your Principal via email, prior to Tuesday morning. Things are shifting quite rapidly at this time. We will continue to update you as new information becomes available.

Stay strong. Stay calm. Be safe. Be kind. Remember, everyone is doing their best.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christine Perkins | Superintendent & Chief Executive Officer

Proud to live, work, learn, and play on the ancestral, unceded territory of the syilx nation.

(she, her, hers)

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