



August 31, 2022

Dear Parents / Guardians / Caregivers,

Welcome Back! I hope the amazing summer weather provided you with lots of opportunities to spend time with family and friends and that you are rejuvenated and looking forward to the new school year. Included, please find some updates for your consideration.

Communicable Disease Prevention Plans:

As we return and settle into the routines of a new school year, it is reasonable to expect that COVID-19 won't completely disappear. Instead, it will likely continue to emerge in waves or develop into a seasonal disease, circulating similar to cold and flu season, and be managed as other respiratory infections in the community.

As per the updated [Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#), schools will continue to be supportive environments for communicable disease prevention by promoting health awareness and illness practices listed below. We will continue to be vigilant as a school community by engaging in the following practices:

1. Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces once in 24 hours and when visibly dirty.
2. Continuing to ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems are operated and maintained – please see up-to-date information regarding school ventilation systems [here](#).
3. Engaging in hand hygiene and good respiratory etiquette – rigorous handwashing reduces the spread of illness.
4. Staying home when sick – staff and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities.
5. Ensuring individual choices for personal practices (e.g., choosing to wear a mask or face covering) are supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

The above practices are not new and are a continuation of practices from the latter part of last year. Engaging in the above practices as a school community will reduce the risk of communicable diseases in our schools. Also, as per guidance from BCCDC, vaccines continue to be an important tool to protect against many serious communicable diseases and reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. Evidenced-based immunization information and tools for B.C. residents are available from [BCCDC](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#) websites.

New School and Project Update:

Congratulations, and thank you to the Facilities Department team for their outstanding work in supporting the completion of our newest K-8, 930-seat school - Stitó:s Lá:lém Totí:It Elementary/Middle School. It is with great pride that we welcome students, staff, and families to our newest school when our doors open on September 6. The facilities team has also successfully supported completing the Vedder Elementary 10-classroom addition project. The GW Graham Secondary 450-seat addition project is due to be finished this fall. We also want to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Education and Child Care for their continued investments in new schools in Chilliwack, given that we are one of the fastest-growing school districts in the province.

Strategic Plan Update:

This year will be the 2nd year of implementation of our [Strategic Plan](#). District staff and school leaders, along with the Board of Education, have worked hard to align documentation and processes to ensure we build coherence in the system. Part of the new process includes schools engaging in a 90-day growth plan cycle. 90-day cycles are more predictable than annual plans. It is much easier to accurately forecast what actions schools need to take over the next 12 weeks than the actions schools need to take over the next 12 months. Also, a 90-day plan helps schools narrow their focus and tackle current challenges for the greatest impact on student achievement and a success plan for all students.

Indigenous-focused Graduation Requirement:

As part of the Province's commitments to truth, reconciliation, and anti-racism, as outlined in the [Declaration Act Action Plan](#), the Ministry is implementing an [Indigenous-focused graduation requirement](#) which will come into effect in the 2023/24 school year. All students working towards the BC Certificate of Graduation (Dogwood Diploma) - in English or French - will be required to complete the new graduation requirement.

Communication Home and School:

Parent/Guardian home-to-school communication is pivotal to supporting your students' success. All schools will have an updated [communication brochure](#) on their school websites effective the start of this school year. The brochure communicates the process of resolving any concerns parents/guardians may have regarding their child's program or other concerns that may arise during the school year. When we work together as partners, we can collectively create a safe, inclusive learning environment where your student(s) can thrive.

We look forward to welcoming students back to school on September 6, and we hope you have a great school year. Please take care and enjoy the rest of your summer holidays.

Sincerely,

Rohan Arul-pragasam
Superintendent of Schools