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*(To read this in a language other than English, please click the following link and use the Google translate tool:  
<https://newwestschools.ca/the-plan-phase-2-return-to-schools/>)*

August 26, 2020

Dear parents, students and staff,

It is with great pride today that I share with you the New Westminister plan for the Phase 2 Return to our schools.

This has been a collaborative and layered process at every step of the way. While working under the direction of the Ministry of Education, we have also incorporated and applied the guidance and recommendations from all the appropriate health and safety authorities (the Provincial Health Officer, Worksafe BC, Fraser Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control). Further, your feedback and questions has helped inform our decisions every step of the way.

### **What does the plan include?**

The health and safety and well-being of students, staff and families has been our top priority. We have introduced new protocols – from learning groups to rules around mask use – to do everything possible to keep our schools as safe as possible.

Our detailed Stage 2 health and safety plan is now available on our website (link at end of letter).

The attached graphic lays out some of the most important features, showing some of the ways school will look different in September. It includes considerations and rules around distancing both between and within cohorts, controlling access to our schools, the investments supporting hand hygiene, increased cleaning and disinfection protocols, rules around mask and face covering and highlights all the valuable supports that students and families can count on.

We have aimed to be as flexible as we can, wherever possible. And our team has worked hard to consider what that will mean to the varied and diverse needs our school communities have.

### **Elementary schools**

In addition to the enhanced safety measures that will benefit every location, our elementary schools will be opening with cohorts of 30 people or less. Recess and lunch times will be staggered to reduce the number of kids in our hallways and common spaces. Signage and coordinated movement will control students' interactions as they move through the schools. And designated entries and exits will also support keeping the learning groups apart from one another.

### **Middle schools**

Staggered start and dismissal times, in addition entryways being assigned to specific learning groups, will help reduce crowding in key common spaces. Staggered lunches and flexible break times will reinforce this same measure. All adults and students will be required to wear masks when entering the building or moving through common or shared spaces (hallways or entrances). Students will be assigned to a learning group of no more than 60 students.

## New Westminster Secondary School

This is where we continued to push the bounds of what was possible. As one of the largest high schools in the province, we made some big changes that maximized our ability to offer a rich complement of face-to-face instruction, while taking advantage of ways remote learning and new course schedules could reduce the number of kids we needed to safely walk through our doors each day.

All students and staff will wear masks in common spaces and when not in their learning groups. Learning groups at the high school are currently averaging between 90-100 people, well below the 120 person cap that has been set by the Province.

At the grade 9 level we will continue to deliver learning opportunities on a semester-based system, to help make the transition to secondary school easier on students. Remote learning will support their in-class time, with every Wednesday's lessons being delivered through real-time lessons, in an online environment.

At the grades 10-12 levels, we will be shifting to what is called a one-quarter system: four terms of approximately 10 weeks a piece. The new morning and afternoon class blocks will reduce the number of interactions they will have while in the school, while also maximizing the number of electives we were successfully able to maintain. Two half days each week will be delivered by remote learning. The attached one-page summary provides the schedule for Grades 9-12.

Learning groups will be assigned specific entry and exit points to maintain the mandatory distance between cohorts. Designated lunch and break areas will also be assigned to each group.

We firmly believe that the best place for students to learn is inside our schools. But we also recognize that every family is facing their own set of challenges – from serious health concerns to the anxiety that the uncertainties of a pandemic have presented. So we're really proud of the new and expanded alternatives we've worked hard to deliver for New Westminster students and their parents.

What are the choices?

- **Our newly created Online Learning for K-8 program:** delivering lessons and inclusive home learning supports to parents wanting to deliver their kids' learning in a home environment, through a digital platform.
- **Online Learning, with expanded offerings to support students in grades 9-12:** students can be enrolled in full-time online learning through the year, or sign up for individual classes as a supplement to face-to-face instruction they're receiving at NWSS.
- **Home Learners Program at Hume Park:** our hybrid model home school program, for students in grades K-8 ... combining face-to-face and home learning, and supporting parents and students in developing their own learning path.
- **Home Schooling:** a K-12 alternative where schooling becomes the full responsibility of the parent and is not supervised by a BC certified teacher.
- **Individualized plans for students with immune suppression:** According to the Provincial Health Officer most children who are immunocompromised can return to in-class instruction when safety measures are in place. However, alternate options are available on a case-by-case basis for K-12 students and parents/caregivers who have consulted with their doctor, and who have obtained a doctor's note indicating the need for accommodation due to health related risks. Families in this situation should contact their school Principal to discuss their needs and options, by no later than 4pm on Monday August 31.



Interested in one or more of the alternatives?

To find out more about what the options are, what they mean for your family and what the limitations around applying for an alternative program might be, please read more on this page we've created to help inform your decision: <https://newwestschools.ca/home-online-learning-defining-the-alternatives-to-in-class/>

**Note: Applications for alternate programs will open at 9am tomorrow morning (Thursday August 27<sup>th</sup>), with the process closing promptly at 4pm on Monday August 31<sup>st</sup>.**

We've also created a dedicated webpage for our restart plan: <https://newwestschools.ca/the-plan-phase-2-return-to-schools/>

Here you'll be able to see sample blocks, the health and safety plans and other more in-depth details to help you learn more about the layered and extensive work that's being done to make sure all our students, staff and families are returning an environment where safe, engaging and exciting learning opportunities can again take place. Additionally, your child's principal will be sending further communication this Friday, outlining additional details including the first week of school.

Thank you again for your patience, your questions, your support and your role as active and engaged members of this community.

In this together,



Karim Hachlaf  
Superintendent of Schools / CEO

