

August 28, 2020

Dear Families,

I hope that you are well, staying safe, and taking time to enjoy the summer. By now you will have received a letter from the Superintendent outlining the options available to you as you make decisions about the upcoming school year. We know that each of you will make the right choice based on your family circumstances and encourage you to visit our dedicated school district [Stage 2 Restart](#) webpage. Just a reminder that if you, or your child, is immunocompromised to the extent that your child will require accommodations due to health related risks, we ask that you contact me by **Monday, August 31 at 4 pm** to discuss your needs. Please note that these requests must be supported by a medical note.

We are looking forward to welcoming students back to New Westminster Secondary School. We have been working hard to ensure that the health and safety of our students and staff remains our first priority. I would like to provide you with further information about what you can expect when your child returns to school.

By now, you will have undoubtedly heard about the organization of students into Learning Groups. This has been recommended by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) to reduce the number of close, in-person interactions. This will reduce the number of people each student or staff member comes into contact with, thereby reducing the risk of transmission of COVID 19 and ensuring quicker contact tracing by health authorities.

The PHO has established a maximum Learning Group size of 120 for secondary schools, however; Learning Groups in our school are organized in groups of approximately 90-100. Within these Learning Groups, students will attend school in a hybrid model which combines in-class instruction with remote learning. Please see the sample schedules below for specific in-person and remote learning attendance times. To support a smooth transition, students in Grade 9 will continue to be scheduled in a semester system (4 classes per semester; 2 semesters per year). Students in Grades 10-12 will be scheduled in quarters (2 classes per quarter; 4 quarters per year). Aside from Learning Groups, there are a number of additional changes that you will want to discuss with your child. These include:

- Increased hand washing protocols
- Changes in classroom layout to increase spacing between students
- Removal of hard to clean objects
- Reduction of shared materials
- More individual and smaller group activities
- Breaks taken at staggered times based on teacher discretion
- Designated entry and exit doors
- Adults outside of a learning cohort will be maintaining physical distance and wearing a mask
- Masks are required for staff and students when they are in high traffic areas such as hallways as well as when they are outside of their learning group and physical distancing cannot be maintained (E.g. Z Blocks)
- Please note that the PHO has not required masks to be worn within Learning Groups however; wearing a non-medical mask will be a personal choice for students and staff while in these groups. Each student will be provided with 2 reusable masks.

There are a number of protocols in place to ensure the health and safety of our staff and students. These include additional cleaning and disinfecting, physical barriers, sanitizer available throughout the school, and increased signs and other visual cues. Most importantly, we ask for your utmost cooperation in ensuring that your child remains home if they show any symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID 19 and other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. To that end, we ask that you perform a **daily** wellness check with your child using a checklist which will be made available to you. You will be asked to confirm your understanding of this responsibility when you complete the on-line consent forms for this school year.

In order to provide you with further clarity regarding your child's schedule for the upcoming year, please see the sample schedules below.

Grade 9 Timetable (Semester)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:34 - 9:59 Block A	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	Remote Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction
10:06 - 11:27 Block B	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	Remote Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction
11:27 - 12:16	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:16 - 1:37 Block C	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	Remote Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction
1:44 - 3:05 Block D	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	Remote Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction

*Students will be provided time between blocks for transition to the next class

Grade 10 Timetable (Quarter)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:34 - 11:27 Block A	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	Remote Instruction	In-class Instruction
11:27 - 12:16	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:16 - 3:05 Block B	In-class Instruction	Remote Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction

Grades 11&12 Timetable (Quarter)

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:34 - 11:27 Block A	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction	In-class Instruction
11:27 - 12:16	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:16 - 3:05 Block B	Remote/In-class*	Remote/In-class*	Remote/In-class*	Remote/In-class*	Remote/In-class*

*Grade 11&12 Block B classes will alternate between remote learning and in class instruction on alternate days (Day 1, Day 2)

The Ministry has provided time on September 10th and 11th for student orientation to adjust to new routines and review health and safety protocols. Students in Grade 9 will be invited to attend an orientation session on September 10th and students in Grades 10-12 will attend on September 11th.

As we move forward, communication will remain important. To that end, by September 8th, you will receive further information regarding your child's orientation time as well as access to their course schedule in MyEducationBC.

Please be aware that due to the complexities of scheduling staff and students within Learning Groups, we will have very limited ability to make course changes and priority will be given to those students requiring changes necessary for graduation. To maximize in person instruction for all students and support the wide range of course requests, schedule adjustments may be required in subsequent quarters and semester two. Students in the International Baccalaureate Program will receive further information regarding scheduling specifics shortly.

For our Queensborough families or other students who need sufficient travel time, teachers will provide flextime beyond the 45-minute lunch period to accommodate real time remote sessions.

As we have stated throughout this process, we are proud of the new programs that have been created and expanded to give our District's families more options in this challenging year. We have also been clear with the limitations we have faced, including the fact that we do not have the capacity to offer online learning in separate streams to also align with programs of choice. In stating our limitations, we have also made sure that parents and students know that we cannot guarantee a spot in the program of choice to families who opt to pursue one of the new alternatives.

It is our goal to help families who may choose to leave our schools this year – for whatever reason – opportunities to return when they feel it is safe to do so.

We also need to consider the impact on learning that a full year away from an immersion-type program may result in – both for the individual student and for the class they are requesting a return to.

We want you to know that the district is pulling together a team of immersion specialists to consider creating a process that may, on a case-by-case basis, enable students to return to the program in September of 2021.

Again, we cannot guarantee any return into a program of choice. We want you to know that, where possible and appropriate, we are looking for ways to help all of our families return to our schools when they are ready, and when we have capacity to do so.

While classrooms may look a little different, I want to assure you that we are working hard to plan for a positive learning experience for your child and look forward to the year ahead. As always, please don't hesitate to contact me should you wish to connect.

Kind regards,

Murray McLeod

Principal

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