



September 4, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We are looking forward to having our students back to school on September 10. School and district staff are busy preparing for our students to arrive and we are very confident in our district and school plans for bringing students and staff back safely.

Parent information meetings have now taken place with your school principal giving you the information you need to make a decision on whether your children will be coming to your neighbourhood school, K to 12 online Distributed Learning Program or Homeschooling. School plans continue to be updated as we get new information from the Minister of Education and the Provincial Health Officer. You can access information on school plans and the options through our district website at www.sd5.bc.ca.

If you choose Distributed Learning (courses done completely online with teacher support) or Homeschooling (course work done independently of the district and supported by parents/guardians) and decide you wish to come back to school, we will welcome you back. The only stipulation for Distributed Learning is that if you are a high school student and your high school is in a quarter system, (which all of schools are except Sparwood Secondary), we ask you to wait to transfer back to your high school until the quarter is over. The reason is your child may have a difficult time catching up in the classroom.

If you are still unsure of which option to choose, we will hold your spot in your school for a few weeks. Please contact your school principal for further discussion on your options. For Cranbrook only, (as our other communities in SD 5 have only one elementary and one high school) most of our schools have room for you to come back into your catchment area school. There are a couple of our schools in Cranbrook where space may be limited. If there isn't room in your catchment area school on your return, we will find you another school within Cranbrook.

Important information for the first few days: September 8 and 9 - Staff Orientation and Training on Health and Safety Protocols district-wide. September 10 and 11 - all students return to school. Principals will, or have already, sent home important information on how to arrive at school on September 10 which outlines specific health and safety protocols.

You will be receiving a Self-Assessment Waiver from your school principal that will need to be sent back to the school by September 14. It is very important to keep your children home if they are sick. Please read the Self-Assessment Waiver carefully. If you have any questions please contact your school principal.



Masks

Students in middle and secondary will be provided with two reusable masks when they arrive at school. For the first day, we recommend students arrive with a mask at the bus stop or when they come into the school. There will be disposable masks available for students who may not have a mask to get on the bus.

In all settings, the Provincial Health Officer has indicated that non-medical masks are not recommended for elementary school students due to the increased likelihood they will touch their face and eyes. As well, they require assistance to properly put on and take off the mask (requiring increased close personal contact from school staff). Masks are a parent choice for kindergarten to grade 6.

Bussing

Bussing runs will operate as normal on both September 10 and 11. Please remind your children to physically distance at the bus stop and wait for the bus driver to give instructions on how to enter the bus. SD5 is encouraging students in elementary, who are riding the bus and are able to don their masks by themselves and can tolerate the mask, to wear a mask if they wish. This is due to the confined space resulting in the inability to physical distance, multiple age levels and learning groups which riding the bus presents. This will be a parent choice for kindergarten to grade 6.

Class Placement

We are asking for your patience with class placements and timetables. These will really depend on how many students come back to school to determine the learning groups. School staff will be working as fast as they can to ensure the class placements and timetables are provided to you.

Please follow the safety protocols laid out in your school plans for picking and dropping off your children. It will be very important for all of us to physically distance and wear a mask where physical distancing is not possible.

We are all getting used to this “new normal” and we will get used to all of these changes in order to keep our students, staff and parents safe. It will take time. It is important for all of us to be kind, patient and understanding as we start coming back to school.

I am very proud of the work that we have done in SD 5 to get our schools ready for your children. We are so fortunate to have a group of dedicated staff that worked through the summer to ensure we were ready to go for September 10.

I know this may be difficult at first. I understand that this is scary for some and that the decision to send your children back may not be an easy one. Please make the decision that makes the most sense for you and your family with all the information we have provided you. There is no wrong decision and we will support you in whatever decision you make. I reflect on the fact that this “Covid-19” virus will be with us for some time and we will continue to adjust our plans in order to support our students and staff. Please contact your school if you have any questions.

We will be continuing to use our school district [Facebook](#) page to show all the good things that are happening in our district.



Please continue to send any photos or videos you would like to share to our CBO email at cbo.mailing@sd5.bc.ca.

Please see the following links on our website for more information:

[BC's Restart Plan](#)

[SD5 Stage 2 Restart Plan](#)

[WorkSafeBC K – 12 Education Protocols](#)

[Provincial K-12 Health and Safety Guidelines](#)

[Covid 19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Settings](#)

[Keep Learning](#)

Take care,

Silke Yardley

