



Memo

Date: May 14, 2020
To: All Staff
From: Mark Pearmain, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: Re-Opening of NVSD Schools

Dear Staff,

In accordance with BC's Restart Plan, school districts are working with the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and Ministry of Education for partial in-person schooling opportunities. At present, the anticipated start date is June 1st. We will be working closely with Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S), Facilities and Maintenance, school administration, and staff to ensure a thoughtful process of return. As we engage in the transition process to in-person instruction, we would welcome staff on a voluntary basis to start coming to work in their schools over the next week.

I cannot stress enough that the decisions we make around planning for a return to in-class instruction first and foremost prioritize the health and safety of our employees. Across the District, we have already implemented routine and enhanced environmental cleaning programs, purchased the latest technology in surface disinfection, and created several regularly updated guidance documents [please refer to Appendix A] to support our staff.

The decision to start re-opening schools is not taken lightly, and there are many reasons for beginning a phased approach before the end of the school year:

- Schools are important community hubs. Social interaction is critical to our individual and collective well-being and mental health.
- Schools are critical to student learning.
- School closures have significant negative mental health and socioeconomic impacts on vulnerable children and youth.
- Schools play a critical role in the success of BC's Restart Plan. Re-engaging our school community now will set the stage for a full school start in September 2020.

The PHO has recognized the following trends that reduce the risk of COVID-19 to school district employees while working with children:

- There is a lower infection rate for children.
- Children who are infected with the virus and develop COVID-19 have milder symptoms, if any, and very few become critically ill.
- There is no conclusive evidence that children who are asymptomatic pose a risk to other children or to adults.
- There is currently no documented evidence of child-to-adult transmission.

Furthermore, the District, and through our OH&S and Facilities teams, is working directly with each school to ensure a safe and healthy school environment for our staff and students. Some of the measures we will be taking include:

- Routine daily screening for all staff and students entering the school. Anyone who has symptoms of a cold, flu or COVID-19 will not be permitted into the school.
- Routine and frequent environmental and high-touch cleaning.
- A strong focus on the daily routine of frequent washing of hands and other hygiene practices.
- Smaller class sizes, desk separation, rotating school attendance on a routine basis, and staggered start and end times for school days, including recess and lunch periods.

In closing, I hope it has been apparent to you that our approach to the suspension of in-class instruction and working remotely, and now, the re-opening of schools, is one of care for the health and safety of our employees. Additionally, we recognize the potential need of SEL support for students and families in this transition, and the district team is developing resources to this end. We look forward to hearing from you and to welcoming you back (in-person) in our schools.

Keep well,



Mark Pearmain
Superintendent of Schools

Appendix A

Safety Documents and Resources

The following key safety documents can be found on the [OHS web Portal](#):

- [Exposure Control Plan for Pandemic COVID 19](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for Occupational Health and Safety

Safe work instructions for:

- [Childcare](#)
- [Mobile workforce](#)
- [Custodians](#)
- [Site operations](#)

Additional Resources:

[SD44 - COVID 19 Staff Resources/FAQ](#)

[COVID 19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings 03-Apr-2020](#)

[COVID 19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings 27-Mar-2020](#)

[COVID 19: Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings 24-Mar-2020](#)

[College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of British Columbia](#)

[Engineers and Geoscientists British Columbia](#)

[Canadian Union of Public Employees](#)

[WorkSafeBC](#)