

## **Frequently Asked Questions About Returning to Class in June 2020**

### **Is in-class instruction optional?**

Yes. Returning to in-class instruction is optional and you should base your decision on the individual needs of your child and your family. While many young people are eager to learn with their friends and teachers in a classroom setting again, others may wish to continue learning remotely until the end of the school year.

Teachers will continue to support remote learning if your child chooses not to come to school. When students attend school on their invited day, teachers will assist and support students with their learning in a variety of ways. This is not additional learning, rather, it will support the ongoing learning already in place.

### **How do I register my child for in-class instruction?**

Your school will have communicated with you and assigned a schedule for your child. If you did not receive a schedule or you changed your mind and would like your child to attend school, please contact the school office as soon as possible to make arrangements and help schools plan.

### **Why start school again with only a month to go and when everyone is still being so cautious about physical distancing? Why not wait until next year?**

Most importantly, it is safe to restart school now. The number of cases and impacts on BC's health is decreasing. The Provincial Health Officer and international (WHO) research suggest children are less likely to get COVID-19 and less likely to transmit the virus. Furthermore, our most vulnerable students are most impacted, and the inequities are increasing.

Schools are a critical part of BC's Restart Plan. A partial restart now both contributes to the BC Restart Plan and helps get our entire school communities ready to learn safely in September. It may also reduce anxiety for students as they return in the fall. With small groups of students spaced out and attending part-time, we can make sure that everyone learns how to stick to new safety protocols. Preparing now for whatever the fall may bring is the best course of action to keep everyone safe going forward.

Currently, our health region is particularly safe. Please read the [recent letter from Interior Health Medical Health Office Dr. Silvina Mema](#).

### **Will playgrounds be open for children?**

Yes, in collaboration with our municipal partners, school playgrounds will be opened on June 1. Per the Provincial Health Authority, playgrounds are a safe environment and students will follow appropriate personal hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play.

### **What about recess?**

It is important to ensure children have time for outdoor play, and recess will continue. The Provincial Health Office has reassured students and parents that playgrounds are a safe environment if appropriate personal hygiene practices are observed before, during, and after outdoor play. The science and research tell us that, unlike with influenza, children are much less likely to get sick or transmit the virus than adults.

### **Will students and staff have access to hand sanitizing stations (in portables, sinks outside the building)?**

In accordance with the new health and safety guidelines all schools have hand sanitizing stations and well stocked cleaning supplies. We are working closely with the Government of BC to monitor critical supplies and ensure we have access to suppliers.

### **Should staff and students wear masks?**

We take guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). Currently, the BCCDC indicates that students and staff will not be required to wear non-medical masks; however, wearing a mask is a personal choice, and anyone who chooses to do so will be treated respectfully.

### **What will happen if a student/teacher/staff member has a runny nose or shows any other symptoms?**

We have a strict policy that if any student or staff member has even mild symptoms of a cold, influenza or COVID-19, arrangements will be made for that person to be returned home, and students are not to participate in extra-curricular activities or sports.

### **Does the Provincial Health Officer's 50-person maximum rule apply to schools?**

The Provincial Health Officer's order is intended to prevent large groups of people from gathering in close quarters with one another and does not apply to school activities. There can be more than 50 students and staff in a school at any given time if they are not all in one area and are actively practicing physical distancing.

**What will you do if there's an outbreak or suspected case of COVID-19 in or near a school community?**

Our plans and Provincial health guidelines ensure if there is an outbreak, increased risk of transmission, or second wave, we can dial-down class instruction for a period of time, or close schools completely under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO).

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For further answers about safety measures in Central Okanagan Public Schools, please view this [Health and Safety FAQ](#).

For detailed answers on BC's phased-in approach, please view the [Ministry of Education's FAQ's on Continuity of Learning in the K to 12 Education System](#).