



Helen Gorman Elementary School

Home of the Cougars

UPDATED JANUARY 2022 HELEN GORMAN ELEMENTARY COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION MEASURES

Please review the information below for basic procedures for a safe return to school. Staff will familiarize students with safety procedures and ensure clean, safe learning spaces. Thank you to families for helping to ensure that their children travel safely and arrive at school in good health.

The COVID-19 Omicron variant has changed the conditions of the pandemic, and the school has had to adjust our safety measures and plan for future disruption. Any further changes will be communicated to our school community in a timely manner. We continue to be committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for students and staff while modeling kindness, empathy, dignity, and respect. Through teaching, learning, and ongoing reminders, we are committed to helping our students be safe through these uncertain times. School updates will be posted at www.hge.sd23.bc.ca. You can learn more about district-wide safety measures and provincial updates at sd23.bc.ca. Thank you for working with us to help students feel safe, welcome, and ready to learn.

SCHOOL DROP OFF/PICK UP PROCEDURES

Please remember the following key points for arriving to and leaving from school:

- We ask all students, staff, and parents to respect the personal space of others.
- There is no student supervision until 8:15am. We ask that families refrain from dropping off their children before that time.
- The playground continues to remain open for student use before and after school.
- Learn the drop-off/pickup areas
- Parent/guardian and visitor access to the school building will be limited to by appointment only, or by invitation by the school principal or designate.

HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Routine Daily Health Self-checks

- The [Daily Health Check](#) or the [K-12 Health Check app](#) are easy ways to determine if your child should attend school based on their symptoms. A regularly updated list of [COVID-19 symptoms](#) can be found on the BCCDC website. Individuals who are symptomatic should not come to school until they seek health guidance.

Allergies & Other Considerations

- Students & staff experiencing symptoms to a preexisting condition (ie, seasonal allergies, asthma) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience a change in their symptoms, they should see their health-care provider.
- Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms, provided they are asymptomatic. Any student, staff or other person within the school who was identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak will be advised by public health about self-isolation depending on their vaccination status, and when they may return to school.

Staff or Students Developing Symptoms at School

If staff or students develop symptoms at school, arrangements will be made to send the person home (ie, call the child's parent). If a student is waiting for a ride, they will be brought to a location away from other students. A mask will be provided if they don't have one (exceptions will be made if the individual is unable to tolerate it). As with any illness or injury which prevents a child from attending school, the classroom teacher will ensure continuity of learning at home in cases where a student is required to self-isolate or quarantine. If someone in the school displays symptoms of COVID-19, we will be encouraging the individual to seek medical assistance. The school will take direction from public health authorities.

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SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

Before you go...

- The City of West Kelowna asks that parents avoid the no parking areas on the south side of Salmon Road when dropping off or picking up their children.
- Please send your child each day with:
 - A full water bottle
 - Suitable, healthy snacks and lunch
 - Clothing appropriate for the weather
 - A beach towel when sitting on the ground during outside learning time (optional)

Daily Entry Procedures

- Students will line up outside their teacher's classroom door while respecting others' personal space.
- Before students enter the school, they will be expected to put on their mask much like they would before entering the supermarket.
- As students enter, they will sanitize their hands by applying hand sanitizer or by washing their hands with soap & water. If hands are visibly dirty, soap & water works best.
- Students and staff also should sanitize hands before they leave for outside time or leave the room (ie, going to the Music Room) or return to the room.
- Teachers may add additional safety steps to this procedure to meet the needs of their students.

Other Considerations

- Classes will enter the building ONLY with their teachers and in a specific, staggered order to facilitate immediate hand washing.
- Students and staff will follow directional arrows to avoid traffic congestion and maximize space in between individuals.
- We will encourage respecting others' personal space, cough/sneeze etiquette and hand washing routines through frequent, kind, and gentle reminders.
- There will be custodial staff on-site for regular general cleaning and disinfecting of the premises which will occur at least once a day.
- Students may bring their own Health Canada approved hand sanitizer or soap.

FACE COVERINGS, MASKS

When everyone wears a mask, we keep each other safe. All staff, students in K-5, and visitors will be required to wear masks in all indoor areas including their desks and on buses. Exceptions to the mask policy include:

- there is a barrier in place;
- in the act of eating and drinking;
- a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons;
- a person unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person
- if the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it
- if the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask, for example:
 - Playing a wind instrument
 - Engaging in high-intensity physical activity
- while a staff member provides a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (for example, a hearing impairment), where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important.

Mask wearing is not required outdoors. Teachers often take students outside for learning.

We will continue to strive to provide a safe learning environment for students and staff while modeling kindness, empathy, dignity, and respect regardless of whether a member of our school community is wearing a mask or not.

RECESS & LUNCHTIMES

All students will continue to have outside playtime for the first half of lunch. Students will return to their classrooms for eating time. Teachers may schedule supervised "fresh air" breaks in the morning during instructional time. Staff and students will practice hand sanitizing and hand washing procedures as they head outside and return to the classroom. There are no longer designated play zones or learning groups.

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FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Parents are always welcome to be involved at Helen Gorman Elementary School. Given these unique circumstances, however, we ask that parents support students and staff by honoring the following expectations:

- Parent/guardian and visitor access to the school building will be limited to by appointment only, or by invitation by the school principal or designate.
- Before entering the school, all visitors should:
 - be familiar with our safety measures;
 - have completed the daily health check; and
 - be wearing a mask.
- Thank you for respecting the personal space of others while on the school grounds.
- Parents & visitors should not enter an occupied classroom without prior approval from the school principal as well as partake in a health and safety orientation.
- Whenever possible, please communicate with teachers or the office through email or telephone.
- If you need to drop-off late or pick-up early, please pull into the round-a-bout at the front of the school and call the office to wait for someone to come out and meet your child. In order to limit congestion, please avoid the use of the round-a-bout for general pick-up and drop-off.
- Pizza Lunch will continue, and other food service options may commence with the approval of the school principal.
- The February 3 and 4 Parent Conferences will be scheduled on a by-phone appointment basis only.

Assemblies, Gatherings, and Field Trips

- For the time being, any gathering (ie, assembly) will be virtual. As restrictions are lifted, we will gradually introduce smaller in-person gatherings and gradually transition to larger events as we recognize that staff and students will have varying degrees of comfort regarding personal space.
- All bus field trips that were scheduled up to and including January 28 will be canceled or postponed. Neighborhood walking field trips may continue as outside is a safe environment.

PLEASE NOTE: We will be making every effort to keep our school clean and safe - including specific teaching and learning about safety routines, procedures, and expectations for safe behavior and physical distancing. However, the nature of working in a facility with young children makes it difficult for us to guarantee continuous sanitization and complete adherence to minimizing physical contact or respecting the personal space of others.

Thank you for your ongoing care, support, and patience as we navigate our response to the pandemic. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the school office at 250-870-5116 or hge@sd23.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

Rob Aviani, Principal

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