



SD64 Stage 2 Restart Plan

2020/2021

Updated: March 30, 2021

SD64 (Gulf Islands)

Stage 2 Restart Plan 2020/2021

On September 8, school will resume for all students and staff in Stage 2 of the *K-12 Education Restart Plan*. For the past few weeks, SD64 (Gulf Islands) has been working closely with the Ministry of Education and Public Health on the District's Stage 2 Operations of the *K-12 Education Restart Plan* in preparation for September 2020. We have and continue to work closely with our education partners to ensure that the District's back-to-school Restart Plan for September supports students, teachers, and staff in the Gulf Islands.

The health and safety of our students and staff is paramount. Adhering strictly to the guidelines and requirements set out by the Provincial Health Officer, WorkSafe BC, and B.C. Centre for Disease Control, our schools will implement a suite of health and safety protocols and infection prevention and exposure control measures to create environments to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and to maximize in-class instruction for all students. These enhanced safety measures and layers of protection to be implemented at the schools will enable all students to return to full time, in-class instruction and to the continuity of educational opportunities. Local public health (school medical officers) will consistently monitor cases of COVID-19 that impacts schools and will support school communities to manage cases if and when they occur.

Below is an outline of the measures that will be implemented at each of the schools to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. For the complete and detailed health and safety measures and protocols, please see [SD64 COVID-19 Protocols for Returning to Stage 2 Operations](#).



SD64 (GULF ISLANDS)

RETURN TO SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2020

A few things you should know as we prepare of Stage 2

SCHOOLS ARE SAFE
our #1 priority

We are opening our doors on the guidance and expert advice from Public Health and the Ministry of Education. Be assured that procedures and protocols are in place to safeguard those in our care against exposure to COVID-19. This September, expect to see:

- enhanced cleaning in our buildings
- more hand washing and sanitation stations
- learning groups and staggered break times

WE CARE
for students, staff, and families

We know how important it is for children to be back in school for healthy development and we are committed to providing a welcoming and safe environment for students to learn and grow. We will continue to work with our partner groups: Public Health, and the Ministry of Education to ensure that our local procedures are consistent with the best guidance for safety and meet the needs of our communities. We care in this together.

WE BELIEVE IN SUCCESS FOR ALL LEARNERS

We are committed to providing options and opportunities for all K to 12 learners as they move through our schools and beyond public education. We will continue to provide high-quality instruction and programs to support each and every student's pathway to graduation.

Let's work together to ensure a safe and successful return to school for all.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE FOR A SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL RETURN TO CLASSES

<https://publich.bc.ca/>

Learning groups/cohorts

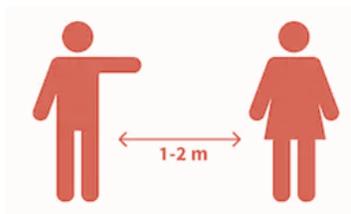


Students and staff will be assigned to a specific learning group or cohort within which they will remain and primarily interact with for the quarter, term, or year. This reduces the number of in-person, close interactions an individual has in a day with different people, helping to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The learning groups will also allow for quicker contact tracing if required.

At the elementary and middle schools, learning groups will be no more than 60 individuals. At the secondary school, learning groups will be no more than 120 individuals. Learning groups can be a single classroom of students and staff or multiple classes who join for some activities (like recess or lunch). Specific details about learning groups at each school will be in the individual School Restart Plans.

Physical Distancing (maintaining a distance of 2 metres apart)

Physical distancing measures have been implemented to reduce the risk of transmission of infection between individuals. This refers to a range of measures aimed at reducing close contact with others. Physical distancing is used as a preventative measure as COVID-19 tends to spread through prolonged, close (face-to-face) contact. Within learning groups, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available. Students are required to maintain physical distancing of 2 metres when interacting with those outside of their learning group. Within and outside of learning groups, there should be no crowding.



Various strategies will be implemented at schools to allow for more space and physical distancing (reconfiguring classroom layouts; conducting classes outside; staggering recess, lunch, transition times; designating entrances/exits, etc.).

Hand Hygiene / Respiratory Etiquette



Washing hands with soap is the most effective way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Hand washing guidelines will be taught, reinforced and practiced to mitigate the spread of illness. When a sink is not available, a 60% (minimum) alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be used. Hand sanitizer stations will be set up at the entrances of schools and in areas where a sink is not available. In addition to hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette will also be taught, reinforced and practiced to reduce the spread of illness: cough into elbow, sleeve or tissue. If tissue is used, it will be discarded immediately, and hand hygiene protocols will be followed.

Cleaning and Disinfecting



Regular cleaning and disinfecting of schools will be essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 from areas that may be contaminated. The following protocols mitigate the risks and potential exposure to the virus: general premises will be cleaned and disinfected once per 24 hour period; in addition, high touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected twice per 24 hour period (once to occur during school hours); and surfaces that are visibly dirty will be cleaned and disinfected immediately.

There is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute to the spread of COVID-19. SD64 will be adjusting the heat, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in the district to help reduce any possible transmission of the COVID-19 virus in the schools. The current MERV 8 filters have been replaced with MERV 13 filters to enhance school ventilation.

Personal Protective Equipment

All K-12 staff and all students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear non-medical masks at all times while in schools and on school buses – both within and outside their learning groups. Exceptions to the non-medical mask requirements are as follows:

- While eating or drinking.
- When there is a barrier in place.
- When wearing a mask cannot be tolerated for health or behavioural reasons.
- Temporary removal of mask for the purpose of identifying the person wearing it.
- Temporary removal of mask to engage in educational activities that are not possible with masks (eg. playing an instrument, hi-intensity physical activities, etc.).



- When unable to put on or remove a mask without assistance of another person.
- When providing service to a person with a disability of diverse ability (hearing impairments, visual cues, facial expressions, etc. are important).

When wearing face shields, a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield. Face shields are a form of eye protection for the person wearing it and should not be worn in place of non-medical masks, except for those providing services where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movements is important for student health and development and physical distancing cannot be practiced.

Students in Grades K-3 are encouraged to wear masks when indoors, but are not required to wear of non-medical masks consistent with the above exceptions, as mask wearing remains a personal or family choice for these students.

Illness and Individual Health Checks



Access to schools will be restricted for individuals in the following circumstances: confirmed by public health as a case of COVID-19; travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days; or identified as a close contact of a confirmed case. Individuals must stay home, self-isolate and will be supported by public health. A person who has been tested for COVID-19 must stay home while they are waiting for the test result.

Staying home when sick is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction to and spread of COVID-19 in schools. Parents are to conduct daily health checks prior to their children leaving home for the bus, water taxi or school. Any student or staff who develops new symptoms of illness (e.g. cold, influenza, or COVID-19) should stay home and should seek a health assessment for guidance. This includes calling 8-1-1 or a primary-care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner. Families may also use the [BC COVID-19 App](#) for assistance. Students or staff should not return to school until COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory disease has been excluded and symptoms have improved. A doctor's note should not be required for students or staff to return. All staff and adult visitors are required to complete an active health check prior to entering the schools. If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.

Procedures are in place for students who may develop symptoms of illness at school; the student will be relocated to a designated area away from others while waiting to be picked-up by the parent. For students who reside on the Outer Gulf Islands, protocols have been developed with BC Ferries to ensure that students who develop symptoms of illness at school may now return safely to their home islands via ferry. Details are available at the schools.

If a student or staff is a confirmed case of COVID-19 through testing or investigation, public health will identify those who were in close contact recently (i.e. contact tracing) to determine how they were infected and who else may be at risk of infection. If a potential exposure is suspected at school, public health will work with the school to understand who may have been exposed and to determine what actions to be taken.

When multiple confirmed, linked cases of COVID-19 occur among students and/or staff within a 14 day period (and determined by public health as a cluster), public health, under the direction of the school medical officer, will investigate to determine and advise schools if any additional measures are required to prevent further transmission of COVID-19.

Student Transportation

Buses and water taxis for transporting students will be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided by the BC Centre for Disease Control. Various protocols will be in place to mitigate the spread of illness. When possible, students will have their own seats or share with a member of the household or cohort. Assigned seating plans (when possible) and bus/water taxi manifests will be created and maintained (for contact tracing if required).



Students in Grades 4-12 and all staff will be required to wear non-medical masks on the buses and water taxi with the exception for bus drivers, while driving the bus. Parents will be required to conduct daily health checks prior to sending students to the bus or water taxi. If students have symptoms, they are not to board buses or water taxis; they are to remain at home.



Orientation/Training

During the first week of school, all staff will return to their schools, starting September 8, for the orientation and training on the updated BC CDC Health and Safety guidelines. Students will attend school on September 10 and 11 for their orientation to become familiar with their new classrooms and learning groups, with hygiene protocols and respiratory etiquette, and the health and safety protocols for their classrooms and other spaces in the school. Principals at each site will communicate directly with families with full details and schedules for the orientation days for students.



Schools and classrooms will look and feel different, but the four foundational principles that were established at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic remain the same: maintain a healthy and safe environment for all; provide services needed to support children of our essential workers; support vulnerable students who may need special assistance; and provide continuity of educational opportunity for all students. Schools will resume normal practices in supporting students with diverse needs and abilities. Schools will ensure that students who require supports will be identified early, be provided with targeted intervention, receive on-going supports and be assessed regularly for progress. Communication with families, diverse indigenous communities, and partner groups will be on-going and timely to ensure that they are kept abreast of all updates, announcements and other relevant information that pertain to the *K-12 Educational Restart Plan* and Health and Safety Guidelines.

We appreciate the tremendous challenges and efforts everyone has had to endure to adapt and adjust to the exceptional circumstances under COVID-19. We also recognize that our situation is constantly changing and uncertain. Our District and our schools will endeavour to communicate to you our operational plans as they evolve in these undoubtedly changing times. We are excited to welcome our students back to school and wish everyone a wonderful start-up to the new school year.



We are in this together.