



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 64 (GULF ISLANDS)

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August 30, 2021

Dear Students, Families and Staff,

On September 7, a new school year begins with students returning to full-time, in person learning. This is an exciting time of the year as students connect with friends and teachers and engage in new learning opportunities and various activities/events at their schools. The start of the 2021-2022 school year will be different as we work closer towards “getting back to normal” in a safe manner. Sports, music and extracurricular activities will resume in September. Students will be in their classes where cohorts or learning groups will no longer be required. In order to do these safely, schools will continue with the following provincial health and safety guidelines, released on August 24, 2021:

1. Provincial Mask Mandate

- 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/water taxis.

Exceptions to the non-medical mask requirements are as follows:

- While eating or drinking
- When behind a barrier
- When wearing a mask cannot be tolerated for health or behavioural reasons
- When identifying the person wearing it
- When engaging in educational activities that are not possible with masks (e.g. 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 or diverse ability (hearing impairments visual cues, facial expressions, etc. are important)

For students in Grades K-3, the Provincial Health Officer encourages, but does not require, the wearing of non-medical masks consistent with the above exceptions, as mask wearing remains a personal or family choice for these students.

2. Daily health checks prior to school start (staying home when experiencing symptoms of illness)
3. Hand hygiene (frequent washing/sanitizing)
4. Respiratory etiquette
5. Illness protocols at school
6. Cleaning protocols (cleaning of high touch surfaces once per day)
7. Directional signage to manage traffic flow and prevent crowding

These Provincial public health guidelines for prevention and exposure control help support safe environments by reducing the transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

More information on the new guidelines can be found on the [BC Ministry website](#) and the [BCCDC website](#).

Our District and our schools will keep you informed of any changes or updates to our operational plans as determined by the Ministry of Education and Public Health. The health and safety of our students and staff remain our priority.

Our collective efforts last year enabled us to provide our students with uninterrupted full-time, in-class instruction. Adhering to the measures in place to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 and getting vaccinated (if eligible) will help to protect our children. Once again, our efforts together will enable us to keep our students, staff and families healthy and safe; to continue to provide full-time, in-class instruction; and to move us closer towards getting back to normal operations.

We are excited to welcome our students and staff back to school and wish everyone a wonderful start-up to the new school year. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Principal at your school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Boe Beardsmore', with a stylized, cursive script.

Boe Beardsmore
Director of Instruction, Learning Services