

June Newsletter Update! Questions and Answers Below!

Dear parents, there have been several emails and questions sent to the office and to our teachers about the Volunteer June attendance. I will update the original newsletter with this Q and A, so you can make a better-informed decision whether to send your children into the school in June.

Also, there was an error in reporting the family names for K-5 families on Mondays and Wednesdays are for family names STARTING with **A to M**; Tuesdays and Thursdays **N to Z**

The following is a summary of the General Questions and Answers that are specific to OLS,

Q1: Can students wear summer uniforms?

Yes, would like to separate the students from their home clothes as to ensure they are washed regularly. However, students can wear running shoes and are not required to wear school sweaters. Only Polo shirts and the regular kilts for girls with undershorts and uniform pants for boys are required. Students will be outside for part of the day so please ensure proper attire for the weather

Q2: Will there be extra handwashing sanitizers, wipes and cleaning for students before entering and when leaving all rooms and the buildings and at the end of each day?

YES! YES! And of course, YES!

Q3: Will students who stay home and not return get the same educational program as those who come to school?

Yes, the only advantage of coming to the school is, as it is part of the Province's Stage 3 Educational Restart Program and is to help families returning to work. It also helps for students who may need a more regular structured day (regular school day hours)

Q4: Does support for Essential workers continue?

Yes. At present we have opened the Gym space for those families who need more than 1 or 2 days for June. If needed we can expand those days (Mondays, Weds, and Fridays) to include siblings not in class of students who are present in the school as well.

Q5: What is Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning mean? How will that be different in June?

At present teachers are on-line from home or from school, and students watch "live instruction" (**Synchronous**) on-line from their devices at home. That will not change. The only difference is the teachers will be live from their classrooms on the days their students attend

school and students have the option of watching from their devices at school or as before from home. On-line times maybe adjusted to reflect the different class times.

Asynchronous instruction is when students are watching static videos or doing seat work independently. This is the same as homework, except it is called independent seat work at school. These times are different as not all students have a parent or adult at home during the day and maybe do their daily and weekly collected assignment during non- school hours

In June:

- i) Students who stay home will continue with their asynchronous schedules as before
- ii) Students who come into school will now have time to complete more of their lessons at school. Teachers will not be direct teaching during this time and other support staff will circulate, as parents would at home, to supervise the work and answer questions.

I hope these Q& As will help clarify some of the questions you may have on the Stage 3 Educational Plan at OLS. A clear safety plan will be posted on our website on Wednesday, May 27th after our Monday and Tuesday staff meetings.

Thank you for your patience with all this change and again please complete the survey by this Friday 12p.m.

Voluntary Return to School Survey. Please click the following link and complete by Friday at 12 p.m.

<https://forms.gle/CbSxV2NR7GRnpACL9>

Pasquale Balletta
Principal

Please READ More in the questions and answers from the MINISTRY WEBSITE below:

- **Update May 15:** Minister of Education Rob Fleming announced B.C. K-12 students will have optional access to increase in-class instruction on June 1 under Stage 3 of the education restart plan

What can parents and students expect to happen in Stage 3?

- Stage 3 for school districts and independent school authorities will include the following:
 - Optional in-class learning for students in kindergarten to Grade 5 on a part-time basis

- Access to optional in-class learning as needed for grades 6 to 12 on a part-time basis
- Remote and online learning continues to be available for those students who choose not to return to school
- There will be full-time in-school instruction available five days a week for children of Essential Service Workers (ESWs), students with disabilities/ diverse abilities and students requiring additional supports
- Parents and students will continue to receive regular information updates on school, district and independent school authority websites

What is your plan for this transition? When will more kids be transitioned back to school?

- As the Premier has said, it won't be like flipping a switch. We can't anticipate a regular return to education as we know it
- Our plan is to see some students being gradually introduced back into the classroom this school year, with an ultimate goal of having all students back in class in September 2020 if the Provincial Health Officer determines it is safe to do so
- Students will be invited to return to school, but parents will continue to have a choice to send their children to school
- More information on the phased-in approach and timing for resuming more in-class instruction will be available shortly

Is it safe for students to go back to school?

- The PHO has advised that it is safe for us to move to this stage of opening schools
- If it wasn't safe to do so, we wouldn't be opening them. The health and safety of staff and students is our top priority
- Today there are already about 5,000 children in B.C. schools, these include children of Essential Service Workers (ESWs) and those who need the extra support that a school setting provides
- The science and research so far tell us that children under 19 are at low risk of transmitting COVID-19 and suspending schools only has modest impacts in minimizing the spread of the virus
- We have looked at what has worked and not worked elsewhere and have considered this in our planning.
- At the same time, we need to stay diligent, and that's why we are looking at a measured, gradual approach to transitioning more students back into the classroom

What exactly will these safety measures look like? What are you doing to protect children and staff?

- To make sure schools are safe for students and staff, the number of students in school each day will be reduced, with most receiving in-class instruction part-time
- All boards of education and independent school authorities will be required to implement the strict health and safety measures endorsed by the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC to reduce the risk COVID-19 transmission, which includes:
 - Limiting the number of students in school, avoiding groups or gatherings of students in hallways or other common areas and taking students outside more often
 - Regular cleaning of high-contact surfaces like doorknobs, toilet seats, keyboards and desks at least twice a day, and cleaning the school building at least once a day
 - Students, educators and staff will be required to clean their hands before entering school property. And there will be more hand-sanitizing and cleaning stations available
 - There will be staggered drop-offs, lunch and recess breaks, with increased outside time
 - Staff and students (or their parents/guardians) will be asked to assess themselves daily for symptoms of COVID-19 with clear policies not to come to school if unwell. If any student or staff member has even mild symptoms, arrangements will be made for that person to be returned home
 - One student per seat on school buses, unless children are from the same house, with plexiglass separating the bus driver from students.
 - Students or employees will be discouraged from sharing food or personal items like phones, pens or pencils, and clear protocols will be in place for the safe and healthy handling of all food items.

Will there be Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for students and staff? Will students and staff be encouraged to wear masks?

- 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 are the new health and safety guidelines for schools?

- The [new guidelines for K-12 settings \(PDF\)](#) released as a part of the Restart BC Plan include a routine daily screening protocol for all staff and students
- There will be routine and frequent cleaning of school property and high-contact surfaces
- Other measures could include smaller class sizes, increased space between desks, alternating attendance arrangements, frequent handwashing, wearing non-medical masks for group activities and sports, and limiting group sizes

- Policies will be clear that children, youth and staff who have symptoms of a cold, flu, or other COVID-19, with any coughing or sneezing are not permitted at school or take part in extracurricular activities and sports
- And international students will need to arrive early and self-isolate for 14 days
- The PHO is also revising the current public health guidelines for K-12 settings and those will be released soon

Will students and staff have access to hand sanitizing stations (in portables, sinks outside the building)? Who will pay for the extra soap and hand sanitizer? What about schools that don't have hot water?

- Among the new health and safety guidelines is a requirement for all schools to have hand sanitizing stations and cleaning supplies to be well-stocked
- Each school district will determine funding for cleaning supplies based on their local community needs
- We are working closely with school districts to monitor critical supplies and ensure access to suppliers
- The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) has confirmed that hot water is not necessary and that schools can use alternate hand hygiene methods like hand sanitizer if required.

What will happen if a student has a runny nose? What about a teacher or staff who has symptoms?

- 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.
- Schools, school districts and independent schools are going to be strict about this.

What type of safety protocols will be put in place in schools to keep staff and students – especially younger students – safe?

- We will soon receive the updated guidelines from the PHO, and we will review them closely with all our education partners – including, trustees, educators, school leaders and staff – to ensure school districts have safety plans that reflect these updates
- The science and research tell us that, unlike with influenza, children are much less likely to get sick or transmit the virus than adults
- The public health guidelines for K-12 school settings recognize that physical distancing can be challenging in a school setting – especially for younger children
- There will be a focus on physical distancing and reduced physical contact in those situations where physical distancing is not practical

- The new measures will include:
 - Routine daily screening protocol for all staff and students
 - Routine and frequent cleaning of school property and high-contact surfaces
- Other measures could include smaller class sizes, increased space between desks, alternating attendance arrangements, frequent handwashing, wearing non-medical masks for group activities and sports, and limiting group sizes
- Policies will be clear that children, youth and staff who have symptoms of a cold, flu or other COVID-19, with any coughing or sneezing are not permitted at school or take part in extracurricular activities and sports
- International students will need to arrive early and self-isolate for 14 days

Will breakfast and lunch programs continue at schools for students in Stage 3?

- School districts will make breakfast and lunch programs and limited cafeteria services available with additional health and safety, physical distancing and hygiene measures in place
- There will be a continuation of pick-up food support for those not in attendance

How will all of this work if some kids are going back to school part-time and others will be at home?

- To make sure schools are safe for students and staff, the number of students in school each day will be limited, with most receiving in-class instruction part-time
- School districts will determine scheduling for classes and transportation arrangements, but for Kindergarten to Grade 5 this means most students will go to school half-time (such as alternating days), while Grades 6 to 12 will go to school about one day a week
- Children of Essential Service Workers and students needing additional supports will have the option to attend school full-time, five days a week
- Families that decide not to send their children to class may continue learning from home

In Stage 3, how will school districts and independent school authorities prioritize supports for students of ESW parents and students with diverse abilities?

- Students with disabilities/diverse abilities and students requiring additional supports who would benefit from in-school instruction will continue to have access to classroom instruction full time
- ESW children in K-5 will be offered instruction five days/week based on parental need
- School districts and independent school authorities will continue to accommodate ESW children beyond Grade 5 if the children have a disability that precludes them from being alone in a home environment

- As in-school supports gradually increase, school districts and independent school authorities will be limited in their ability to provide extended hours for ESW children. ESWs should begin to re-engage with local childcare providers if they will have a need for before and after school care

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

- All school districts and independent school authorities are to have plans in place for each of the five stages, to ensure if there is an outbreak, increased risk of transmission or second wave, then they can dial-down class instruction for a period of time, or close schools completely under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO)
- We've directed all school boards to have plans in place in case they need to change how they deliver education, and so they can adapt to any of the circumstances we may find ourselves in over the next year.

Will libraries, gyms, playgrounds and cafeterias be open? What about playgrounds and recess? Gym or music class?

- Until there is a vaccine, education will continue to be delivered differently than before
- Ensuring children have time for outdoor play is important and recess is expected to continue
- The PHO has reassured students and parents that playgrounds are a safe environment as long as appropriate personal hygiene practices are observed before, during and after outdoor play
- Some schools may have libraries, gyms and cafeterias open, if they can maintain the strict health and safety guidelines
- Gym and music class may need to be modified, depending on the activities and if kids can avoid physical contact – for instance, we won't have situations where children are blowing on instruments or playing volleyball

What are the plans for continuity of educational opportunities for students who will continue to learn at home?

- We understand that many K-12 students in school districts and independent schools will continue to learn online/remotely to supplement in-school instruction
- That's why school districts and independent school authorities will refine remote and online learning resources and delivery to support a "hybrid" instructional design

Are there changes to childcare options in Stage 3? Can schools charge fees for childcare?

- School districts have been asked to work with childcare partners in their community to address hours of service outside of instructional hours at each school
- As in-school instruction gradually increases, school districts will be limited in their ability to provide extended hours for children of Essential Service Workers (ESWs). Essential Service Workers should begin to re-engage with local childcare providers if they will have a need for before and after school care
- Boards of Education must be licensed to offer before and after school care and must charge fees for the childcare they provide for before and after school care
- Boards of Education cannot charge childcare fees to parents while students are at a school during classroom instructional hours (typically 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

What are your exact plans for each Stage?

- We have developed a 5-stage approach with Stage 1 representing the 'new normal' with all students in all grades learning in the classroom and Stage 5 representing essentially a full lock-down of the system
- We are currently at Stage 4, with children of essential service workers and students with complex needs or those who require extra support receiving in-class instruction
- Our goal is to transition from Stage 4 to Stage 3 on June 1st – where we will expand in-class learning for some students, with remote and online learning options continuing to be available

Will the school year end earlier than June 30?

- The current school year is scheduled to proceed as regularly scheduled, which would end on June 30, 2020
- The Ministry of Education will continue to work with the Provincial Health Officer to ensure students, parents, teachers and school staff are protected through the measured and phased approach for class instruction in schools across B.C.

What are the new health and safety guidelines for schools?

- The new health and safety guidelines for K-12 settings include a routine daily screening protocol for all staff and students
- All school districts and independent school authorities will be required to implement the strict health and safety measures endorsed by the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC to reduce the risk COVID-19 transmission, which includes:
 - Limiting the number of students in school, avoiding groups or gatherings of students in hallways or other common areas and taking students outside more often

- Regular cleaning of high-contact surfaces like doorknobs, toilet seats, keyboards and desks at least twice a day, and cleaning the school building at least once a day
- Students, educators and staff will be required to clean their hands before entering school property. And there will be more hand-sanitizing and cleaning stations available
- There will be staggered drop-offs, lunch and recess breaks, with increased outside time
- Staff and students (or their parents/guardians) will be asked to assess themselves daily for symptoms of COVID-19 with clear policies not to come to school if unwell. If any student or staff member has even mild symptoms, arrangements will be made for that person to be returned home
- One student per seat on school buses, unless children are from the same house, with plexiglass separating the bus driver from students
- Students or employees will be discouraged from sharing food or personal items like phones, pens or pencils, and clear protocols will be in place for the safe and healthy handling of all food items

How is this going to work on school buses? What if you have more students than a bus can accommodate with one kid per seat? Are you increasing the funding for transportation so districts can hire more bus drivers or purchase more buses?

- The new health and safety guidelines recommend that there should only be one person per seat, unless the students are from the same household
- Plexiglass can also be installed to separate the driver from students
- Transportation, plans and schedules will be determined by the school district, depending on how many children head back to class this year
- Because there will be fewer students attending school in June, buses should have the extra room to ensure children can practice physical distancing on buses
- In most districts, there will likely be the same number of bus trips with fewer children

Why not just wait until September to bring students back into the classroom?

- We know there is no substitute for in-class instruction and as we continue to take steps toward recovery, it's important that we get kids back into the classroom
- We also know that there is a growing risk of inequity the longer in-class learning is suspended, especially for students who need extra support
- For families and students who need the extra supports that a school setting can provide will have the opportunity to come to school, if needed

- Returning students to in-class instruction before the 2019/20 school year ends will ensure we will be well-positioned to start school up at Stage 1, hopefully in September

Will the return to classes be mandatory for K-12 students?

- No. Parents can choose to have their children continue to learn at home
- For families and students who require the supports of learning in a classroom, that option will be available to them

Why are elementary students able to spend more in-class time than older students who are better able to follow health directives?

- We have looked at what has worked and not worked elsewhere and have considered this in our planning
- We know that access to school for children in Grades K-5 is important for parental participation in the economy
- As we've seen over the last couple of months here in B.C., the older kids get, the better they're able to work remotely

How will teachers physically distance themselves from students who need hands-on support?

- The Ministry of Education has asked school districts and independent school authorities to ensure students with disabilities and complex needs have access to the same level of on-going learning as all other students
- The public health guidelines for K-12 school settings recognize that physical distancing can be challenging in a school setting and offer several different methods for teachers and support staff to consider
- There is no research or evidence that students with disabilities or complex needs are any more likely to contract Covid-19 or transmit it to others
- For students whose care plan already involved gloves, masks or personal protective equipment, staff will continue to have access to those resources

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

- The PHO'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 about recess and playgrounds?

- It's important to ensure children have time for outdoor play, and recess is expected to continue
- The PHO has reassured students and parents that playgrounds are a safe environment as long as 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

If students only go back to school one or two days a week, or for a half-day, how can parents be expected to return to work full-time?

- As we take steps to remove some of the restrictions, we continue to recommend employers be flexible when it comes to parents of school-age students
- Children of essential service workers, vulnerable students and those with complex needs will have five days a week of in-class instruction
- Families will also be able to choose if their children return to in-class instruction for the remainder of this school year
- At home supports may change and shift as we move towards a focus on in-class instruction

Will students be required to go to school this summer to make up for lost time?

- Summer school is not a requirement
- That said, we are currently considering how school districts can prioritize summer school learning opportunities

Will childcare facilities operating on school grounds reopen?

- The provincial government, under direction of the PHO, continues to state that childcare facilities are an essential service, and are considered safe to operate, as long as they are following the recommended health and safety protocols. Some childcare operators have made the decision to close on their own. Those childcare operators that chose to close, may start to reopen in the coming weeks
- Where childcare is being operated in conjunction with K-12 schools, it's expected that boards of education and/or independent school authorities have determined ways to continue these services operating where possible
- MCFD continues to work closely with the child care sector to ensure that Essential Service Workers and other parents returning to work during the COVID-19 pandemic have access to child care, with [recently announced](#) new funding for providers
- [More information on childcare questions/answers and resources in response to COVID-19](#)

Will the school year end earlier than June 30?

- The current school year is scheduled to proceed as regularly scheduled, which would end for students on June 24, 2020 and teachers on June 30.
- The Ministry of Education will continue to work with the Provincial Health Officer to ensure students, parents, teachers and school staff are protected through the measured and phased approach for class instruction in schools across B.C.