

Principal's Update August 27, 2020

Dear Parents,

As per my last week's email, (also posted on our school website, (www.ourladyofsorrows.ca) our goal at OLS is to continue to provide you with a weekly update throughout our September back to school restart plan.

Today's update will include the Superintendent's letter ([click here to view](#)) on the CISVA School's September restart dated August 24, 2020.

This letter includes many hyper- links to important documents which include:

- [K-12 Five-Stage Education Restart Plan](#)
- [Provincial health and mask guidelines for K-12 settings](#)

The school has submitted its own school safety plan to the authorities, which will be posted on the school website next week, once the staff have reviewed this plan for any needed updates. The School safety plan includes school start and dismissal times, cohort descriptions and all safety protocols.

The elements in the OLS Safety Plan are the school's incorporation of all Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Work Safe BC protocols for our local site.

Our primary goal is educating our students in the return to school plan, while considering all enhanced safety protocols in all our school activities. The safety of our students, staff, and families of Our Lady of Sorrows School Community, has been thoroughly considered in this new plan.

Some common questions that are detailed in the OLS Safety Plan are:

What are the School's Enhanced Safety Measures?

Daily COVID -19 screening at home prior to students or staff attending school.

***Anyone who has any sickness symptoms of any kind will not be allowed in school. This will be strictly enforced! This includes all staff as well.**

Students will be asked to wash their hands frequently, including before coming to school, and throughout the day, as well as all movement in/out of rooms after all bathroom use. They will also have access to hand sanitizer when hand washing is not available.

The school will continue to be cleaned more frequently, including classrooms and all high-touch and all common areas at least 2x daily.

Playgrounds are a safe environment. However, students will practice appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play and equipment will not be shared.

Students will be asked to label their personal items and not to share them.

All applicable practice guidelines from the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings have been applied.

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf>

We will also manage the flow of students and staff in common areas, including restricting areas and hallway access to minimize crowding, and allow for ease of people passing through and in uni-directions throughout the school.

All visitors must complete the requirements of a daily health check before entering any school building.

Increased signage to remind students and teachers about handwashing, their health checks, and physical distancing protocols, will be enhanced throughout the building. All staff will wear either a mask or face shield if physical distancing is not possible, or when 2 or more staff occupy the same areas.

Students in each grade from K-7 will be organized into a distinct cohort, including all preschool classes, to allow for greater social interaction between students.

What are Cohorts?

A cohort is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term. Cohorts reduce the number of in-person, or close interactions a person has in a school setting without requiring physical distancing to consistently be practiced.

In elementary and middle schools, a cohort can be composed of up to 60 people. In our school we will use the existing class structure. For example, in Grade 6, teachers, aides and students will be no more than 60. In essence, the Grade 6 cohort will only include the required staff with all registered students in that grade. This is the same for all grades in the school. Each grade is its own cohort. There is no combining of grades.

Within each cohort, physical contact will be minimized, but a 2-metre physical distance **does not need to be maintained**.

Consistent seating arrangements within cohorts will be used where possible, and students from different cohorts may be required to be together sometimes. It is expected that cohorts and physical distance are maintained as much as possible. This does not apply to extracurricular activities where physical distance between cohorts must be maintained.

How do teachers interact with multiple cohorts?

The school will minimize the number of adults as much as possible (staff and others) who interact with cohorts they are not a part of, while still supporting learning.

Those outside of a cohort must practice physical distance when interacting with the cohort. For example, a specialist teacher (PE, Music, French, ADST, Resource) can teach multiple cohorts, but should maintain physical distance from students and other staff as much as possible. In an elementary school, two classes from different cohorts can be in the same learning space at the same time if a 2-metre distance can be maintained between people from different cohorts. Specialist teachers must wear PPE at all times.

Unless they are part of the same cohort, staff and other adults should maintain physical distance from each other at all times and/or wear masks or face shields when possible. This includes during breaks and when in meetings.

Will there still be large Gatherings, assemblies and masses?

Gatherings will not exceed the maximum cohort size in the setting, plus the minimum number of additional people required (e.g. school staff, visitors, etc.) to meet the gathering's purpose and intended outcome.

Most gatherings outside of a single cohort will be virtual. Outdoors environments may include more cohorts as long as social distancing between cohorts is maintained.

Will Drop-Off and Pick up Change?

As in our June re-start, we will be introducing longer drop-off times (8:30- 9am) and pick-up times (2:30-3pm) to prevent crowding. Masks must be worn by parents in all public places, and in the pick-up and drop-off zones when physical distancing cannot be accommodated.

More information will follow after our teachers meet next week to discuss this issue.

There is no playtime outside, PRIOR or AFTER, the drop-off times. Students must go straight to classes and then straight home. There is also **no** After School Care program available at this time.

Primary and Intermediate grades will also have different recess and lunch breaks to stagger transition times and to provide a greater amount of space between cohorts on the playground.

Students will be encouraged to be outside more often. Please ensure all students are prepared with proper jackets and footwear daily as we will also increase the air circulation in the classrooms as well. Students will need to wear sweaters and jackets more often.

The flow of people in common areas will also be managed, including hallways, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

Will there still be Extracurricular Activities?

Extracurricular activities including sports, arts and special interest clubs will occur when physical distance can be maintained between members of different cohorts and reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same cohort.

Inter-school events including competitions, tournaments and festivals, will not occur at this time. This will be re-evaluated in mid-fall 2020. In school events are possible. More information will be given out after next week.

There is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students. However, laminated paper-based products will be cleaned and disinfected daily if they are touched by multiple people.

Key Physical distancing reminders!

Parents and caregivers are to remain outside of the school when dropping off their children. When picking up students you are to wait outside the school yard until the student's dismissal time.

Masks must be worn in all public places and parents must avoid close greetings, like hugs or handshakes.

We ask students to keep their hands to themselves when possible and not to pass objects to each other with their hands.

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

Non-medical masks are recommended in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance for extended periods of time and is in close proximity with a person outside of their regular contacts or cohorts. This includes riding the bus or car-pooling to school where a student may be sitting next to a person outside of their cohort or household.

Non-medical masks are not recommended for primary students due to the increased likelihood they will touch their face and eyes more often and not wear it correctly.

All students in grades 5-7 will be provided with 2 non- medical reusable masks for the year to wear if they wish (any primary student may ask for one as well). Masks will be required in smaller areas, between classes or when transitioning between classes or cohorts. Students may also bring their own from home as long as they are clean and dry and washed when soiled.

No student is required to wear a non-medical mask if they do not tolerate it, as they are not required to wear them with their own cohorts in the classroom unless they wish.

What happens with students with medical complexity, immune suppression and or receiving delegated care?

Parents and caregivers of children who are considered at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine their child's level of risk. **ONLY High-Risk** children will be allowed to receive their programs at home provided there is a doctor's note and an Individualized Education Plan. Parents must contact the school prior to Sept 8th if a new IEP is required.

No health services will be provided to a student in school who is exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19 (beyond those detailed if a student develops symptoms at school in [BC CDC guidelines](#)).

This week's letters and links are to help you understand the incredible thought and work put into the September Restart plans.

As of this week, plans are as mentioned. If there are any new developments in regard to online learning options, you will be informed in my September 1st letter.

Our office will open Monday, August 31st at 9 a.m., however all contact must be by phone, email or appointment due to the COVID screening protocols mentioned above.

Our complete plan and our PEC welcome letter and will go home with our September newsletter, which will help answer questions regarding participation and fundraising.

Please remember to check the www.olos.ca website for all MASS and Parish announcements and I hope you have all checked out the great on-line Masses, or have registered in person by calling the Parish office.

Again, I wish to sincerely thank all of you for your patience and support as we realize that we are now entering a new phase of education in a time of COVID-19.

Remember to "Be calm" and "Be kind", as we all work together to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community of OLS, while doing all we can to "Be safe"!

Sincerely,

Pasquale Balletta

Principal