

Frequently Asked Questions

Greater Victoria School District No. 61

1. What schooling alternatives are available for students?

There are five educational options for students and families to choose from, which include some remote alternatives.

- 1) In-class instruction (K-12)
- 2) Students/Parents/Caregivers with Immune Suppression (K-12)
- 3) Distributed Learning (K-12)
- 4) Homeschooling (K-12)
- 5) Hybrid Learning (Gr. 1-8 in English Track)

For details of each option visit: www.sd61.bc.ca/news-events/stage-2-return-to-school-plan-2020/

2. Do you have any plans for students with special needs?

All students with special needs who enroll in a GVSD 61 school (not homeschooling) will have access to the full range of supports typically offered in our schools although the delivery method may look different. All students with special needs with a Ministry designation will continue to have an IEP with personalized goals. The IEP will be in place across stages and options (e.g., hybrid), acknowledging that support strategies may vary or be adjusted for different stages and environments. Regardless of stages / environments, continuity of access to learning will continue. We will ensure ongoing communication and collaboration with students and families to implement plans and monitor the success of student learning goals. Parents/guardians and caregivers should communicate directly with their school team.

3. What options are available for immunocompromised students/families/caregivers?

Parents/caregivers seeking an alternative to in-class instruction, and who do not wish to register their child in a distributed learning program or homeschooling, will be required to obtain a doctor's note indicating the need for accommodations due to health-related risks. We will work with these families to ensure continuity of learning and supports. Accommodations could include some elements of remote learning, specific course offerings, and/or modified days. Specifics for each child need to be developed in collaboration with families and school staff.

4. What will the Hybrid Learning Model look like for students?

Elementary and middle students will be placed in classes where students will receive approximately 20% of face to face instruction (two regularly scheduled half days per week) and approx. 20% of remote instruction. This would keep students physically distanced and would be a combination of small group face to face learning and remote learning from home. Half the class would attend two mornings a week and the other half would attend an alternate two mornings a week.

The hybrid learning option will see classes organized in single grade or multi-grade configurations. Depending on the hybrid model numbers at each school, schools may be reorganized and students may or may not be attending the hybrid model at their catchment/currently enrolled school. Families will be expected to support their students' learning at home for approximately three days a week.

This educational option allows students to stay connected to their catchment school while attending in-class instruction for approx. 20% of the learning week and approx. 20% online and the remainder at home.

5. Will the District be offering Programs of Choice (e.g., French Immersion) via hybrid learning?

The Hybrid Model offers, as an interim measure, a means of supporting families to provide a core program focused on literacy and numeracy at the Grade 1-8 level. The Hybrid Model is not intended to replace a full instructional program and, therefore, does not contain the fine arts, second language development, and other such elements. As only a small percentage of families have selected this option, there will be restricted class organizations.

Further, as French Immersion is a Program of Choice it is much more challenging to create the same variety of delivery models as we do for regular programs.

6. Why is the Hybrid Learning Model not being offered for Kindergarten students?

The Hybrid Model is not compatible with the play-based nature of the Kindergarten Program. Additionally, parents/guardians of Kindergarten students have the option to defer entry to Kindergarten until September 2021.

If parents choose to defer entry into Kindergarten until September 2021, students will be subject to the student enrolment priorities when they reapply to attend in person.

*For our **Student Enrolment Priorities**: www.sd61.bc.ca/parent-student-resources/registration/student-enrolment-priorities/*

7. Would our child be eligible to begin at our catchment school in Grade 1 in September of next year (2021/2022 school year), if we are thinking of homeschooling for her this year?

Yes, a student living in-catchment will be eligible to enrol in their catchment school in the 2021/2022 school year. As in any other year, our student enrolment priorities will apply to all new registrations and transfer requests, from elementary to middle school and middle to secondary transitions.

If your child registers for homeschooling for Kindergarten this year (2020/2021), they can return for in-person instruction for Grade 1 at the school they are currently registered at for the following school year.

The school district will save the child's seat at the school they are currently registered at for their Grade one entry in the 2021/2022 school year.

8. Will the District be holding seats for students who choose to learn remotely?

The District is offering hybrid learning for students in grades 1 thorough 8. This educational option allows students to remain enrolled and hold their seat at their current school while attending in-class instruction for approximately 20% of the learning week and approx. 20% online and the remainder at home.

If elementary and middle school students register for distance learning or homeschooling, they are no longer enrolled in our School District. The school will not be holding seats for students if they are not currently enrolled in our School District. Enrolment will be determined by spaces available in the school and in alignment with our student enrolment priorities.

Students who select homeschooling will be subject to the student enrolment priorities when they reapply to attend in person.

9. If a child does the homeschooling option this upcoming year, will they be considered a "re-enrolling student" in accordance with the student enrolment priorities?

If a student withdraws from their school to register for homeschooling they would be considered a new registration when they apply the following year. They would not be a re-enrolling student if a family selects a homeschool option for a year. If a student opts for the Hybrid learning option, they would remain enrolled at their current school.

Student enrolment priorities would be applied upon registration for the following school year.

10. We already know schools are at capacity and it's difficult to get a transfer to your preferred school. What are the chances that a student would get their spot back if the school they were in wasn't their catchment school?

Parents need to know that re-enrolment as a new registration is subject to space availability and alignment with the District's student enrolment priorities.

11. Why is Hybrid Learning not being offered to Secondary students?

The District's Restart Plan for Secondary students includes 70% of in-class instruction, supplemented by independent home study for the remainder. This is a similar model to the hybrid learning option under consideration for Grades 1-8, where 20% of in-class instruction is supported with learning that takes place from home.

12. What other online options are available for high school students?

The District provides distributed learning for students from grade 9 through grade 12 through a program called "The Link". For registration and course information: <https://thelink.sd61.bc.ca/>

Other Distributed Learning programs exist throughout the province and offer K-9 programming. For more information: <https://www.learnnowbc.ca/Courses/>

13. Will there be a school nurse at each site to help kids and staff feel more secure during the school day?

The District relies on the Island Health Authority to provide guidance in schools. As of today, PHO and Island Health have not decided to deploy nurses in schools.

14. What health screening will be in place for the staff/teachers and students? Will there be daily health checks/questions? Reliance on the honour system and asking staff/students to self-report?

There is no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health-care professionals ([BCCDC, Public Health Guidance for K-12 Settings](#)).

Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, Covid-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. If a child has any symptoms, they must not take the bus or go to school.

Similarly, staff will self-assess and will stay home if they are not feeling well.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that all visitors confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.

15. What will be the 'trigger' to cause someone (student, teacher, or support staff) to have to stay home and self-isolate for 2 weeks?

Any student, staff or other person within the school who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 must stay home and isolate for 10 days since the onset and will be directed by public health of when they can return to school.

Any student, staff or person within the school who has travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days or was identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate, including children of essential service workers.

Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should not return to school until they have been assessed by a health-care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious [diseases \(BCCDC, Public Health Guidance for K-12 Settings\)](#).

For a list of symptoms of Covid-19, see the BC Centre for Disease Control Website at: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/about-covid-19/symptoms>

16. When someone has to self-isolate, what will be the protocol for continuity of learning? If it's a student, will they be able to continue learning online?

If a student is required to self-isolate or quarantine schools will provide educational programming to ensure there is continuity of learning for the student. This may include online, remote or other methods of instruction.

17. What is being done about staff who work in multiple schools? Librarians, support staff, TTOCs, etc.? They will be in contact with multiple Learning Groups. What if one of these staff needs to isolate due to a suspected or confirmed case? Do the students they've had contact with need to now isolate as well?

- *Administrators will work with school staff to set schedules that minimize the number of staff that interact with a learning group that they are not a part of as much as practical.*
- *School staff interacting with multiple learning groups will practice two-metre/six feet physical distancing and mask/face shield wearing. Plexiglass barriers may be used where practical.*
- *School staff interacting with multiple learning groups will keep a daily log of contacts with learning groups and individual students.*
- *These procedures apply to include: Administrators, prep/exploratory teachers, non-enrolling teachers, teachers with assignments in more than one school, education assistants, custodians, office support staff, itinerant specialist educators, TTOC's and spareboard education assistants and clerical staff.*

For more information please review: [GVSD Exposure Control Plan for School Sites](#)

18. For the younger grades, what is the plan for identifying the Learning Groups? How will recess work?

Schools are working with staff and may schedule staggered recess times to minimize contact between Learning Groups. Some schools will divide up the school yard with markers, while others may use coloured pinnies to identify students and play areas.

All schools will have playground supervisors during recess to monitor interactions.

19. Is it okay for my kids play with some kids (their closest friends) outside of school if they are NOT in the same Learning Group/Cohort?

Yes, if outdoors and if students can minimize physical contact.

In elementary schools, students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they are outdoors and can minimize physical contact or if they are indoors and can practice physical distancing. Elementary-aged students are less able to consistently practice physical distancing. Outdoors is a lower-risk environment than indoors. (BCCDC Guidelines, Sept. 11th, p. 11)

Please refer to p. 11 of the BCCDC guidelines for more info: www.sd61.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/91/2020/09/Guidance-k-12-schools-September-11.pdf

20. Will there be any primary prevention protocols set in place such as mandatory masks, smaller learning groups, and fewer transitions?

For prevention protocols please see question #17. Each school will implement their return to school plan with the 60 or 120 Learning Groups and include each schools' transitions plan.

The District has updated its health and safety protocols to adhere to all of the requirements of the [COVID-19 Public Health Office's Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#). All schools will be implementing the following procedures outlined in the [GVSD Exposure Control Plan for School Sites](#).

21. Why are masks not mandatory everywhere?

Wearing non-medical masks at all times in schools is not recommended by the Public Health Office, as there are multiple, more effective infection prevention and exposure control measures in place, such as:

- i. Ensuring students and staff stay home when they are sick or required to self-isolate, including ensuring everyone entering the school performs a daily health check;*

- ii. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection;
- iii. Placing students and staff into consistent groupings of people (Learning Groups);
- iv. Adapting learning environments to maximize the use of space;
- v. Ensuring physical distance can be maintained between Learning Groups; and
- vi. Frequent hand hygiene.

These measures provide multiple layers of protection that reduce the risk of transmission. While masks are not mandatory, there is nothing preventing a student or staff member from wearing a mask at all times if they wish.

For more information of on the Health and Safety Measures:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school#health-safety>

22. If COVID-19 cases start to increase and schools have to be closed again in September or at any point, has a plan B been created?

The Ministry of Education’s Education Restart Plan outlines how schools will move from various stages if necessary. With June’s return to school experience the District has a good framework for moving from Stage 2 to Stage 3.

For more information on the Ministry of Education’s Five Stage Framework:

www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/five_stages_k-12_education.pdf

23. If two children in the same household are in the same school, will their pods be with the same group of 120? Or will they be in different pods? Also, as a parent of 2 students in the same school can I request they are in the same pod?

The District and its Principals are planning for the best learning environments for student success within the PHO guidelines. Parents may request students be in the same learning group, but no commitment can be made to ensure that the request will be fulfilled.

24. What is being done to address air quality in classrooms?

School districts are required to ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers.

In order to enhance school ventilation, schools should consider: moving activities outdoors when possible (for example, lunch, classes, physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit, ensuring that the ventilation system operates properly and maximize air exchange where possible, and opening windows when possible.

25. Will schools or District facilities still be rented out?

External rentals for gatherings of less than 50 people may be available with an additional requirement of the COVID-19 ADDENDUM TO FACILITY RENTAL AGREEMENT and a comprehensive safety plan.