

February 4, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

RE: Enhanced Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Schools

As you may be aware, the Province announced enhanced safety measures for K-12 schools today in efforts to keep our students and staff safe. Keeping schools open and safe is our priority.

As the Ministry reported today, it has been meeting with our education partners and provincial public health officials regularly through a provincial steering committee to review current practices. What we've all learned is that as the pandemic continues to evolve, and as we learn more about its behaviour, our school guidelines must also evolve.

In the near future, we will be working with schools to help implement these new updates. These enhanced measures will assure students, staff, and families that our schools continue to be safe spaces. All school districts have until Friday, February 26th to confirm they've implemented the enhanced safety measures.

We wish to highlight some of the important changes that will be coming to our schools, including mask requirements and strengthened guidelines for physical education and music.

All middle and secondary students and K-12 staff will now be required to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas, including when they are with their learning groups. The only exceptions are when:

- sitting or standing at their seat or workstation in a classroom;
- there is a barrier in place; or
- they are eating or drinking

High intensity physical activities are to be held outside as much as possible. Shared equipment or items, such as weight machines, treadmills or musical instruments, can be used only if they are cleaned between use, according to strict school sanitization guidelines. Students using equipment or playing instruments should also be spaced at least two metres apart and masks are to be used when singing.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

For more information on the updated guidelines please visit:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021EDUC0011-000201>

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf

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

We understand that there may be questions. Please note that we will be providing you with an update on our implementation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Shelley Green
Superintendent of Schools

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One *Learning* Community

