



December 31, 2021

Dear Staff and Families,

I hope that you have had the opportunity to relax with your family during the holiday season and that you are rejuvenated and looking forward to the new year. On December 29, Education Minister Whiteside and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Henry [announced](#) that there will be a delay to the start of school for students until Monday, Jan.10. All staff will return to work Tuesday, January 4, 2022.

This delay will provide school administration and staff time to review and implement additional safety measures as outlined in the [addendum to the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines](#) regarding our response to COVID-19 and the new Omicron variant ahead of students returning to class. These additional safety measures on top of robust measures already implemented (mask protocols, daily health checks and staying home if not feeling well, hand washing and respiratory etiquette, sanitizing, directional signage to manage traffic flow, MERV-13 Filters in all ventilation systems) will continue to minimize the comparative risk in schools.

During the week of January 4, schools will be open to supporting children of essential service workers in the health care system, students with special needs, and vulnerable students. Please contact your school principal by e-mail by Monday, January 3, if you plan to send your child to school on Tuesday, January 4, and you require this support. Please note regular school buses will not be running, but limited bus transportation will continue to be available to those students with significant needs, starting Wednesday, January 5. Please contact your school principal if bus transportation for your child is required for Jan. 5 through 7. Regular bussing will commence Jan.10. Also, please note that currently, there is no plan provincially to move to online learning.

Enhanced Safety Measures:

Listed below are the additional preventative health and safety measures that will be implemented before students return to school on January 10.

- Implementing strategies that prevent crowding during class transition times.
- Maximizing space between people; avoiding face to face seating where possible
- Holding school gatherings and events (e.g., assemblies, etc.) virtually; if they must be in-person, limit the number of people to no more than 50% operating capacity.
- Holding staff-only gatherings (e.g., meetings, professional development activities) virtually where possible.
- Limiting visitors to those who are supporting activities that directly benefit student learning and wellbeing (e.g., teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.)
- Pausing extracurricular sports tournaments. Individual games and practices can still occur.

The District will be updating its Communicable Disease Prevention Plan to reflect these additional measures. The District and the Ministry recognizes the importance of in-person learning and the pivotal role it plays in children's intellectual, social development, and mental health wellness.

As a result, it is important that we all pull together and do what is necessary to continue to reduce the comparative risk in schools, including encouraging everyone who is eligible to get fully vaccinated to do so.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment in supporting each other and for doing your part in reducing the transmission risk in our community during this pandemic. Enjoy the rest of your holidays and looking forward to welcoming students back to school in the New Year. Stay safe!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arul-pragasam".

Rohan Arul-pragasam
School Superintendent

Additional Resources For Consideration:

[BC's Restart – A Plan to Bring Us Back Together](#)

[BC's Health and Safety Guidelines](#)

[To learn more about COVID-19 vaccines for children](#)

[Provincial Health Officer Order on Face Coverings](#)