

VIA Email –

February 03, 2021

Dear Board Chair Broady,

No doubt you've seen the emails from the Ministry of Education and Worksafe BC advising that school districts have the power to implement safety measures that go beyond what is laid out by the Provincial Health Officer. When I asked around back in October, Jordan Sturdy had indicated the same thing.

We are more than likely on the precipice of seeing a spike in cases as the variants of the virus start to spread and people will become even more concerned. It certainly appears that things will get worse before they get better.

The West Vancouver School Board has an opportunity to step up and announce that you are concerned about the students in your care and you have decided to implement further safety measures despite recommendations from the health authority. This will send a strong message to parents that you are champions for our children's health and safety.

I am the first to admit that I've lived in West Vancouver for nearly 8 years and I've not voted in a civic election, nor had I attended a board meeting until a few months ago. There's nothing quite like a pandemic to make parents pay attention to who the people actually are who have been elected to look out for the best interests of our children. I'm paying attention now, as are literally thousands of other parents in West Vancouver.

Please understand that I do not mean to imply that you don't care about the safety of our kids. I understand that politics plays into this in a big way, and I assume that your position as Vice President of BC School Trustees Association influences your decision making as well. I firmly believe though, that if ever there was a time to burn some political capital this is it.

I'm encouraging you to get out in front of this and announce a mask mandate in West Vancouver schools for all students. The 1% who are anti-maskers will squawk, but the vast majority will see you as heroes and will remember it when they go to the polls in 2022.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Coralynn Gehl

VIA Email –

February 03, 2021

Dear Ms. Gehl,

Thank you for your recent email regarding mask protocols in our schools.

The revised Provincial Guidelines for K-12 that were released last week provided some additional requirements around mask usage in schools. All adults in our school buildings will now be required to wear masks, even within their learning cohort. At secondary, while we have extremely high mask usage, these new guidelines ensure that with only a few exceptions, all our high school students will be wearing masks in indoor spaces. I wrote to the DPAC this past weekend on our efforts to help create a mask wearing culture in our elementary schools, knowing that parents can play an important role as partners in making this happen.

Over the past week we have consulted with the Provincial and Regional Medical Officials, the Ministry of Education and our own legal counsel regarding the specific responsibilities of Boards. Because we have no specialized expertise in matters of health, we will not be departing from the officials within government who are entrusted with the responsibility of public safety.

Masks provide only one layer of protection against Covid-19 and I am hoping that parents across our district will assist us by reminding their children of the importance of the daily health check; keeping them home if they are sick; hand hygiene and physical distancing.

I can assure you that West Vancouver Schools continues to follow all the required safety protocols and that ensuring our students' health and academic success remains our priority.

Yours truly,

Carolyn Broady

Chair, West Vancouver Board of Education