

Good afternoon

I am pleased to get a chance to reconnect with all of you. Return to school plans have been front and centre in the media for the last month. We have spent hours reviewing how to best meet the needs of your children this school year. Today, I am going to share some concrete information around our plan in West Vancouver. Know that we are submitting our full plan to the Ministry today for approval, and we will post our final draft to our website next week.

Since my message on July 29th, school and district administrators, in consultation with representatives from our teachers, support staff and parent groups, have been working on our Return to School Plan. This fall will look different than any previous year. Strong emotions, diverse views and opinions and sometimes conflicting evidence surround us. We will need to be calm, thoughtful, flexible, compassionate, patient and creative. I know the answers today will not be fully satisfactory to everyone but we will continue to communicate regularly, with updated factual information as we have it. While our plan shares many elements with those of other school districts, we also have many “uniquely West Van” elements that are intended to best support our students and staff.

Just like the spring, we will need to work together one step at a time. All of us.

I want to speak directly to our students. We are excited to have you back in our schools. We saw many of you in June, but we haven't seen some of you since March. And we miss you. We have been planning all summer to ensure health and safety measures are in place. New learning models are being embraced to ensure that you have a rich experience when school starts up. Your teachers, EAs, Principals and all the other adults in our buildings are looking forward to seeing you in a couple of weeks.

Health and Safety

It is health and safety that is first and foremost in our minds and driving all of our work in schools. Many of the protocols that were in place in June continue with some modifications and enhancements. For example, personal measures including staying home when you are sick, hand hygiene expectations and daily personal health checks are in effect for all staff and students. Reusable masks have been ordered and will be supplied to all staff and students who request them. Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering within classrooms is a personal choice for students and staff. However, masks will be mandatory for all staff in common areas and mandatory for secondary students, in hallways and when interacting outside of one's cohort and for all students on buses.

We have hired additional custodial staff to support cleaning rules in our schools. Carrying over from the spring, there will be staggered start and end times for school, as well as for recess and lunch breaks.

To be very clear, we are not creating local health and safety guidelines. We are meeting and exceeding the rules set out by the Provincial Health Officer, Worksafe BC, and the BC CDC.

Learning Groups

The next item, and again it is one that has received a lot of news, is cohorts or learning groups. These groupings are intended to reduce the number of people each student and teacher come in contact with. In elementary schools, your learning group, in most cases, is your class. When students or staff interact with others outside of their learning group they will maintain physical distance. In reality, elementary school organizations will not look a lot different than in previous years.

For secondary learners, it will be quite different. I will provide a general overview now, with more details to come from your school next week. Like many school districts across the province we are adopting a quarter system - where students take 2 courses at a time for 10 weeks and repeat this 4 times in a year. This keeps learning groups small. In some cases as low as 30, and no higher than 120. The quarterly system allows us to maximize student in-person instruction, student choice and course offerings, and is scalable between stages, while still meeting the cohort/learning group requirements. As part of our weekly schedule, we have also built in FLEX time on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons to support vulnerable students, tutorials, academies, remote teaching and courses that do not fit into the quarterly timetable. The Tuesday and Thursday FLEX time can also be used to program some semester and linear offerings to best meet the needs of our students.

We are committed to running a full slate of programs - this means electives, academies, IB / AP Programs and all the offerings students require for graduation and post-secondary.

While most high school students will attend 100% in person, some students, particularly in the higher grades, may have some hybrid offerings that mix face-to-face with online learning. More details to come directly from your principals.

All of our teachers will be maintaining Google classrooms K-12. We know there will be greater student absence this year with the need to be away with any cold and flu symptoms, and this will allow students to keep up with their schooling if they have to be away from school. This will also allow us to easily move between different stages if required.

Students with Diverse Abilities

We will continue to ensure that our students with diverse abilities/disabilities have equitable access to learning. Health and safety protocols will be in place to ensure that our students and our school teams are well supported. Our continued innovative, caring and unique approaches to individualizing learning will ensure that the West Vancouver model of inclusive and responsive education for all students continues. More information will come from school and district staff as plans are finalized for the fall.

Transportation

This is really about our students in Lions Bay and Bowen Island. Regular bus transportation will resume with the start of the school year. There are additional safety protocols in place following Worksafe and CDC guidelines. You will hear directly from our transportation manager by the end of August with more information on these protocols.

Return to School

I have heard from a few parents with specific questions regarding unique circumstances. Some of you, for medical or non-medical reasons, might be wondering about options. I don't yet have more information on this topic, but by this time next week I will be in touch again with the criteria and a process for you to follow if you are looking at options other than full-time in-person learning.

Hundreds of you emailed me in June and you were overwhelmingly hopeful that we could return to school in September. Our staff have worked to make this happen. I want to thank everyone who has spent this summer preparing for the safe return to school in the fall.

You may be familiar with the new term "orientation week". All of our staff will be in their schools on September 8th and 9th to receive a full health and safety briefing and to learn about our new

schedules. Depending on what grade, students will be back in their schools for a portion of the day on either the 10th or the 11th and you will hear more information on those orientation days for your children directly from their school.

The West Vancouver DPAC will also be hosting an upcoming information session with myself, Board Chair Carolyn Broady and Vancouver Coastal Health. We will be getting that information out to you once it is finalized.

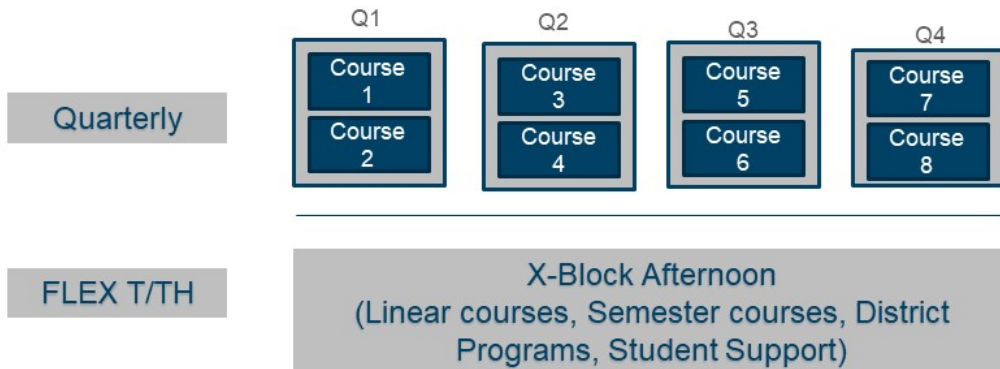
I want to close where I started. We continue to be in this together. You will hear from me again soon. And you will be hearing from your local school with school specific information over the next couple of weeks. I don't want people out there without the information they need and I want to ensure the information I provide is as complete as possible. You can also email our office at info@wvschools.ca and either me or one of our team will get back to you.

More information to come.

All the best for the weekend. We look forward to welcoming our students back soon.

Please find a link [HERE](#) to my return to school message.

Quarterly Overview



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