

Dear families,

I hope you are enjoying a restful winter break. With the recent announcement that the return to school has been delayed I want to reconnect before the new year.

The aim of the delay is to ensure a safe return to school on the 10th of January. Our teachers, principals and all school-based staff will be returning to work on January 4th to review our updated health and safety protocols and to make plans to ensure our students will be able to continue their learning. The new addendum can be read [here](#)

Although no instruction will be occurring next week, our schools will be open. You may have seen that as part of the return to school plan, schools will be welcoming children of essential service workers, as well as students with exceptional needs next week. If you qualify and you would like to send your child to school next week, please let your Principal know before Noon on Monday, January 3rd so we can make appropriate preparations.

In addition to questions about essential services workers, I have been asked if there will be any changes to start and end times in elementary schools or in the semesters at secondary. There will be no changes to either of these right now. There may be some adjustments to bell schedules to reduce crowding, but no changes to the start and end of day nor when semester one in our high schools finishes. I have also been asked about school sports. While tournaments are on pause, practices and games will continue (with no spectators), and you will hear more about this from your teachers, coaches, and schools.

One of the health and safety matters that will receive renewed attention is mask wearing. We know in almost all settings mask wearing compliance has been very high. There are a small number of cases in which staff or students can be exempted from this requirement. You will hear from your principal on more information on this, as we reinforce this expectation.

I am sure you will have other questions. I have asked our school principals to be in touch with families and to provide more detailed school specific information in the coming days.

We will be working next week to update our health and safety procedures and implement the enhanced measures outlined by the Ministry of Education and the Provincial Health Officer and be ready to welcome students the following week. We look forward to seeing them all on January 10th.

You will hear from me periodically, but your school principal will be the primary contact as we move to our January start-up.

Chris

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