

Dear parents,

I want to reach out to you today with some updates and some requests. As we have now passed the one-year mark of living with COVID-19 in our community, I want to extend my deepest appreciation to our school and district staff who continue to work vigilantly to ensure our schools remain safe. We know how incredibly important consistent in-class instruction is for our students, not only for their learning but for their social and emotional well-being.

In September our Back-to-School plan was to maximize in-class instruction while prioritizing health and safety in order to minimize the risk of COVID-19. As time passes, more is learned about the virus. The Ministry of Health has recently updated their guidelines which now include required masks for all K-12 staff and for secondary students. Although mask wearing remains a personal or family choice for our elementary students, we do encourage you to discuss the benefits of mask wearing with your children. All of our schools are working hard to create a culture of responsible mask wearing.

As we have heard and seen on the news, what happens in our community is also reflected in our schools. While our rates remain very low, and far lower than many other school districts, we have had an uptick in school exposures this past month. According to Vancouver Coastal Health, some activities that are leading to exposures are:

- Sleepovers
- Birthday parties
- Multi family gatherings

We understand the desire to get back to normal, but we all need to continue to do our part to keep our community safe and our schools open for learning. If we all do our part, we are hopeful for a more normal September start up and 2021-2022 school year.

Thank you for your continued support and vigilance. For more information and resources:

[Provincial Guidelines for K-12](#)

[COVID self assessment tool](#)

[Safe Schools](#)

All the best for the last two weeks before spring break.

Chris

Chris Kennedy, Superintendent of Schools