

Deputy Minister's Bulletin

Ministry of Education



K-12 Education Restart Plan for 2020/21 School Year

July 29, 2020

Today Minister Fleming and Dr. Bonnie Henry [announced](#) all schools in B.C. will begin the 2020/21 school year in Stage 2 of BC's [K-12 Education Restart Plan](#) with the goal of maximizing in-class instruction for all students within the [revised public health guidelines](#).

In order to maximize the number of students who can return to in-class instruction while also reducing the number of close, in-person interactions, the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) has recommended the use of cohorts, or learning groups, for students and staff. This will reduce the number of people each student or staff member comes into contact with, thereby reducing the risk of transmission and ensuring quicker contact tracing by health authorities.

Learning groups will be no more than 60 people in elementary and middle school and no more than 120 people in secondary school. Learning groups can be larger in secondary schools due to the increased ability of older children to be able to consistently minimize physical contact, practice hand hygiene, ensure physical distance where necessary and recognize and articulate symptoms of illness. Further information on learning groups can be found on the new [Covid-19 Return to School page](#).

To support the health and safety of students and staff, the Ministry is providing one-time funding of \$45.6 million to school districts and independent schools for enhanced cleaning and supplies. This includes \$3 million to support remote learning for students, \$23 million to support increased cleaning and \$9.2 million for enhanced hand washing and hand sanitization stations.

With support of the K-12 Education Steering Committee, the Ministry is finalizing detailed operational guidelines to further assist school districts and schools with their planning for 2020/21 school year. The Steering Committee and Working Groups will continue to meet throughout August to discuss implementation planning.

The Ministry recognizes the right of First Nations to determine the approach to instruction in First Nations schools and will continue to work closely with the First Nations Schools Association and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) to share information and collaborate on areas of mutual interest. The Ministry will also continue to work with FNESC and Metis Nation BC to ensure that the increase to in-class instruction in the BC K-12 system is implemented in a manner consistent with the Province's broader obligations to Indigenous students and their families

Next Steps:

School districts and schools should begin planning for September as soon as possible with the existing information and in alignment with the dates below:

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August 10:

- School districts and independent schools receive further operational guidelines for each of the 5 Stages and a Stage 2 Restart Template.
- Each Stage 2 Restart Plan will need to outline how learning groups are being implemented, provide details on updated health and safety plans and detail consultation that has occurred with local unions, community members and Indigenous people.

August 17:

- Release of K-12 Operating Guidelines for COVID-19 and final Steering Committee materials.

August 17 – 21:

- School districts and FISA Member Associations finalize their Restart Plans and submit to the Ministry.

August 21 – 26:

- Ministry reviews Restart Plans and confirms approaches.
- School districts and independent schools begin to communicate information to parents once Ministry review is complete.

August 26:

- School districts and schools communicate information to parents on Stage 2 Plans and post final versions online.

September 8:

- School re-opens and Stage 2 of the K-12 Restart Plan starts.

Supporting Materials for School Districts and Independent School Authorities

- [Covid-19 Return to School](#) – New!: Updated with information for parents, students and staff about returning to school in September, learning groups and health and safety resources.
- [BC K-12 Education Restart Plan](#): Released today with updates to five-stage planning framework
- [BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#): Updated today to provide health and safety standards for schools to operate in Stage 2
- [WorkSafeBC K-12 Education Protocols](#): Provides guidance and protocols for returning to operation for K-12 education providers
- [Learn Magazine](#): Article on low COVID-19 transmission rates among children

Inquiries

School/school district administrators are encouraged to contact the Ministry by email at educ.covid@gov.bc.ca or by phone at 236-478-2712 with COVID-19 related inquiries. For more information visit the [Ministry's COVID-19 Return to School website](#).