



**550 Poirier Street, Coquitlam, British Columbia V3J 6A7 • Phone 604-939-9201 • Fax: 604-939-7828**

August 4, 2020

Re: Back to School in September

Dear SD43 Families:

You will have likely heard about the announcement on Wednesday, July 29 by Minister of Education Rob Fleming and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry regarding the provincial guidelines for students to return to school in September. Children returning to school and in-class instruction is defined by stage 2 of the BC Government's 5 stage plan: [www.gov.bc.ca/covid19returntoschool](http://www.gov.bc.ca/covid19returntoschool)

While local details will not be available before August 21, 2020, when the SD43 plan will have been submitted and approved by the Ministry of Education, there is some information to share now as organizing continues in earnest.

The primary goal in stage 2 of the re-opening plan is to maximize in-class instruction for all students within the revised public health guidelines. Students will be grouped into cohorts of 60 children at elementary and middle and 120 at secondary. This means students will be limited to interacting within their learning group for classes, collaboration and activities, lunch times, etc. The idea is to limit points of contact within school communities and reduce the risk of potential virus spread. The details of how these groupings may be assembled and how this may be implemented is just one of many parts that are within the active planning stage. Self-directed online learning may supplement in-class instruction at this stage, if needed, particularly at the secondary level.

It is important to keep in mind that the health and safety of all students and staff is paramount in SD43 and great effort is being made to provide the safest possible environments for learning. Schools are controlled, supervised settings where protocols and measures are implemented and encouraged. Hand hygiene, entry and exit points, cohorts and diligent cleaning of facilities all work in concert to ensure adherence to the latest health and safety guidelines.

As before, we are committed to sharing the most recent information available with our families via direct email in addition to posting all updates on district and school websites and social media channels. To read the full text of the Ministry of Education media release, please visit [www.sd43.bc.ca](http://www.sd43.bc.ca) or your school site.

We are all still very much immersed in preparing for the September restart and will keep you informed as plans are put in place. We believe that it is crucial that our children have the opportunity to return to school in the fall. This will be accomplished by our working together within the guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Provincial Health Officer. I have confidence in the creative and caring leadership in SD43, the

dedication of our teachers and support staff and, most of all, the resilience of our students and their families. I look forward to a successful opening of schools in September.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Patricia Gartland".

Patricia Gartland  
Superintendent of Schools, CEO  
School District No. 43 (Coquitlam)