



Learning for a Lifetime

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February 4, 2021

Dear SD43 families,

I am writing to advise you of important information regarding changes to the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines to align with revised public health guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control. These changes have an impact on related requirements for school districts.

Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry reminds us that school is the best place for students to learn and for their mental, physical, and emotional wellness. As such, keeping SD43 schools open and safe is a provincial priority. As a district, we continue to focus on the well-being of your children.

K-12 guidelines around masks, physical distancing and cleaning have been strengthened to keep students safe during the ongoing pandemic. Some of the most notable changes are as follows:

- All middle and secondary students and all K-12 staff will now be required to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas, including when they are with their learning groups. The only exceptions are when:
 - sitting or standing at their seat or workstation;
 - there is a barrier in place;
 - they are eating or drinking.
- For elementary students, wearing masks indoors will remain a personal choice.
- In physical education classes, high intensity activities are to be held outside whenever possible. In middle and secondary schools, if indoors and the activity is stationary, students should be spaced 2 metres apart. Shared equipment can be used following cleaning protocols.
- In music classes, students within the same cohort should be spaced as far apart as possible. In middle and secondary schools, masks should be worn when singing.

A new mobile K-12 Health Check app has been developed for students and families to support daily screening for COVID-19 symptoms. The app is available for Apple and Android devices and may be accessed at www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca. Use of the app is voluntary. Please continue to perform daily health checks with your child using whatever means is most convenient, the app or a checklist.

These strengthened measures, in addition to a continued emphasis on hand hygiene, physical distancing and cleaning of surfaces are the most effective in controlling the spread of COVID-19. Schools have proven to be safe, supervised, and controlled environments and school exposures are a reflection of what is happening in the community. Dr. Bonnie Henry, PHO, has urged us all to, “stay small, stay apart, stay local”. I wish to thank you for continuing to do your part in supporting our schools and community.

For additional information visit www.sd43.bc.ca or access the updated [K-12 Guidelines](#) or [BCCDC Guidelines](#).

Sincerely,

Patricia Gartland
Superintendent and CEO