



October 1, 2020

**RE: Kindergarten to Grade 12 Mask Mandate**

Dear NLPS families and staff,

Earlier today, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Education Minister Jennifer Whiteside announced a Kindergarten to Grade 12 mask mandate for all schools in B.C. **Beginning Monday, October 4, all students in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools will be required to wear non-medical face masks while indoors, including at their desks and on school buses. This measure builds on the existing guidelines that currently apply to all students in Grades 4 to 12.** Masks will be available for students that may not have their own.

Today's new order was developed under the guidance and direction of the Public Health Officer (PHO) and B.C. Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), in consultation with education partners, as an extra measure of protection to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in schools.

While COVID-19 exposures will continue to occur in Nanaimo Ladysmith Public schools, the vast majority of the cases to date have originated from individuals who contracted the virus in the home or social settings outside of the school. Schools continue to be safe settings for staff and students and are considered low-risk for COVID-19 transmission.

Earlier this week, the PHO announced an updated exposure notification process. Individuals who are directly affected by an exposure will be contacted directly – there will not be a school-wide announcement following each exposure. You will find all potential exposures listed on the Island Health [website](#).

Finally, vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools and everyone eligible is strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

As always, stay safe, perform [daily health checks](#) and stay home when you're sick.

Sincerely,

Charlene McKay  
Board Chair

Scott Saywell  
Superintendent/CEO