



Letter from the Board of Education and  
Superintendent Offices

Monday, August 10, 2020

**RE: Return to school options**

Dear families,

We continue to plan for the return of all students in September, taking into consideration the updated health and safety guidelines from the Provincial Health Office and the Ministry of Education along with feedback from our stakeholders and community members. School districts across the province have been directed to post their restart plans by August 26. You will find our information on the district's COVID-19 [website](#).

We understand that many of you may feel anxiety, apprehension and perhaps fear at the thought of students returning to full-time, in-class instruction. These responses are, of course, normal and while we can't allay all of your concerns, we hope that you can take some comfort in knowing that we will be moving forward with the safety and health of students and staff as our top priority.

As shared by the Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, school-aged children are at a much lower risk of developing and transmitting COVID-19. Add to this the updated stringent cleaning and safety protocols and lowering the number of in-person, close interactions will be key components in preventing the spread of the virus.

Families will have a choice of **one** of three options this school year:

1. In-class instruction at your child's school;
2. Distributed Learning through the district's Island ConnectED K-12 program (learn at home); or
3. Homeschooling.

**In-class instruction** will resume in all schools in September. Families that decide to keep their children home without choosing the DL or homeschool option will not receive instructional materials from their school teacher and the student will be marked absent.

**Distributed Learning** (or DL) is a school-based learning program that allows students to work from a distance, and at their own pace. The learning experiences are guided by teachers who provide materials and assessment of learning.

The DL school in our district is usually a blended-learning model with **optional** face-to-face lessons for students in Kindergarten to Grade 9. Students who need to work exclusively remotely are able to do so.

Students who take DL programming in grades 10-12 and complete all of the graduation requirements (required courses and assessments) will receive a Ministry graduation

certificate (Dogwood Diploma). Secondary school courses may have tests and labs that require students to come into the school to write, and can be booked in advance.

**Homeschooling** is a term that is used by the Ministry of Education to refer to families who decide not to attend school or enroll in a DL school. These families are responsible for all of their children's learning and do not have the support of a teacher or any teacher-developed materials. Students who become registered homeschoolers are ***not eligible*** for a Ministry graduation document (Dogwood Diploma).

Please be aware that by transitioning your child from their catchment school to either DL or homeschool, the option to return to their catchment school at any point during the school year may not be available.

It is important to assess your family's situation and to make an informed decision. Below is information for you to consider:

- [Province of B.C.'s return to school plan](#)
- [Province of B.C.'s public health guidance for K-12 school settings](#)
- [Island ConnectED K-12](#)
- [Province of B.C.'s Distributed Learning model](#)
- [Province of B.C.'s information on homeschooling](#)

We will continually send updates as more information becomes available. Please contact your school principal after August 31 if you have any questions regarding the return to school options.

Sincerely,



Charlene McKay  
Board Chair



Scott Saywell  
Superintendent/CEO