



August 24, 2021

Re: 2021–2022 School Start Up

Dear VCS Community,

The new school year is almost upon us. As a leadership team, we have been meeting, praying and visioning together - excited to continue in the journey of equipping your children for a life of discipleship by providing excellent education in a Christ-centered community!

This morning Minister Whiteside provided an update on BC's K-12 Health and Safety guidelines. As projected at the end of the last school year, there is a significant move to guidelines that align more closely with pre-pandemic school operations. However, with the COVID-19 fourth wave a reality, government and public health officials have maintained select guidelines in order to promote safe and supportive school communities.

As a school leadership and staff team, we will be carefully reviewing the updated requirements and will communicate a more complete School Safety Plan to you next week, along with other important return-to-school information.

Here are a few key highlights from the latest K-12 guidelines:

- Vaccines will not be mandated for staff or students over the age of 12 that could be vaccinated. The government will focus on sharing credible scientific information to encourage greater vaccination levels across the province.
- To start this school year, all school staff and visitors are required to wear masks indoors.
- Grades 4 – 12 are required to wear masks indoors and on school busses, unless they have an exemption.
- K – 3 students will be encouraged to wear masks indoors.
- Strict physical distancing guidelines (cohorts and 2 meters personal space) will be replaced with a respect for personal space through effective utilization of school space and student movement. There will be no Ministry prescribed cohorts.
- There will be baseline PHO orders that will apply across the province but local health authorities may also activate medical health orders that reflect their region's context and public health experience.
- Cleaning protocols will more closely resemble pre-pandemic practices. Regulations on building ventilation remain similar with updates on the best practice for safe air movement.

- Extra-curricular school activities will resume and will be governed by the wider provincial or local health authority orders.

Note: for more information about the K-12 guidelines, please see the following links:

- [This morning's press release](#)
- [August 24 - Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools:](#)

Please pray for our staff and administration team as we plan and prepare for September. Please also keep in your prayers our families and Greater Vernon community members who are impacted by the threat of wildfires.

Sincerely,

Matt Driediger

Principal