



Surrey District  
Parents Advisory Council (DPAC)  
Strengthening PACs & Empowering Parents

## Surrey DPAC COVID-19 Parent Q&A

Dear parents:

Thank you so much for answering our call to provide your feedback. We have compiled the questions/concerns that have been sent in by parents from all over Surrey District and provided answers.

We will continue to bring forward any more questions submitted by parents to [info@surreydpac.ca](mailto:info@surreydpac.ca), as well as Facebook [@surreydpac](https://www.facebook.com/surreydpac) and Twitter [@SurreyDPAC](https://twitter.com/SurreyDPAC)

We understand the anxiety we are all feeling, and we are here to help support you in any way we can. We will continue to be your voice and advocate for the needs of our families. We have provided you with the most up to date information so that you can make an informed decision for your family regarding their education come this September. Please continue to visit the [Surrey Schools](https://www.surreyschools.ca) website for more updates.

Please be advised that we shortened some questions/input to allow for more content. All information used to answer your questions were taken from the most recent updated documents:

[Proposed Plans for Secondary Schools](#) (Surrey Schools)

[BC's Back to School Plan](#) (Government of British Columbia)

[CUPE K-12's COVID-19 FAQs](#) (CUPE 728)

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## **Timeline/Model:**

### **Q - Is there any idea on when the first day will be now that the start has been delayed (a few days, a week or longer)?**

- Starting September 8, all staff will meet with their school's joint health and safety committee to receive instruction on how the updated BCCDC guidelines will work in their school. This time allows teachers and staff to:
  - Adjust to their new routines
  - Finalize plans for learning groups
  - Review health and safety protocols
  - Confirm lesson plans that align with the new normal in schools
  
- Students will return to school by September 10 for orientation. The District will advise parents if this changes.
  - Thursday and Friday, Students will return gradually, like our normal first day. Students will attend for an hour, staggered entry.
  
- Students can get familiar with classrooms that will look different than they did before the pandemic. During orientation, students will:
  - Get assigned to their class or classes
  - Find out who is in their learning group
  - Practice their new routines
  - Familiarize themselves with how to safely move from the class to outdoor and common areas of the school.

### **Q - Are we prepared to move back and forth between in class and online learning if a class/school needs to isolate?**

- Yes, our District plan includes details to allow for transitioning should we require it. This new model can easily be adapted to changes in pandemic stages (i.e. face-to-face classes can be transitioned online).

## In School:

### Q - How are cohorts formed?

- **Secondary** school students will continue to be organized in courses. School timetables will be organized to limit students to learning groups of no more than 60 students and staff. Schools will analyze student enrolment and course selection to identify "natural learning groups, students who are taking the same core subjects and electives. Secondary schools will be able to re-organize learning groups after each quarter or term.

#### *Example*

To accommodate as many students as safely as possible and with as much choice as possible, your child's school introduces a quarter system, where students take two classes over a 10-week period (one term).

Your child is in grade 11 and is assigned to a grade 11 learning group. In the first quarter of the year, they complete Math 11 and English 11.

The next quarter, they are assigned to a new learning group and complete Biology 11 and Drama 11.

This process continues for the entire school year with new learning groups being formed every 10-week term based on student course requirements and elective choices.

- **Elementary** schools will still be organized into classrooms as students' primary learning environment and have the option to create learning groups of up to 60 students and staff who can interact more regularly.

#### *Example, Grade 2/3*

Your child is in grade 2 and is part of a grade 2/3 learning group made up of two classes.

All curriculum instruction for your child is provided by your child's classroom teacher with the potential that the teacher of the grade 3 class may switch with your child's teacher to provide some instruction in areas where they have particular skills and interests.

The two classrooms will be located close to each other and students will share recess and lunch times and may participate in outdoor learning activities together as part of the learning group.

#### *Example, Grade 4*

Your child is in grade 4 and is part of a grade 4 learning group made up of two classes.

All curriculum instruction for your child is provided by your child's classroom teacher with the potential that the teacher of the other grade 4 class may switch with your child's teacher to provide some instruction in areas where they have particular skills and interests.

The two classrooms will be located close to each other and students will share recess and lunch times and may participate in outdoor learning activities together as part of the learning group.

**Q – Will the district clarify parental expectations for pick up/drop off etc. so that families follow safety procedures?**

- The District continues to consider strategies to help prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.

**Q – Will there be staggered starts to the day or will 500 kids and parents be arriving at schools all at the same time?**

- The District plan staggers entry, breaks, lunch, and dismissal to ensure minimal contact.
- In secondary schools, the day begins with Hybrid time which has students in the Graduation Program (grades 10-12) arriving after the junior students (grade 8-9).
- Sample of what a timetable for Grade 8-9 could possibly look like.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Weds	Thursday	Friday
8:30 - 10:45	Block A				
10:45 - 11:00	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition	Nutrition
11:00 - 12:10	Block B				
12:10 - 1:20	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1:25 - 2:35	Block B				

- Sample of what a timetable for Grade 10-12 could possibly like.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:30 - 9:15	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12
9:20 - 11:15	Block A	Block A	Block A	Block A	Block A
11:15 - 12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:05 - 2:00	Block B - Online direct instruction whole class	Block B - Group A F2F	Block B - Group B F2F	Block B - Group C F2F	Block B - Online direct instruction whole class
2:00 - 2:45	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12	Hybrid 10/11/12

## Q - Will students have staggered times so that they are not all in the hallways at the same time?

- The District plan staggers entry, breaks, lunch, and dismissal to ensure minimal contact as well as:
  - Use floor markings and posters to show traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors.
  - Schools must keep the same number of exits and ensure they adhere to the fire code.
  - With staggered entry, breaks, lunch and closure the numbers of students passing in hallways and in attendance in the school in any given time is limited. For example, for a grade 8-12 school of 1500 students (300 students per grade), there are only two possible options for attendance in a week: a day where all grade 10-12 students are online in the afternoon, and a day when 1/3rd of grade 10-12s are face-to-face.

## Q - Why no masks/face shields?

- The Ministry of Education recently announced the following:
  - Every student and staff member will be given masks when they return to school in September.
  - Students will have the choice to wear a mask in the classroom.
  - Elementary school students are not required to wear masks (but may if parent requests their child to do so).
  - Staff will have the choice to wear a mask when interacting within their learning group.
  - Masks are required for all staff and all students in middle and secondary school when **they are in high traffic areas like school buses and hallways, and anytime they are outside of their classroom or learning group and they cannot safely distance** from others.
  - Everyone must treat each other and those wearing masks with respect.
  - Even when wearing a mask, staff and students will still be required to maintain physical distance from people outside of their learning group.
  - Exceptions will be made for students and staff who cannot wear masks for medical reasons.
- Appropriate PPE must be provided to those who would normally require it, notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic. WorkSafeBC guidelines on working under infectious conditions state that employers must develop and implement an exposure control plan. The guidelines also say that workers should know how to select appropriate PPE, how to put it on, and how to take it off.

WorkSafeBC includes the following PPE to be used under infectious conditions: gloves, respirators, face shields, gowns, foot covers, and eye protection. (CUPE FAQs)

- During the announcement about the K-12 Restart, Education Minister Rob Fleming specifically mentioned face shields as well as reusable masks as being available for teachers and support staff working in schools. Districts have been directed by government to provide reusable face masks to staff when requested. (CUPE FAQs)

## Q - How will lunch and recess operate?

- **In elementary schools**, group activities will be adapted to limit physical contact and reduce shared items.
- Limit use of frequently touched items that cannot be easily cleaned.
- Clean and disinfect laminated materials daily if multiple people touch them.
- Students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they are outdoors and can minimize physical contact or if they are indoors and can maintain physical distance.
- Elementary-aged students are less able to consistently maintain physical distance. Outdoors is a lower risk environment than indoors.
  
- **In middle and secondary schools**, students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they can maintain physical distance. Students must maintain physical distance when socializing with peers in different cohorts.
- No more than 40% of the school will be in session for lunch on any given day.
- Students are expected to be capable of consistently maintaining physical distance when it is required. If a student is unable to physically distance, the student should socialize within their cohort or where they can be supported to physically distance.
- Students from different cohorts may be required to be together to receive beneficial social supports, programs, or services (e.g. meal programs, after school clubs, etc.). Within these supports or services, it is expected that cohorts and physical distance are maintained as much as is practical to do so while still ensuring the support, program or service continues. This does not apply to extracurricular activities where physical distance between cohorts must be maintained.

## Q - What kind of support is there for students with disabilities/diverse abilities?

- School districts and independent schools are expected to implement health and safety measures that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities.
- School districts and independent schools must ensure that supports and services typically provided to students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity continue across all

stages. This should include ongoing discussion on needs assessments to better understand the supports that students and families may require.

- Students with disabilities/diverse abilities who are not able to physically distance are not to be excluded from a learning group. Prevention and exposure control measures should be implemented to support students to access learning within a learning group (e.g. assigned seating, prompts, visual support, education using video modelling, social stories, etc.)
- Schools districts and independent schools must ensure that learning groups are established in a manner that allows for the implementation of students' IEP goals, respects the principles of equity and inclusion and does not result in segregated learning environments.

### **Q - Will there be the option for remote learning for students/adults dealing with compromised immune systems in the home?**

- Short answer yes, however, on a case by case and discussed with your school/district see below.
- According to the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), most children who are immunocompromised can return to in-class instruction when safety measure are in place. Protective self- isolation is only recommended for children who are severely immunocompromised, as determined on a case-by-case basis.
- School districts and schools should be aware of BCCDC Guidelines for children with Immune Suppression and BCCDA Guidance for Families of Immunocompromised Children in School and Group Gatherings and share these documents with families of children with immune suppression.
- The advice from the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control for parents/caregivers of children with complex medical conditions or underlying risk factors, OR parents/caregivers who are immunocompromised themselves, is to consult with their medical health care provider to determine the level of risk regarding their child's return to in-class instruction. Parents/caregivers seeking an alternative to in-class instruction, and who do not wish to register their child in a distributed learning program or home schooling, will be required to obtain a doctor's note indicating the need for accommodation due to health-related risks. Districts and schools are expected to work with these families to ensure continuity of learning and support.

## Q – What if I do not want my child to return?

- With the current Surrey School District Back to School Plan, **Middle and Secondary schools will be doing a hybrid model.**
- Attendance Requirements (Ministry of Education)
  - In-class instruction provides students with peer engagement, supports social and emotional development, and decreases feelings of isolation.

School also provides many students access to programs and services they can't get at home and is integral to their overall health.

**Like every year, students who are registered in "bricks and mortar" schools are expected to attend school in-person, unless they are sick.**

Students in secondary school courses may be required to complete some learning online, only if in-person instruction is not possible given learning group sizes (Surrey Schools is providing this option).

- Alternative options
  - Before selecting an alternative to in-class instruction, parents should talk to their school district about their options **if they later want to return and enrol at their desired school.**

Online and distributed learning (DL): **Currently at full capacity for Surrey**

- Both public and independent distributed learning schools offer classes. Students in Kindergarten to grade 7 must take a full course load at one school, while students in grades 8 to 12 may enrol in courses from a number of different distributed learning schools at one time.
- There are 48 school districts with 56 public schools offering distributed learning courses. Sixteen independent schools are currently offering distributed learning courses.

Homeschooling:

- Homeschooling is an alternative method of teaching offered outside the B.C. educational system. Typically, a family member delivers the entire educational program to children at home.
- **Note: Homeschoolers are not eligible to receive a British Columbia Dogwood Graduation Certificate.**

## Q – Will French Immersion be offered?

- As per the Superintendent, all programs such as French Immersion, Montessori, and Traditional will continue.

## Q - How will PACs be integrated?

- Parents, caregivers, health-care providers, volunteers and other non-staff adults (e.g. visitors) entering the school should be prioritized to those supporting activities that are of benefit to student learning and wellbeing (e.g. teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.). This will likely mean that PAC activities will not take place in schools.
- All visitors should confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering. Schools should keep a list of the date, names and contact information for all visitors who enter the school.
- Food and beverages:
  - Schools should continue to emphasize that individual food and beverages are not to be shared.
  - Schools should not allow homemade food items to be made available to other students at this time (e.g. birthday treats, bake sale items).
  - **Please note** that different guidelines apply to food that is prepared in schools (e.g. as part of a culinary program) or for school food services (e.g. cafeteria), which are outlined in the Curriculum, Programs and Activities section.

## Staff:

### Q - How much does the cohort increase when the children need to work with EAs and LSTs?

- District is striving to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day (i.e. minimize the amount of mixing between students and different staff in the setting). As with TTOCs, staff who work with students from different learning groups will take appropriate precautions, including physical distancing and appropriate PPE.
- When staff are in close physical proximity with a student within their learning group, personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, is not required beyond that used as part of the personal care routine normally encountered in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting).
- Non-medical masks are required in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their learning group. As such, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) when outside of their learning groups, and when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Schools will have non-medical masks and face shields available for staff.

### **Q - Will TTOCs be assigned to schools or continue to move around?**

- Staff who transition between learning groups or work with students from different learning groups will not be included as part of any single learning group (cohort). This means that they will take appropriate precautions, including physical distancing and appropriate PPE, when working. (CUPE FAQs)

### **Q - Will teachers and staff be implementing procedures to ensure that they maintain their cohorts when accessing copiers and office supplies or taking their breaks?**

- Under the updated health and safety guidelines, masks are required for all staff and all students in middle and secondary school **when they are in high traffic areas** like school buses and hallways, and anytime they are outside of their classroom or learning group and they cannot safely distance from others.
- Unless they are part of the same cohort, staff and other adults should maintain physical distance from each other at all times. **This includes during break times and in meetings.**

## **Reporting:**

### **Q - What will report cards look like?**

- The return to full in-class instruction in September will include the following:
  - Provincial curriculum for all students at all grade levels
  - Regular report cards
  - Regular assessments at the classroom and provincial level

### **Q - What is being put in place for grade 11 and 12 to ensure they will have their post-secondary prerequisites?**

- The District plan allows students to take the courses they requested and stay on the graduation pathway selected.

## **Facilities:**

### **Q - Who is doing all the cleaning?**

- Our school janitors (CUPE 728). As per the Superintendent, schools have changed schedules to daytime school hours.

## Q - What is the minimum cleaning required in each class, each day?

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice every 24 hours (once during the school day) (e.g. door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students, keyboards and toys); and clean every surface that is visibly dirty.

## Transportation:

### Q – What are the guidelines for buses?

- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. **If a child has any symptoms, they must not take the bus or go to school.**
- Buses should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with BCCDC guidelines.
- **Bus drivers** should clean their hands often, including before and after completing trips. They are encouraged to regularly use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol during trips, as well as wear a non-medical mask or face covering when they cannot physically distance or be behind a physical barrier in the course of their duties.
- Schools and school districts can consider a transparent barrier to separate the driver from the students.
- To reduce the number of close, in-person interactions, the following strategies are recommended:
  - Keep seating consistent and assign seats where possible.
  - If space is available, students should each have their own seat unless sharing with a member of their household, and should be seated beside the window.
  - Prioritize students sharing a seat with a member of their household or cohort.
  - Buses should be loaded from back to front and offloaded from front to back.
  - The seating arrangement can be altered whenever necessary to support student health and safety (e.g. accommodating children with a physical disability, responding to behavioural issues, etc.).
- Middle and secondary school students are required to wear non-medical masks on bus. These should be put on before loading and taken off after offloading.
- Masks aren't recommended for elementary students on buses because they are more likely to touch their face and may need help putting them on and taking them off.

- Schools and school districts should keep up to date passenger lists to share with public health if contact tracing needs to occur.
- Students should clean their hands before they leave home to take the bus, when they leave school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home.

## Health:

**Q - If a child is sick and has COVID-19-like symptoms, is it a requirement for them to be tested before being allowed back to school, or will they be allowed to return as soon as they have no symptoms?**

- Stay Home When Sick
- The BCCDC guidelines for schools are firm. If a student, staff member or any other adult has any symptoms of a cold, influenza, COVID-19, or any other infectious respiratory disease, **they must not enter the school.**
- Any student, staff, or other person within the school who has cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms should **seek assessment by a health-care provider and self-isolate while they await the results.**
- Students, staff members and any other adults must stay home and self-isolate if they have:
  - Symptoms of COVID-19
  - Travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days
  - Identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak
  - This includes the children of essential service workers.

**Q - What occurs if there is a suspected/test positive case?**

- If a staff or student in a school is confirmed by public health as positive for COVID-19, public health will work with school administration to determine what actions should be taken, including if any staff or students who have been in contact with that person need to self-isolate, and if other staff and students' families should be notified.
- Students and staff with cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms should stay home, self-isolate, and be assessed by a health-care provider. **Testing is recommended for anyone with these symptoms, even mild ones.**
- Specific public health measures are implemented in facilities where an outbreak occurs to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 and keep others safe.