

August 21, 2020

Quesnel School District

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Board of Education

Dear Families, Students and Staff,

With just three weeks left until we welcome students back to school, I want to update you on the Quesnel School District's preparations and share some information in the form of frequently asked questions.

Since August 10, District Staff and Principals have been meeting and planning. On Monday, August 17, all school districts received operational guidelines from the Ministry of Education to support the creation of our restart plans. You can learn more at <https://gov.bc.ca/covid19returntoschool>.

Thank you to the representatives of Quesnel Parent Advisory Council, Quesnel District Teachers' Association, CUPE Local 4990, Quesnel Principals' and Vice Principals' Association, District Staff, and Trustees for their feedback, consultation and support.

Today, we will submit our restart plan to the Ministry of Education for approval and when approved, our final plan will be shared by August 26.

Most frequently asked questions:

1. Is the return to school mandatory?
In Stage 2, all students are expected to return to school.
2. When will my child begin school?
The Ministry of Education announced a staggered start to the school year in order to provide time for staff orientation to safety protocols and to prepare for student return. School staff will report to their schools on Tuesday, September 8. Staff will welcome students back starting on Thursday, September 10. In order to ensure a smooth orientation for students half the students will return on Thursday, September 10 and the other half will return on Friday, September 11, as outlined below:
 - Elementary students and Quesnel Junior School students – half of each class will attend on Thursday, September 10 and the other half of the students will attend on Friday, September 11. Parents of these students will be contacted with confirmation of which day their child(ren) will return by September 4.
 - Correlieu Secondary School students – only grade 10 students will attend on Thursday, September 10. Grade 11 and 12 students will attend on Friday, September 11.

Thursday, September 10 and Friday, September 11 will be half days. This will allow staff an opportunity to meet and to adjust school safety plans, as necessary.

Information about any changes to our Kindergarten gradual entry plan will be sent home to parents by August 26.

3. What is a Learning Group or Cohort?
Through the direction of the Public Health Officer (PHO), students and staff will be organized into learning groups or cohorts. This reduces the number of close, in-person interactions or contacts for students. Students will be organized in classes with their teacher as we do every year. One or two classes will be organized as a learning group. These learning groups will be students of a similar age. Learning groups can also include support staff - Education Assistants (EAs) and Youth Care Workers (YCWs). The Public Health Officer established that learning groups for elementary cannot exceed a maximum of 60 people and 120 people for secondary school grades 8-12.



4. Will my child be in a class with 60 students?
No. Students will spend most of their time in their own class with their teacher. However, they will have breaks (recess and lunch) with others in their learning group. Where there is more than one learning group outside, separate spaces on the school playground or field will be established for each group.
5. What is happening at the high schools?
Correlieu will move from a semester system to a quarter system, where students will take two courses a day for ten weeks. This still allows students to stay enrolled in their selected course options. There are no changes to the Quesnel Junior School or McNaughton Centre timetable.
6. Will the School District be staggering school day start and end times?
Changes to school start and end of day times are not being contemplated at this time. However, break and lunch times may be staggered in schools to reduce hallway, playground, and common area interactions.
7. What health guidelines are being put in place?
The health and safety protocols have been updated and submitted to the Ministry for approval. These plans will be posted on the School District website www.sd28.bc.ca and the Facebook page by August 26. **Individual school health and safety plans will be sent home to parents by September 9.**
8. Will the school buses be running?
The School District will continue to offer bus services. The transportation safety plan includes hand hygiene before getting on the bus and masks for students grades 8-12 when not seated with a sibling or a member of their learning group. Assigned seating will be required for all routes.
9. Will there be 'health checks' for students?
A Daily Health Check tool will be provided to families. Parents are asked to use the Health Check to assess their children daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms.
10. What are the options for parents who want their child(ren) to learn at home?
The Quesnel School District offers a home based distance program called Quesnel Distributed Learning (QDL). Interested parents should go to this link <https://qdlonline.com/> and then to the registration page for K-9 or 10-12. QDL is only taking names for our K-9 distributed learning program and will not be able to confirm registration until after August 26.
Homeschooling is an alternative method of learning at home, offered outside the B.C. educational system. Typically, a family member is responsible for the entire educational program to children at home.

Please continue to check email, the SD28 Facebook page and website for important return to school information.

In closing, I want to assure you that we are working hard to provide for a safe return to school for staff and students.



Sincerely,

Sue-Ellen Miller
Superintendent of Schools