

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- WHERE CAN I FIND THE RETURN TO SCHOOL PLANS AND HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE?

All of our Return to School information is posted on our specific 'Return to School' page on our [website](#).

Quick links:

[District Return to School Plan](#)

[School-specific Return to School Plans](#)

[Health and Safety Guide](#)

[Learning Groups – An Explanation](#)

- WHAT ARE MY LEARNING OPTIONS FOR THIS YEAR?

The Cowichan Valley School District is offering four Learning Options this year. Those options are:

In class instruction

Remote Learning Transition Program

Distance Learning through The Grove

Blended Learning through our two blended learning programs (Described below)

Hospital Homebound Program

- WHAT IS THE REMOTE LEARNING TRANSITION PROGRAM

The Remote Learning Transition Program is connected to your home school. This program will see learners supported through a Remote Learning Transition Teacher who may be attached to a group of schools. The program's focus will be on bridging the gap between in-class instruction and full-time remote learning, while working to transition students back to their home school. While space in your class will be reserved for you, a Remote Learning Transition Teacher will be your regular teacher until such time as you transition back to your school.

- WHAT IS DISTANCE LEARNING?

Distance Learning (DL) in the Cowichan Valley School District is through The Grove, our dedicated DL program. For those not registered prior to this 2020/21 school year, this is the virtual, learn-at-home model from the District. Learning is supported by a teacher who helps facilitate the learning.

COWICHAN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

- WHAT IS THE BLENDED LEARNING MODEL?

The Cowichan Valley School District is offering two elementary school blended learning model programs. These programs are based on 51% of face-to-face instruction and are then supplemented with online learning, provocations, or other not in person activities. The two options for this year are:

INQUISITIVE DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY-2 SCHOOL HUBS:

The Inquisitive Design and Technology Program offers students from grades four to seven the opportunity to learn through investigations supported by effective use of technology. The philosophy of the program is one where students focus on developing solutions to real world problems that are meaningful to them and related to the curriculum. This program will be offered at Drinkwater Elementary and Lake Cowichan School. You can find more information on this program [HERE](#).

MILL BAY BLENDED LEARNING CLANS

Mill Bay Nature School's blended learning Clans will provide learning opportunities (online provocations, individual face-to-face interactions, zoom gatherings / lessons /celebrations of learning, family field studies) for children and youth - ages 5 to 13 - rooted in the philosophy & pedagogy outlined in the [Field Guide of Mill Bay Nature School](#). These blended learning Clans will be structured upon individual learning plans focusing first on developing the core competencies of the B.C. Ed Plan, and will require consistent, engaged participation by teachers, learners & parent/guardians. You can find more information on this program [HERE](#).

- WHAT IS THE HOSPITAL HOMEBOUND PROGRAM?

As in prior years, we will have Hospital Homebound support for those students with medical conditions that prevent them from attending school temporarily or for longer term.

- WHAT IS HOMESCHOOLING?

Registering as a homeschooler is an alternate method of schooling where the primary teaching is done within the family unit. Homeschooling is not formally connected to any school and homeschoolers receive no support or funding from a school district or the Ministry of Education. While you may follow the BC curriculum, registered homeschoolers are not required to do so. It is not supervised by a BC Certified teacher or required to meet provincial standards. Registered homeschoolers are not eligible to receive their British Columbia Dogwood Graduation Certificate. You can find out more information through the Government of BC's [Homeschooling Website](#).

COWICHAN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

- IF I CHOOSE ANOTHER PROGRAM, WILL MY SPACE AT MY HOME SCHOOL BE GUARANTEED?

Yes. If you leave your home school for another in-district program, your space will be reserved for you for next year. If you are in a separate in-district program and you wish to return to your school during the school year, that can only happen at a natural break in the year (Winter / Spring breaks) as re-working of learning groups may be needed to facilitate your return.

- IS THE COWICHAN VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT GOING TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO SUPPORT FRENCH IMMERSION FAMILIES WHO CANNOT SAFELY RETURN TO SCHOOL?

If your child is currently enrolled in French immersion and you have questions or concerns regarding your child's return-to-school plan, please connect directly with your school principal. We understand that some families may be facing a unique set of circumstances and we will address them on a case-by-case basis. Our goal is to keep our communities connected during these unprecedented times.

- WHAT IF I'M STILL LOOKING FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT?

The first place to start is to contact your principal or vice-principal and have a conversation about your needs for the upcoming school year. From that conversation you'll be able to figure out a plan forward. These individual plans could look like many different things based on your individual or family needs.

- WHY ARE YOU NOT OFFERING THE SAME PROGRAM AS IN JUNE?

What was offered in June was intended to be short term. We are in a different situation now. We learned many things in June, one of which that the hybrid model was very difficult for teachers to work with two groups of students at the same time - those who came to school and those that stayed home. We also learned that the June model did not work for many students, especially our primary students who were not able to access technology independently and for other learners who did not have adult support. It was also very hard on parents, especially working parents who found themselves trying to find time to take on a teaching role.

- WHAT ABOUT INDIGENOUS FAMILIES?

For our Indigenous families, we are coordinating an outreach service that will be developed in collaboration with our various Nations. We hope to create a culturally responsive service that will provide additional flexibility for our Indigenous families.

- WHAT IS THE PROCESS IF THERE IS A CASE OR SUSPECTED CASE?

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been working closely with Island Health to ensure our Health and Safety guidelines are based on the latest research and information. If a case is suspected or confirmed, we will take direction from Island Health and their Public Health teams. They will determine what level of risk there is and what precautionary measures would be needed. More of this information is in our [Health and Safety Guide](#) and is detailed below:

If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, and were potentially infectious while they were at school:

- Public health will perform an investigation to determine if there were any potential close contacts within the school. (To learn more about contact tracing, visit the [BCCDC website](#).)
 - Students and staff who have interacted with the confirmed case may be asked to stay home by Public Health while they complete their investigation.
- If it is determined that there are close contacts within the school, public health will notify the school administrators to request class and bus lists to assist with contact tracing and provide guidance on what steps should be taken.
- Public health may then:
 - Recommend 14-day isolation if necessary (for confirmed close contacts).
 - Recommend monitoring for symptoms if necessary.
 - Provide follow-up recommendations if necessary.
- Schools must continue to provide learning support to students required to self-isolate.
- Together, schools/school districts and public health officials will determine if any other actions are necessary.

- IF TRANSMISSION RATES GO UP, WILL SCHOOLS CLOSE AGAIN OR MOVE BACK TO PREVIOUS MODEL LIKE WE DID IN THE SPRING?

This decision will be made by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control and the Dr. Henry, the Provincial Health Officer.

- WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY CHILD IS SICK?

The first step is to ensure you do not send your child to school. Secondly, depending on your assessment of the illness and whether or not it meets the criteria for a call to Public Health, you may want to consider doing that. From there, Public Health officials will guide you through whatever process you collectively decide on.

- WILL THE COWICHAN TRIBES BUS FOLLOW THE SAME SAFETY PROTOCOLS AS THE DISTRICT?

Yes.

- WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO ENSURE PARENTS HAVE SELF-ASSESSED PRIOR TO SENDING THEIR KIDS TO SCHOOL?

We have continually messaged that a Daily Self-Assessment **MUST** be done prior to coming on a bus, or attending school (whether a student or staff). Any student or staff member who shows any symptoms of illness will be isolated and, in the case of a student, the parent or guardian will be called to pick them up. In the case of a staff member they will be asked to go home. Ultimately, if you show any signs of COVID-19 symptoms, please stay home and get tested. Please use the [BC CDC COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) for guidance.

WHAT ARE LEARNING GROUPS?

A Learning Group is a cohort of students and staff who stay together through a length of time and primarily interact with one and other. Learning Groups can be a single class, a group of classes, or a group of students who share courses (secondary). They can also include a wide variety of staff, but are consistent in their makeup. Learning Groups allow for schools to maintain a safe and controlled environment, as well as allow for safe social interactions within the group. We created a handy graphic that you can find [HERE](#).