



August 26, 2020

'Uy' skweyul, Parents, Guardians, and Families,

We continue to prepare our schools and staff to welcome all of our learners back for the start of this new school year. We know that it is vitally important that they come back to a safe, well-organized school and be received in a warm, caring, and welcoming way. This year will look substantially different than those in the past, and my [previous letters](#) have outlined the processes we are undertaking to ensure a safe return to school for everyone.

School will resume for in-class instruction on September 10th. On September 8th, staff will return to our schools and be carefully oriented to the new Health and Safety Procedures before resuming instruction. In addition, students will be gradually transitioned during their first days at school to ensure they are familiar with the new Health and Safety protocols. Dr. Shannon Waters, our local Medical Health Officer, and I recently relayed the health and safety information to parents, families, and caregivers in our [letter from last week](#).

As a district we know that face to face learning, where learners have their teacher, support staff, peers, and social outlets, is critically important for their health and wellness. Last spring, some of our students had great success in a hybrid model of learning provided by our schools, however many did not fare as well. This is why we have worked hard to align with provincial guidelines and maintain safe and caring school environments that will focus on foundational skills, social-emotional development, mental health, and enhancing our compassionate communities. Our plans encompass all the things we care about as a society, as well as provide tools to prepare our learners for a world they will create.

In order to ensure that all parents and guardians have the information they need, the [Cowichan Valley School District Restart Plan](#) is attached to this communication. In addition to that detailed plan, this letter provides further information for all families regarding specific questions they may have, as well outlining updated district information pertaining to various programs.

French Immersion

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.

Hospital Homebound

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.

District Learning Options: Elementary Students

For families who are seeking alternative learning options for their elementary students, there will be three additional selections available for students and families this year who may be seeking flexibility. If families do decide to choose any of the options below, they will only be able to return to their original school at a natural break such as Winter or Spring Break should the alternative option not work out as well as they hoped. This can only occur if their original school has room in the learning group to facilitate their return and staffing is available. If there is no room in their current learning group to return, we will attempt to find space in the next closest school.

Distance Learning-The Grove K-9

The Grove is a program that allows parents the option of online learning through Distance Learning (DL). If parents are choosing to not attend in person classes at their original school they may enroll in [The Grove](#). This program is part of the Cowichan Valley Open Learning Centre and has been an established program for number of years. Should parents of students who have diverse learning needs be contemplating enrolling their child in Distributed Learning, please be aware that DL may not be able to provide the same, space, staff and resource supports they are offered at their home school.

We are also going to offer two blended learning programs for the year. These two options outlined below will be made available to those families who have exceptional circumstances:

1. Students/families with unique situations (eg. Student with Immune Suppression)
2. Students/families who meet the [Distance Learning profile](#)
3. Or, families interested in programs that respond to their unique set of family values and are aligned with the District Programs' Learning Principles

Note: If registration in the programs described below exceeds available space, the district will initiate its lottery process used for all of its District Programs of Choice.

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](#).

Registration for this program will be available Thursday, August 27th at www.sd79.bc.ca. The deadline for this program will be September 2nd.

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](#). 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](#).

Registration for this program will be available Thursday, August 27th at www.sd79.bc.ca. The deadline for this program will be September 2nd.

Elementary Schools: Specific Options

Elementary schools will be working closely with all families and students to support the learning opportunities that are right for them. Please contact your student's school to discuss options that may be available at their school.

Secondary Schools: Specific Options

Secondary schools will be working closely with all families and students to support the learning opportunities that are right for them. Please contact your student's school to discuss options that may be available at their school.

We are working incredibly hard to ensure a safe smooth transition back for all of our students this school year. We can't wait to see you back in class this September and are looking forward to navigating this year compassionately and collectively.

Kind Regards,



Robyn Gray, Superintendent

The Cowichan Valley School District acknowledges that for thousands of years the Malahat, Lake Cowichan, Quw'utsun, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, and Lyackson Peoples have walked gently on the unceded territories where we now live, work, and play. We are committed to ensuring a healthy educational environment for our xe'xe'smun'eem, our sacred children, that is based on science and inclusive of traditional knowledge and history.