

Friday, September 4, 2020

‘Uy’ skweyul (good day) Parents, Guardians, and Families,

The first day of school is coming up next week and we are excited to be welcoming students back. Staff throughout the District have been working hard over the summer, and especially over the last few weeks, to ensure our schools are ready for students and staff.

Yesterday, the [BC Ministry of Education announced the allocation of new educational funding from the Government of Canada](#). These funds are a welcome addition to our [Return to School Plans](#) and will let us provide further options to your families.

The learning options already announced in our Return to School plan will continue to be offered to families. Those include regular In-class instruction, our Distance Learning option through The Grove, the two newly-announced blended learning programs (Inquisitive Design and Technology and Mill Bay Nature School Blended Learning Clans) and our Hospital Homebound program. No matter what option your family chooses, your spot in your home school, or District program, will be guaranteed next year.

Additionally, we are now able to offer a Remote Learning Transition Program for K-7 that 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.

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.

Regardless of whichever option you think is best for your family, you should first connect with your Principal or Vice-Principal in your home school as they will always be your best point of contact and someone you can count on to support you and your family.

Our Return to School Plan will be updated in the coming days with these new programs. If you have not seen the District or [school plans](#), and supplemental [Health and Safety Guidelines](#), you may want to take some time to familiarize yourself with those documents. We have also attached a Frequently Asked Questions document to assist you in better understanding your options.

.../2

It is important to remember that no matter what learning option you choose for your family, the first week of school will look different than years before. We know that this, coupled with the previous months of ongoing disruptions, may have caused stress and anxiety for your child(ren).

Our staff is working to ensure that they prioritize a warm welcome back to school that will support our students' and staff's mental health and well-being. During these first weeks, it will take time to become accustomed to new procedures and their new classes. We know how important it is for us to take this transition slowly, carefully, and respectfully.

A large part of this transition will have to do with creating new routines. Families can help with this by incorporating similar adjustments in their day-to-day lives. [The Daily Health Assessment](#) is one routine that families will need to make a regular occurrence. The Daily Health Assessment will help families ensure that their loved ones remain safe and healthy, and will also protect the school community and the community at large.

We will continue to work to ensure the health and safety of our students and our staff as we collectively navigate this unique school year.

Huy tseep q'u (Thank you all),

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Robyn Gray', written in a cursive style.

Robyn Gray, Superintendent

I acknowledge that for thousands of years the Malahat, Lake Cowichan, Quw'utsun, Halalt, Penelakut, Stz'uminus, & 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.