

## Frequently Asked Questions – Restart Plan

Updated: September 1, 2020

This document will be added to and refined as additional information becomes available. It is also highly recommended that parents take the time to read the other documents on the COVID-19 page of the district website as they provide much more detailed information on a variety of topics:

<https://www.sd38.bc.ca/covid-19-updates>

### 1. Why is the district offering a transitional option for elementary students but not for students in Grade 8 and 9?

At the secondary level, the district has an alternative for parents who do not wish to have their child attend school in-person. That alternative, Distributed Learning through Richmond Virtual School, is not currently available to elementary students, which is why the district created the transitional learning option for them.

The elementary transitional model that will be used in Richmond can be achieved using current staffing allocations. There is a far greater degree of flexibility within elementary schools where many teachers can teach different grade level groupings across subject areas. As students re-enter school for in-person learning between September and January, informal groupings of students can therefore be re-organized relatively easily. At the secondary level, there is far less flexibility. Secondary timetables cannot simply be adjusted throughout the school year due to school size and complexity. Secondary teachers tend to be subject area specialists, so an English teacher would typically not be asked to teach a Science course. As such, there is far less flexibility at the secondary level to change the timetable structure as students re-enter the school as part of a transitional program. Also, there is currently no teacher staffing available to add teachers to a transitional program.

### 2. If I choose to put my child in distributed learning for Grade 8 or 9, will they automatically lose their spot in their catchment school either for this year or next year?

Parents who choose to place their child in a distributed learning program, such as Richmond Virtual School, will need to withdraw their child from their current placement so that the appropriate level of teacher staffing can be assigned to each school and to Richmond Virtual School.

The ability to re-register in the catchment school during the 2020-2021 school year would be dependent on whether or not there was remaining space available in the required courses. Parents would be asked to communicate in advance of the end of a 'quarter' so arrangements could be investigated. If there was space, it is very likely that the student would be re-admitted to the school. Parents who wish to re-register their child in their catchment secondary school for the 2021-2022 school year would be ensured a spot provided they re-register with the school by March 31, 2021.

### 3. Why isn't the district offering a hybrid model for secondary students where some students come to school and some learn from home, similar to what we had in June?

In June, parents had the choice of keeping their child at home or sending them to school. At that time, teachers were required to provide a hybrid model of both in-person and remote learning to their students, but students did not attend full-time. Teachers were therefore available at some

points during the school day to teach remotely, thus making a hybrid model possible. This model presented a number of challenges for many families and also for some teachers. The Ministry of Education therefore chose to require parents to choose either full time in-person learning, distributed learning or home-schooling for their children this fall. Teachers in the regular in-school program are expected to teach their students in-person all day and are therefore not available to provide remote instruction as they were asked to do in June.

**4. Why doesn't the district require teachers to provide in-person and remote learning at the same time using remote technology?**

Teachers will be teaching in classrooms full time to support their students with in-person learning. There is no additional time built into the daily schedule to provide remote learning and there is currently no additional staffing available to add teachers to teach remotely. Teachers in 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms do not simply stand at the front of the classroom and lecture, so it is not simply a matter of pointing a camera at the teacher and broadcasting remotely. In-person classroom lessons are collaborative and use a variety of digital tools, materials, and interactive discussions. It would be problematic to expect teachers to be fully present for the students in their classroom if they are also required to monitor online chats, deal with technical challenges (such as ensuring the microphone and camera are picking up the required parts of the lesson), and make certain that students studying remotely are engaged in the lesson.

**5. Why doesn't the district have some teachers teach in-person and hire additional teachers to teach remotely so a hybrid model could be implemented across secondary schools?**

The district must operate within its operating budget and currently does not have the funds available to hire additional teachers to teach remotely. Should additional funds become available for staffing, the district will consider how it can best use those resources to support student learning.

**6. Why can't parents try out a program in September and then decide which program they'd like their child to be in by early October?**

Districts are required to provide enrolment numbers to the Ministry of Education by the end of September so that they can claim funding. This funding provides the budget for teaching and other staff. The district does not have the ability to let parents try different programs in September without running the risk of losing staff in a program, and then losing space for students. For example, if a student registers for in-person instruction at their neighbourhood school, the district will claim that with the Ministry of Education. If the student then withdrew from their neighbourhood school and transferred to Distributed Learning after September 30, the district would not have the staffing available in the Distributed Learning program to provide a space for the student. The same works in reverse. If a student registers for Distributed Learning and then transfers to their neighbourhood school, the district would not have the staffing within the school to accommodate them. In order for secondary schools to organize their staffing resources, it is necessary to know by mid-September how many students will be attending so the appropriate level of teaching staff can be assigned, and classes can begin.

**7. Is it true that students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 will only receive half the normal hours of instruction? How can students in Grade 10, 11 and 12 access their teacher when they need additional support?**

Students in Grade 10, 11 and 12 will be receiving in-person instruction for half of the time that they would normally receive. However, students will still be provided with a comprehensive learning experience, and they will not be expected to teach themselves the course. Our teachers care deeply about student success. Many teachers will collaborate with colleagues to explore how to best meet the needs of their learners despite the many obstacles the global pandemic places before us.

The District arrived at this delivery model after making a number of difficult decisions, one of which was reducing class size to 50 per cent or less for students in Grade 10, 11 and 12. This was largely guided by our responsibility to maintain learning groups or cohorts of less than 120 students and staff, balanced with our commitment to offer students a full array of elective choices to support graduation and post-secondary planning. In addition, in order to achieve these two ends, our students in Grades 10, 11 and 12 are required to maintain physical distance while in-class. The district also re-organized our delivery model, so that students only have two classes to focus on at a time. Students can anticipate receiving increased personalized support as a result of having significantly reduced class sizes and extended in-person sessions of approximately 2.5 hours each day.

Given the adjustments to the schedule, teachers across the district will likely explore a variety of instructional practices, focused on big ideas, and key curricular content knowledge and competencies that best prepare students for the future. Teachers will provide students with materials that they will learn together, while also providing materials to engage with outside of the classroom.

Students in grade 10, 11 and 12 have traditionally been expected to engage in learning outside of classroom, both individually and with peers. It is also very common for teachers to provide their students with course outlines that includes information about expectations, curriculum to be covered, assessment, access to additional support, supplemental resources, as well as contact information. While students are not at school, out of class learning may include independent learning or virtual group learning with peers. There may also be times when teachers choose to connect with students virtually by posting information on a digital platform such as Microsoft Teams or Scholantis.

One of the opportunities that has emerged from implementing a quarter system in our secondary schools is re-envisioning how teachers receive their preparation time. Working with the Richmond Teachers Association, the District is introducing a linear preparation model which allows full-time teachers to receive daily preparation time throughout the year. This innovative design will provide teachers additional time each day to support student learning in-person or remotely.

The ultimate goal of B.C.'s competency focused curriculum is to develop a student's independence, as well as their ability to apply their learning in a variety of settings. We recognize that this is different than a traditional timetable structure, but we remain committed to preparing all students for their future pathways.

August 28, 2020

## **SURVEY**

- 1. I have not yet completed the survey as I would like to know more about the options available to me for my child. Where can I get more information?**

Please take the time to read this document as well as the links to other documents on the district website: <https://www.sd38.bc.ca/covid-19-updates>

- 2. I have read all the documents and still have questions but do not want to miss the survey deadline of August 30. What should I do?**

Please submit the choice that you are most likely to want. If you have more questions, please contact your child's school principal the week of August 31. If you need to adjust your plan at that time, you will be able to do so.

- 3. Will the district offer additional options other than those that are currently on the survey?**

The programs that currently appear on the survey are what the school district will be offering this year. Parents who have questions about these options are encouraged to speak with their school principal to choose the best possible option.

## **ELEMENTARY IN-PERSON PROGRAM**

- 4. What will the structure of the day look like for the in-person program?**

A typical school day at the elementary level will be as follows:

- All parents, employees and students will be expected to engage in a mandatory health declaration process each day before coming to school, with a firm requirement to stay home if sick.
- Each morning, teachers will greet their students at assigned entrance doors. The students will enter the school, wash or sanitize their hands and then begin the school day.
- Students will be in a regular classroom with their peers and classroom teacher and will learn grade-appropriate curriculum and be assessed in the normal fashion.
- Students will eat their lunches in the classroom under adult supervision. Play breaks at both recess and lunch will be outside. Students should be appropriately dressed as they will be outside for play breaks regardless of the weather. Recess and lunch play breaks will also be staggered so that no more than half of the student population is outside at one time.
- At the end of the school day teachers will escort their class to a designated meeting spot outdoors where parents and guardians can greet their children and then take them home.

- 5. When will parents find out their child's cohort and teacher?**

During the week of August 31, schools will be confirming individually with each family whether they intend to have their child attend school in-person or plan to select another option. On September 8 and 9, staff will finalize class and cohort placements and parents will be informed of these placements by the end of the day on September 9.

- 6. How many students will be in the classrooms for elementary school?**

The Ministry of Education has indicated that elementary students whose parents choose to send them to school for in-person instruction will attend full time. This means that teachers will be teaching full-time all day, and classes can therefore not be divided up into smaller groups in order to provide remote instruction at different points during the day. Class sizes will continue to vary depending on the number of students assigned to a particular division and the number of students whose parents choose to have them attend in-person. It is likely that in most cases, elementary classes will continue to be below or at the class size maximums outlined below:

- Kindergarten: 20 students
- Kindergarten/Grade 1: 20 students
- Grades 1- 3: 22 students
- Grade 3 - 4: 24 students
- Grades 4 - 7: 28 students

**7. Before Covid-19, a typical elementary class consisted of between 20 and 28 students. Does the new plan including cohorts mean that students will now be in a combined class of 60 students?**

Students' main grouping will continue to be a 'regular' size class as outlined in the previous question. Students will continue to spend the great majority of their time at school with that class. Learning cohorts of up to 60 students will allow for students and teachers to work together for learning as needed. In other words, two Intermediate classes may make up a learning cohort so that the two teachers can plan activities for their students to work on together (i.e. "Buddy classes"). This is a common practice at the elementary level and is an important part of a student's learning.

### **ELEMENTARY TRANSITIONAL LEARNING**

**8. How does the transitional program work? What can I expect from the teacher and what will be expected of me?**

Please refer to the Elementary Transitional Learning Program description for further details:  
<https://bit.ly/2QFSIID>

**9. Can we choose transitional learning at a later date? If my child returns to school and feels unsafe, can they be taken out and put into transitional learning?**

You may reassess your choice to be in the transitional learning program at any point before January 29, 2021, as long as there is space available in a transitional learning class in the school district.

**10. How long will the transitional learning program be available? What are the re-entry dates if we choose transitional learning if we want to come back to in person learning?**

Transitional learning will be available until January 29, 2021, at which point the district anticipates that the majority of students will have returned to in-person learning at their home school. The school district will reassess options for the anticipated small number of students who wish to continue with transitional learning at that time. There are two re-entry dates available for families who may wish to have their children return to in-person learning before February 1, 2021. These dates are:

- October 13, 2020
- November 16, 2020

In order to allow time for planning, parents must give their school and their transitional learning teacher one week's notice of their intent to withdraw from the program and return to their home school. This means that the schools and teachers must receive this information by:

- October 6, 2020
- November 9, 2020

**11. How will course content be delivered in the transitional learning?**

Students will meet with their transitional learning teacher daily at set times over videoconference (i.e. Zoom) for whole group and small group instruction. The students will also be required to work on additional learning activities individually, supported by the parent/guardian. The district will provide parent support sessions so that parents can learn how to help their child with home learning.

**12. For students who have COVID-19 symptoms or test positive and have to stay home, will there be an online platform for them from their school to continue their learning?**

Your child's teacher will remain in contact with you, and your child, should they need to self-isolate. Your child will be able to keep up with class work via electronic communication with the classroom teacher, for example through the digital portfolio tool.

**13. If a student returns to the classroom later in the year, does their classroom placement stay the same or could they get put in another class?**

Class organizations and placements will be set for when the students return to school on September 10. Students enrolled in transitional learning and/or in school learning will keep their class placement throughout the year. To the best extent possible, there will be no changes to classroom placements after September 10.

**14. Will there be transitional learning options for French Immersion students?**

The district is committed to providing transitional learning options for all students, including French Immersion students. The results from the return to school survey will determine which transitional learning options may be required.

## **SECONDARY PROGRAM**

### **15. What will the structure of the day look like?**

All schools will be following the province's health and safety guidelines for a safe return to school. These include:

- Daily self-assessment before entering the school and a requirement to stay home if sick.
- The reinforcement of regular hand washing and respiratory etiquette.
- A requirement that masks be worn by all staff and secondary students on buses, in common areas with high traffic such as hallways, and outside of the classroom or learning group when physical distancing is not possible.

Given the diversity of our secondary schools in terms of the number of students and physical layout, these procedures may look different in each location. Families will hear from their respective secondary schools before the start of the school year as to what their student arrival and departure procedures will be.

Students in grades 8 and 9 will attend full-time, five days per week. They will be organized into learning groups, taking two courses at a time for 10-weeks (quarter system). They will attend their Block A class all morning followed by a lunch break and then the same class of approximately 30 students will attend their Block B class all afternoon. Again, given the diversity of school sizes, etc., each school will be making their own arrangements to ensure that health and safety guidelines are being followed during the lunch breaks.

Students in grade 10, 11 or 12 will attend school half-time (mornings or afternoons) five days per week to receive in-person instruction, which will be combined with independent learning. Secondary schools are developing a remote and/or in-person support option for students who are in need of tutorial support to supplement their in-class and independent learning. As Grade 10-12 students will be attending school for half-days, no lunch break will be required, and students will be expected to leave the building once their half day is over. Students arriving for the second half of the day will be expected to arrive shortly before their afternoon class in order to minimize contact with other students while at school.

### **16. When will we find out our child's cohort?**

All students will receive their timetable when they come to school on the orientation days on September 10 or 11. Before the school year begins, each secondary school will be emailing their families to give more specific detail as to when and how students should arrive for their orientation.

### **17. How will resource blocks be handled?**

Students requiring additional learning support will be able to access that support in a variety of ways. This will be adapted to meet the individual needs of students and may include a quarter class of support, or both scheduled or drop-in support at various times during the school day. Further details will be provided by the school.



**18. Why are Grade 8 and 9 students going to school full time with regular class sizes, while Grade 10, 11 and 12 will only go half time with reduced class size?**

For students in the early years of secondary school, strong social-emotional connections and a sense of belonging to the school community are especially important. Secondary schools are large complex places that are organized very differently from elementary schools. Some junior students who make the transition to secondary school can experience a degree of discomfort or uncertainty at a critical stage of their adolescent development, and often require more direct school support than older students. Older students tend to be more independent and can generally manage less structure to their day.

Therefore, the school district believes that having grade 8 and 9 students in school full-time is important for the following reasons:

- It supports their transition into the early years of secondary school.
- It provides routines and structure that are important for personal well-being.
- It provides continuous access to learning.
- It creates a strong learning connection with their teachers and the school community.
- It supports development of personal and social responsibility.
- It provides the opportunity to develop friendships.

In addition to these reasons, the school district also must consider our ability to stay within the required maximum cohort size of 120 students. Because grade 8 and 9 students take a minimal number of electives, they can more easily be arranged into consistent class groupings which do not change from course to course. This allows the district to maintain the cohort maximum for students in grades 8 and 9. Students in grades 10-12 take a wide variety of different electives which makes it very challenging, or in some cases impossible, to arrange cohort groupings that stay within the maximum of 120. The district therefore needed to reduce the size of each grade 10-12 class in order to stay within the cohort or at least provide physical distancing.

**19. Will there be any support for students in grades 10-12 while they are working independently?**

Schools will work with students and parents directly to establish support mechanisms as necessary for students who require additional support.

**20. Will students spend approximately five to six hours per day on the same two subjects for ten weeks?**

The quarter system is being implement broadly throughout the province at this time and was chosen by many school districts as it allows schools to maintain the learning group limits established by the Provincial Health Officer, while maintaining the integrity and depth of the curriculum. Students will take two courses at a time for ten weeks then will take another two courses.

**21. What will the class sizes be for Grade 8 and 9 in-person learning?**

As junior (Grades 8-9) students will be welcomed back full time, class sizes will vary depending on course, but will range from 20 to a maximum of 30 students.



**22. What will the lunch arrangement be for Grade 8 and 9 students?**

Secondary schools will follow the required provincial health and safety guidelines and will establish the protocols that work best for their own school building. This may include staggered lunch breaks and specific, designated places for Grade 8 and 9 students to eat. Grades 10-12 students will not eat lunch at the school, thereby greatly reducing the total number of students staying for lunch. Schools will communicate specific lunch arrangements.

**23. What will the class sizes be for Grade 10, 11 and 12 in-person learning?**

As graduation program (Grades 10-12) students will be welcomed back half time, class sizes will vary depending on course, but will range from less than 10 to up to 15 students.

**24. Will the cohorts stay the same after each quarter?**

As much as possible, cohorts or learning groups will be maintained at the Grade 8-9 level. In Grades 10-12, cohorts may change each quarter as students take different electives, but class sizes will continue to be reduced.

**25. Has the school district considered having an alternative school day for each student with a full day class schedule?**

The school district has considered a number of scheduling designs including alternating days. One of the important considerations was eliminating the lunch break for grades 10, 11 and 12 in order to limit students gathering outside of class time.

**26. What are the dates for each quarter?**

The final dates have not yet been established however it is anticipated they will be approximately as follows:

- Quarter One: September 14 - November 18
- Quarter Two: November 19 - February 3
- Quarter Three: February 3 - April 23
- Quarter Four: April 26 - June 28

**DISTRIBUTED LEARNING – RICHMOND VIRTUAL SCHOOL (RVS)**

**27. Is full-time RVS the only option for online learning?**

RVS is the District's Distributed Learning (DL) School. There are other DL schools throughout the province.

Given that Grade 8 and 9 students will be attending school full time, and there is no remote learning (hybrid) option available at their neighbourhood schools, those Grade 8 and 9 students who select the RVS DL option must be enrolled in full-time studies with RVS, which is eight courses. Grade 8 and 9 students cannot take a hybrid of neighbourhood and RVS courses in order to create a full-time program.

Grades 10-12 students may choose to take some courses at their neighbourhood school and may also take other courses with RVS. If students choose to enrol in courses at both schools, RVS cannot guarantee that the courses will align with their neighbourhood school class

schedule. As well, students cannot be enrolled in the same course in two schools at the same time.

**28. When will registration open for RVS?**

For Grades 10-12, course registration is currently open. If a course is full, students will be added to a waitlist. RVS will monitor waitlists and will endeavor to create additional course sections based on enrolment numbers.

At the Grade 8 and 9 levels, the District needs to review the return to school survey data in order to plan the next steps. The survey results will determine the number of courses and the level of staffing that will be required. A registration date will be communicated during the week of August 31 to September 4.

**29. Will the list of available courses be published prior to registration?**

Course lists for Grades 10-12 are already on the RVS website (additional Grade 10 courses will be added). The RVS website will be updated with Grade 8 and 9 program information once the return to school survey data has been collated and analyzed.

**30. Are courses available on a first come, first served basis?**

Registration for Grade 10-12 classes started in February 2020 and remains open. As courses fill up, students are placed on a waitlist. RVS will monitor waitlists and will endeavor to create additional course sections based on enrolment numbers in the order in which they have registered. Given the need to collate data from the return to school survey, there will be a shorter timeframe for Grade 8 and 9 students to register for RVS. The District will work to schedule all students who register during this timeframe into program courses.

**31. Is RVS on a semester or linear schedule?**

For the Grade 8 and 9 full-time programs (8 courses), RVS will follow the same quarter schedule as in-school learning (2 courses every 10 weeks). In Grades 10 through 12, RVS typically offers both semester and linear courses and is considering offering some classes on a quarterly schedule to align with neighbourhood schools. The RAIL and SKY Programs follow a linear schedule.

**32. What happens if the courses that my child needs to graduate are full or not available?**

If students require specific courses that are not available through RVS, they would need to either enrol in these courses at their neighbourhood school or enrol in another DL program in British Columbia that offers these courses and has space.

**33. Do RVS courses count towards graduation credit?**

All Grade 10, 11 and 12 courses are full credit and earn 4 credits per course, as they do in a neighbourhood school. As has always been the case, Grade 8 and 9 courses are non-credit, both in neighbourhood schools and at RVS.

**34. RVS doesn't offer many courses, how will my child meet university requirements?**

Student enrolment determines the courses that are offered through RVS. If there are enough students that want a specific course and a teacher is available, the course can run. If RVS does not offer the specific courses a student needs for post-secondary entrance requirements, the

student will need to either enrol in that course in their neighbourhood school or find another DL provider who offers that course.

**35. Do students need to select different electives to meet graduation requirements?**

During their high school education, students must complete 13 required courses (52 credits) plus a minimum of seven elective courses (28 credits). For more information on graduation requirements, please visit this [Ministry of Education website](#).

**36. What if a student requires a specific elective for post-secondary program admission?**

If a student wants a specific elective that is not offered through RVS, the student may take the elective at their neighbourhood school or find an alternate DL provider.

**37. What happens to the electives that students had previously selected for this school year that are not available through RVS?**

If students previously selected an elective that is not available through RVS, they can choose to:

- continue with their previously selected elective courses through in-person instruction in their neighbourhood school.
- enrol in a different elective course offered by RVS.
- find another DL provider that does offer that elective.

**38. Since students need to withdraw from their neighbourhood school before enrolling with RVS, what happens if they cannot register for any courses? Or only some? Will they be able to re-enroll at their neighbourhood school?**

For students in Grades 8 and 9, RVS will offer a preset program. Students will not have choices (or very limited choices) of which electives they want to take. If RVS cannot offer a full-time program for a Grade 8 or 9 student, they will be able to re-enrol at their neighbourhood school.

For students in Grades 10-12 who cannot register for all of the courses that they may want, there are two possibilities:

- If they are already taking courses both at their neighbourhood school and through RVS, then they may connect with their school to find a course that they can take there.
- If they are taking a full course load at RVS, they will have to re-register at their neighbourhood school and then select a course to take there. Their program will then be partial RVS and partial in-school learning.

**39. The RVS site states that there will be still be in-class requirements. Will these classes require masks and physical distancing?**

Like all Richmond School District schools, RVS will ensure that all health and safety guidelines are followed as per the direction of the Provincial Health Officer.

**40. What is the minimal commitment period?**

If a student enrolls full-time with RVS and then decides they want to return to a neighbourhood school, they would need to complete the required district paperwork to re-register. The status of their transfer would depend on whether or not the school has available space and can create

a full program for the student. Students who wish to do so may apply to return to their neighbourhood school at the start of each quarter.

**41. After course completion, do students have the choice to continue with RVS or do they need to go back to in-person learning?**

For students in Grades 10-12, whether they are taking courses in-person or online, students are scheduled in classes for their full year. They will complete the course with the school in which they are enrolled. If their courses are with RVS, they will continue with RVS. If their course is with their neighbourhood school, they will continue with their neighbourhood school.

RVS does not normally offer programming for Grades 8 and 9. This option was made available this year in order to offer more choice to families during COVID-19. RVS Program options for the 2021-2022 school year will be determined in March, 2021.

**42. If a student registers for RVS, will their spot be saved at their neighbourhood school?**

In Grades 10-12, if a student continues to take some in-person classes in their neighbourhood school, they can also enrol in some RVS classes to supplement their program. If a Grade 10-12 student enrolls in full-time classes with RVS, they would need to withdraw from their neighbourhood school and release their spot. Grade 8 and 9 students can only register with RVS as a full-time student and would therefore lose their spot at their neighbourhood school.

**43. If a student registers for RVS, are they still part of the school district?**

Yes, RVS is a Richmond School District school.

**44. If a student is withdrawn from their neighbourhood school, is there a chance that they cannot get back into that school if it is full?**

After a student withdraws from their neighbourhood school, the district cannot guarantee that space will remain available for that student in that same school, although efforts will be made to try and accommodate the request.

**45. If RVS is selected full time for the 2020-21 school year, will a student hold their place at their current school if regular school resumes for the 2021-22 year?**

Once a student has withdrawn entirely from their neighbourhood school (i.e. all classes are being taken through RVS), that student would need to re-register at their neighbourhood school for the 2021-2022 school year and would need to follow the District's registration guidelines and timeframe. Students in Grades 10-12 who are pursuing their studies partially online and partially at their neighbourhood school will still be considered registered at their school for the following school year.

**46. Can a student who does not live in Richmond enrol in RVS courses?**

Students living within the Richmond School District will have priority registration for RVS, but out of district students may register as full-time students with RVS, if space is available.

**47. Is there an option to transition to distributed learning at a later date if it appears that in school is not working well?**

If RVS has space available, and can provide the student with their required courses, it may be possible for a student to transfer to RVS at the start of a new quarter.

**48. Will RVS be offering a Gr. 8-12 French Immersion DL program?**

RVS is not able to offer a French Immersion DL program due to the challenges that all school districts face in finding a sufficient number of qualified French Immersion teachers. We currently do not have sufficient staff to provide FI teachers for both our physical and virtual schools. Therefore, at this time, the district is not planning to provide French Immersion courses through distributed learning.

**49. Will my children be able to return to French Immersion if I opt to enroll them in DL for this school year?**

If you chose to enroll your child in an English DL Program, the student will be withdrawn from their current placement and they will no longer have a guaranteed spot in the French Immersion program. Families are always welcome to re-register with the Richmond School District and apply to re-enter French Immersion, but a return cannot be guaranteed.

**50. Will RVS be able to provide English Language Learning and/or Learning Strategies classes?**

RVS is unable to provide these specialized classes as part of the Grade 8 and 9 core programs. Due to the increased number of courses that will be offered online this year, including the Grade 8 and 9 full-time program, RVS does not have the teaching staff available to provide these specialized classes at other grade levels.

**51. When will RVS classes start?**

Once the data from the return to school survey is received, analyzed and collated, RVS staff will begin to plan course offerings, assign staffing, and prepare for registration. RVS classes will start in late September. Exact dates will be provided in the near future.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

It is highly recommended that parents with health and safety concerns familiarize themselves with the [COVID-19 Public Health Office's Guidance for K-12 School Settings document](#). School districts do not set health and safety requirements and are required to adhere to these guidelines. The Richmond School District is committed to meeting or exceeding all health and safety guidelines as outlined.

**52. Will schools be conducting temperature checks on all staff, students, and visitors entering schools?**

In all matters related to public health, our schools follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer (PHO). At this time, there is no requirement to conduct temperature checks. All parents and employees will be expected to engage in a mandatory health declaration process each day before coming to school. This process will be shared with all parents and reviewed with students. Staff will receive a complete health and safety orientation before students return to school.

**53. Why are masks not mandatory in classrooms?**

The district's health and safety practices are in compliance with the direction from the Provincial Health Officer. The guidelines outline a layered approach including reinforced hygiene practices, physical distancing, learning cohorts, and the use of masks for staff and secondary students in spaces where physical distancing is not possible. At this time, the Provincial Health Officer has

not indicated that masks must be worn in other circumstances. The Richmond School District will continue to comply with the Provincial Health Officer.

All students and staff are welcome to wear a mask while at school. The school district will be providing two re-usable masks to every student and every staff member at the beginning of the school year.

**54. What will the school district do if a teacher is away from work - will substitute teachers be in different classes over the course of a week/month, or will they be considered as part of the cohort?**

As the district is in the process of finalizing enrolment and staffing at our schools, we are also organizing how teachers on-call will be working in our schools. Health and Safety guidelines will be followed for all itinerant staff and teachers on call which means that if they are not within a particular learning cohort, physical distancing will be required at all times.

**55. What will the school district do when someone at a school is diagnosed with COVID-19, whether a staff person or a student? What is the plan for supporting a student's ongoing academic learning if the student is required to self-isolate and is unable to attend school in-person?**

As is always the case, schools will follow the direction and advice of the Provincial Health Officer if a staff person or student has been diagnosed with COVID-19. As per our usual processes, students who are absent from school for longer periods of time due to any type of illness, including COVID-19, will be provided with learning materials to complete while they are away from school.

**56. Will students be expected to self-isolate if the exposure is within their cohort?**

Schools will follow the direction of the local public health authority if there is a direct COVID-19 exposure within their learning cohort.

**57. How will the school district inform parents of possible COVID-19 exposures, so that we can ensure that we take measures to avoid further exposure?**

In the event of a possible COVID-19 exposure, schools will provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill with COVID-19 at home or at school **when directed to do so by public health.** [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID\\_public\\_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf) (p 5). School Districts do not have the authority to act in these circumstances without the direction of public health officials.

**58. Will the district change how it is offering instruction to students if there is an increase in cases in the general population or a certain number of confirmed cases at schools?**

Every school district in B.C. is operating within the 5 Stage [BC K-12 Education Restart Plan](#). Each district's plans for school start-up this September were approved by the Ministry of Education and include how we will to move between the various stages should that be required. Currently, we are planning for and moving into Stage 2, but if directed by the PHO to move or revert to a different stage, we will make changes to how instruction is provided, based on the requirements of that stage.



## **GENERAL**

### **59. Is the survey binding or can I change my mind?**

We know that parents make decisions with their child's best interests in mind and that they may change their minds if they receive new information that causes them to think or feel differently.

The return to school survey is important to the school district as the information gathered informs our planning and therefore, we would like it to be as accurate as possible. However, we also understand that for some parents, choosing an option at this time can be difficult. Our hope is that parents and guardians feel that they can make an informed decision with the additional information provided to you here, and by your school. If parents do choose to adjust their plan, we ask that they contact their school principal.

### **60. Will you be able to register for homeschooling after September 30?**

As is the case in any school year, families can make the decision to withdraw from their current school and register as a homeschool student at any time during the school year. The September 30 deadline is one that is set by the Ministry of Education as per School Act requirements and is intended to ensure that all children are enrolled in an educational program for the coming school year.

### **61. Do doctors' forms need to be provided for immunocompromised students and will immunocompromised students who are not attending school in-person be assigned to their school teacher or a district teacher?**

The majority of students who are considered immunocompromised are already known to their home school. Parents are encouraged to consult with their medical health provider to determine the level of risk regarding their child's return to in-class instruction. Students who are immunocompromised or have underlying health conditions, and have been identified by a medical health care provider as being high risk to attend school, will be provided with an at-home learning plan.

Who is responsible for supervising that at-home learning plan will depend on the individual circumstances at each school, including the number of students requiring this support within a particular classroom, or within the school. Students will continue to be assigned to a specific classroom, and teacher within their home school, but it may be district or school staff other than the classroom teacher who will work with the student. This person will collaborate and connect with the student's school team while home learning support is provided. Regardless of which adult is responsible for supporting the immunocompromised student in his or her learning, the focus will be on maintaining that student's connection to his or her regular school. If you have questions or wish to identify your child as immunocompromised, please connect with your school administrator.

### **62. Will there be covered areas for students to eat outside on rainy days?**

Elementary students will eat in their classroom and be supervised by an adult. Play times will be outside regardless of weather. While some schools may have covered play areas, they may not be large enough to house all students in a physically distanced manner and therefore, students should come to school prepared for all types of weather.



**63. Will parents be allowed to pick up kids for lunch and take them home?**

In the interest of everyone's health and safety, we are minimizing visitors to the school, including parents and guardians. This means that students should come to school with their lunch and snacks and everything that they need for the day.

**64. Will school sports continue this fall?**

Inter-school sports will not be taking place this fall, however, extracurricular activities, which may include some sports, may take place within a single school site. Participants in these activities will need to comply with the health and safety protocols such as maintaining physical distancing.

**65. Will students be participating in gym class?**

Students will continue to participate in Physical and Health Education classes which are a required part of the mandated curriculum. These classes will be conducted according to the health and safety guidelines.