

August 26, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As the start of the new school year is fast approaching, I would like to assure you that the health and safety of our students, families and staff remains our top priority. I would also like to thank you for your patience while we have been working on the district's plan for a safe return to school for students and staff. We can appreciate this has been a stressful time as you await further information.

The purpose of my letter today is to:

1. Provide you with details of our **back to school plan**, which has been approved by the Ministry of Education.
2. Explain the **learning options available** for your child.
3. Provide answers to **frequently asked questions** (FAQs).
4. Highlight **families' responsibilities** for helping to keep our school community safe.
5. Provide you with information on the **first week of school**.

The Ministry's [five-stage framework for K-12 education](#) is designed to maintain high standards of educational instruction while lowering the risk of transmission of COVID-19. All five stages continue to be guided by the principles established at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Ensure a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.
- Provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers.
- Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.
- Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

In September, [school will resume under Stage 2](#) of the five-stage framework. Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to note that we may need to respond quickly to changing circumstances and to intensify health and safety measures, and even adjust instructional delivery schedules, if and when required based on public health guidance.

1. Back to School Plan

Maximizing in-class instruction for all students within current health and safety guidelines is important to minimize learning gaps and to provide the academic, social and emotional supports which are essential for every child. The majority of students learn best in a classroom with direct contact with teachers, other professional staff and their fellow learners. As a result, **Delta students will attend school every day** on their return to school in September.

Our back to school plan aligns with the province's operational guidelines for Stage 2, which delivers full-time instruction for all students for the maximum time possible within cohort/learning group limits and enables self-directed learning that supplements in-class instruction. Density targets are not applicable for Stage 2.

We know you will have many questions about what this will look like so we've created a series of information sheets highlighting the various components of our back to school plan. Please click on the links below for more detailed information:

- [Elementary School Schedule](#)
- [Secondary School Schedule](#)
- [Health and Safety Measures](#)

2. Learning Options Available

For the return to school in September, you have the following options for your child:

- Face to face, in-class instruction at their school.
- Distributed learning – Home Quest (K-9), Delta Access (Grades 10-12).
- Home schooling – Parents assume all responsibility for their child's learning.

Please note: Both Home Quest and homeschooling are full year commitments. If parents choose either of these options, the earliest that students would be able to return to their home school is September 2021.

If a student who is currently attending a Delta school registers for Home Quest or homeschooling for the upcoming school year (2020/21), Delta School District is committed to holding a student's place at their home school for the following school year (2021/22). *Please note: If a student who is currently attending a Delta school registers for a distributed learning option outside of the Delta School District, students will need to re-register in our normal spring process in late January/early February.*

[Click here for an information sheet](#) containing more details on each option.

In order for us to create our learning groups, we will need you to let us know which option you choose for your child's learning at some point in the week beginning August 31. However, we understand that you will need some time to review the information we are sharing with you today. Please look out for an email next week.

We understand some parents may not be ready to send their children back right away and so we will work with them to help their children transition back to full-time schooling.

3. Delta DPAC Survey Responses and Frequently Asked Questions

To gather families' questions and concerns, the Delta District Parent Advisory Council (DPAC) recently carried out a survey. We encourage you to review the summarized parental responses by [clicking here](#) if you haven't done so already.

To help answer these concerns, and to address the various questions asked by parents who have contacted the school district directly, please read our [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#). If you have additional questions after reading the FAQs, please contact your principal or email them to info@deltasd.bc.ca.

4. Other Responsibilities of Families

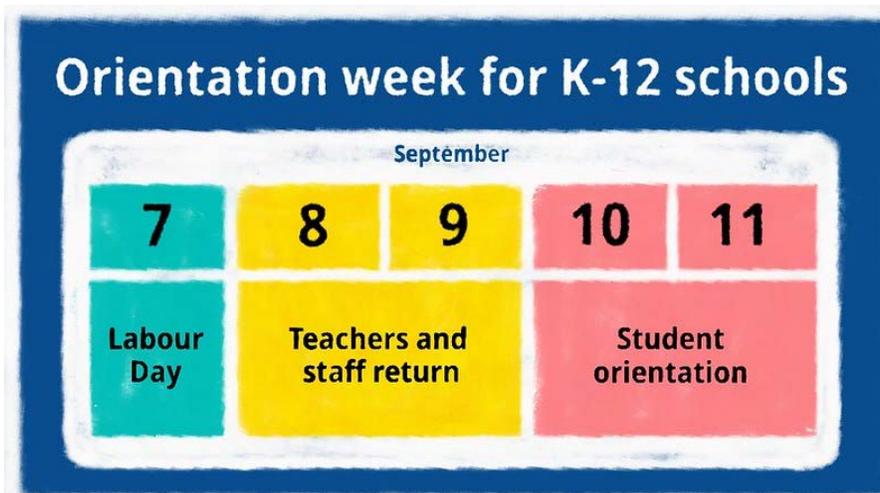
The Delta School District will be doing everything within its power to protect the safety of students and staff in school. Clearly, families also have a role to play in keeping our school communities safe.

We kindly ask for your support in the following ways:

- Please do not send your child to school if they are ill. Complete the [health check](#) daily before your child comes to school.
- Talk to your children about the importance of maintaining physical distance from others whenever possible, and of wearing a mask in situations when it isn't possible.
- Reinforce good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette with them.
- Try to maintain physical distance with those outside of your bubble. To quote Dr. Bonnie Henry: "Fewer faces and bigger spaces!"

First week of school

As announced by the Ministry of Education on August 12, to ensure schools are ready to welcome students into the classroom, there will be a gradual restart to allow extra time to orient students and staff on the new health and safety measures in place.



Starting September 8, all staff will meet with their school's joint health and safety committee to receive instructions about how the updated guidelines, co-developed with the BC Centre for Disease Control and Provincial Health Officer, will work in their school. This will also allow time for educators and staff to adapt the plan to their school's needs, adjust to new routines, finalize plans for learning groups and confirm lesson plans.

Students will be welcomed back to class for orientation starting September 10. During this time, they will be assigned to their class, find out who is in their learning group, practise their new routines, and familiarize themselves with how to safely move from the class to outdoor and common areas of the school.

Meeting the needs of school communities

While the main elements of our plan will be rolled out across the district, some schools may use slightly different ways to accommodate the unique needs of their communities.

As a result, timetables, learning environments and related services may look different from regular operations, and may vary from school to school. You will receive more information from your school administrators shortly. Regardless of any slight differences in delivery, please know that all schools in the district are committed to:

- upholding the health and safety standards and guidelines for K-12 and maintaining the high educational standards set out by the Ministry of Education;
- ensuring teacher and support staff workloads regarding in-class instruction and remote instruction (where applicable) are balanced and manageable; and
- including as many elements as possible that can be maintained if and when there is a transition from one stage to another.

I recognize that this letter provides a great deal of information for families to work through. I encourage you to contact your school Principal if you have further questions or concerns that you would like to discuss in more detail.

We look forward to welcoming your child back to school in September and continuing to deliver our vision of helping all learners to succeed and contribute their full potential to the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D Sheppard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

Doug Sheppard
Superintendent of Schools