

January 2, 2021

Dear Families,

As we begin the new year, we wanted to express our thanks for your ongoing support through an extremely challenging and stressful 2020. We know there has been significant anxiety in our school community, particularly in recent weeks with the significant number of positive cases of COVID-19 in the Lower Mainland.

We have been impressed with how well students have adjusted to the many health and safety protocols in place at our schools. However, we know that COVID-fatigue is becoming a reality for many and we ask for your assistance in ensuring that your children continue to help bend the curve and reduce COVID transmission in 2021 by:

- Staying home when not feeling well. *(Please complete the daily health check every day before sending your child to school - <https://www.deltasd.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/09/BCCDC-Daily-Health-Check-Sept-11-2020.pdf>).*
- Seeking a COVID test as soon as possible after mild symptoms occur. This will significantly help to speed up the contact tracing process if the test result is positive.
- Maintaining at least two metres physical distance from others when outside of your cohort.
- Washing/sanitizing hands frequently.
- Wearing masks in high traffic areas and when physical distancing is not possible.
- Avoiding gathering with anyone outside of their household out of school hours, including directly before and after school.
- Answering their phone even if it is an unknown number. This will help the contact tracing process in case Fraser Health is trying to get in touch.

We strongly encourage students to follow the provincial health and safety guidelines not just at school, but when they are out and about in the community. This shows great leadership in modelling the right behaviours and demonstrates respect for others.

These are small and simple measures, but they make a huge difference in preventing the spread of COVID-19. As Dr. Bonnie Henry has said "We have the knowledge and we have the tools that we can all use to be safe, no matter where we may be. Let's use our layers of protection and make them a part of our daily routines each and every day."

Safety in Schools

At the end of November, the Board of Trustees had the opportunity to hear from Dr. Réka Gustafson, BC's Deputy Provincial Health Officer.

We feel it would be helpful to share her update on the province's COVID-19 response in schools:

- The pattern of transmission of COVID-19 is now well understood.
- Public health knows what safety measures work (*those outlined above*) and we need to focus on keeping those safety measures in place.
- How individuals interact at school and who interacts at school are very different than in other settings. As a result, the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools is substantially lower than in other settings.
- Health and safety measures in public settings differ from those in schools because the controls used in schools are not possible in public settings.
- Additional safety measures in schools are not needed at this time.
- Opening schools has had no significant effect on COVID-19 transmission in the community.
- Data indicates children are safest at school.
- Schools also offer additional social, emotional and mental health benefits for children.

Given the low transmission rate in schools, it appears that the health and safety measures we have in place currently are working. We will continue to take our lead from the Provincial Health Officer, and will implement any new protocols that are introduced.

Helpful resources

We encourage you to visit the Delta School District website regularly for updates. It contains our COVID-19 safety plan, along with many other helpful resources:

<https://www.deltasd.bc.ca/news-events/news/information-for-parents-guardians-novel-coronavirus/>

We also encourage you to review the school-related resources for parents and teachers on the Fraser Health website, in particular the Q&As which are available in video and text format: <https://www.fraserhealth.ca/health-topics-a-to-z/coronavirus/back-to-school-resources-for-parents-and-teachers#.X8GBX6pKg60>

We are all in this together, and by working together and following health and safety protocols and the [provincial health orders](#), we will help keep ourselves, our loved ones and our community healthy and safe.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to your school principal.

Thank you,

Val Windsor,
Chair, Delta Board of Education