

October 1, 2021

Dear Families,

Earlier today, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry and Minister of Education Jennifer Whiteside [announced updates to the K-12 health and safety guidelines](#). The existing **mask mandate is being expanded to include Kindergarten to Grade 3 students** in response to the evolving situation with the Delta variant and increasing levels of concern among some parents, students, teachers and boards of education.

Beginning Monday, October 4, 2021, all students and staff will be required to wear a mask when inside a school building, including while at their desks and on buses. This builds on the existing guidelines that apply to students in grades 4 to 12. Staff will continue to work with students and families in a positive and supportive way regarding mask wearing.

Exceptions to the mask policy remain the same:

- A person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons
- A person unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person
- If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it
- If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask. For example:
 - Playing a wind instrument
 - Engaging in high-intensity physical activity
- If a person is eating or drinking
- If a person is behind a barrier
- While providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (for example, a hearing impairment), where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important

This mandate, which extends until the winter break (and will be reviewed at that time), is intended to provide an additional layer of protection against COVID-19. Please ensure your child(ren) has at least one spare mask with them when they arrive at school. This could be a backup in their jacket, backpack or locker. We will continue to supply masks for students who forget their mask or who have a mask that breaks during the day. Students and staff may wear a face shield in addition, but must wear a mask under the face shield.

Health and Safety Measures

The most important step we can take to keep COVID-19 out of our schools is to stay home when sick. Please complete a [daily health check](#) for your child(ren) before bringing them to school. **If they have any symptoms, please keep them home from school and take them to be tested.**

Students who become symptomatic during the school day will be separated from their classmates and cared for until picked up by their families. They will also be given a take-home COVID-19 Mouth Rinse/Gargle Sample Collection kit to help speed up the testing process.

The expanded mask mandate announced today builds on the existing K-12 health and safety guidelines in our schools which include frequent hand washing, maximizing the physical space between people, practising good respiratory etiquette, regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, and good ventilation. We will continue to partner with Fraser Health to ensure that health and safety measures in Delta schools are based on the latest public health guidance.

Get Vaccinated

Most COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths are now among unvaccinated adults, so it is extremely important for all eligible people over the age of 12 to get vaccinated. Here in Delta, we continue to have the highest COVID-19 vaccination rate in the Fraser Health region, with 93% of people aged 12 and over having received one dose and 87% being fully vaccinated. This is impressive and we would like to express our thanks to the community for rolling up their sleeves to help stop the spread of COVID-19. If you or your child(ren) are eligible but haven't yet received your vaccine, we encourage you to get fully vaccinated to further lower the risk in our community. You can find information on where to get vaccinated [here](#).

Exposure notifications

As a reminder, if your child is identified as a close contact of a person with COVID-19, Fraser Health will contact you directly and provide further instruction (e.g. self-monitor, self-isolate). Information on school exposures is available on the [Fraser Health website](#). You can also find the link to this site on the [COVID-19 page of the district's website](#).

Thank you again for your ongoing support in keeping our school communities safe and healthy.



Doug Sheppard
Superintendent of Schools