

此信的中文译文将于明天提供

A Chinese version of this letter will be provided tomorrow.

March 30, 2021

Dear Richmond Families,

As we welcome our students and staff back from spring break, we would like to take the opportunity to share some information with you about a new public health protocol regarding the use of masks in elementary schools. We would also like to remind everyone about the existing health and safety measures we all need to continue to follow in order to keep our schools safe. All these measures are important as our province experiences an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases and increased spread of variants.

A revised mask protocol has been put in place for all school districts across the province. School districts have been waiting for specific direction from the Ministry of Education, which we received this evening. Moving forward, districts will implement the following [BCCDC Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) which will be in place until they are re-evaluated on April 19th:

Students in grades 4-12:

- All staff, adult volunteers and visitors, and **all Grade 4 to 12 students should wear a non-medical mask or face covering (a “mask”)** at all times while indoors at school, subject to the exceptions noted below:
 - A person who is unable to wear a mask because they do not tolerate it (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 (e.g. actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity, etc.);
 - If a person is eating or drinking;
 - A person who is behind a barrier;
 - While providing a service to person with a disability or diverse ability where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important.

Students in Kindergarten-grade 3:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3 students are **encouraged** to wear a mask at school and on buses, but should not be required to do so.

Over 80% of students in Richmond elementary schools have already been wearing masks daily so this new protocol will simply add to what has been happening in many cases. Where students are not used to wearing masks indoors, teachers will spend the next few days helping their students adjust to this change. We recognize that for a small number of families, this will be a new routine, and teachers and

school administrators will be encouraged to support student mask use through positive and inclusive approaches.

This new protocol will offer an additional layer of protection for our staff and students, however it does not replace any of the existing health and safety protocols currently in place. With the recent increase in COVID-19 cases in British Columbia, we continue to ask everyone to:

- Use the daily health check before arriving at school
- Stay home when feeling ill
- Practice diligent and frequent handwashing
- Practice physical distancing
- Spend time close to home with members of our own household
- Adhere to province-wide restrictions

We are pleased to welcome you back to school, and we are excited about the final term ahead. There is light at the end of the tunnel and I am confident that we will get through the remainder of the school year by continuing to work alongside each other to provide a safe environment for all members of our school community. If you have any questions about anything in this letter, please feel free to reach out to your child's principal.

Sincerely,



Scott Robinson
Superintendent of Schools