



SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 64 (GULF ISLANDS)

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March 31, 2021

Dear Students, Families and Staff,

On March 29, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer announced a three-week circuit breaker to bend the curve and to stop the rising transmission of the COVID-19 virus. With the increasing trend in community incidence of COVID-19, the Provincial Health Officer has ordered stronger province-wide restrictions.

To reduce the risk of mirroring this trend in schools, Public Health and the Ministry of Education have mandated additional safety measures. For at least the next three weeks, all schools in BC will be implementing the enhanced non-medical mask wearing order.

Enhanced Mask Wearing Order:

All K-12 staff and all students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear non-medical masks at all times while in schools and on school buses – both within and outside their learning groups. Exceptions to the non-medical mask requirements are as follows:

- While eating or drinking
- When behind a barrier
- When wearing a mask cannot be tolerated for health or behavioural reasons
- Temporary removal of mask for the purpose of identifying the person wearing it
- Temporary removal of mask to engage in educational activities that are not possible with masks (eg. playing an instrument, hi-intensity physical activities, etc.)
- When unable to put on or remove a mask without assistance of another person
- When providing service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (hearing impairments visual cues, facial expressions, etc. are important)

For students in Grades K-3, the Provincial Health Officer encourages, but does not require, the wearing of non-medical masks consistent with the above exceptions, as mask wearing remains a personal or family choice for these students.

The enhanced mask order is an additional layer of protection to the current health and safety protocols at each school to protect students and staff. We continue to practice the following preventative measures to keep schools safe for all students and staff:

- Daily health checks to monitor for key symptoms of illness prior to coming to school
- Maintaining physical distancing of 2 metres
- Following hand washing/hand sanitizing protocols
- Practicing respiratory etiquette
- Adhering to protocols of wearing masks when indoors for staff and students

We will continue to monitor, update, and communicate safety plans to ensure that students and staff are safe and in school for the remainder of the school year. If you have any questions, please contact your school.

Respectfully,

Boe Beardsmore
Director of Instruction, Student Services