



**DEER
LAKE
SCHOOL**

Safe September Start Plan

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INTRODUCTION

Deer Lake School developed our plans in concert with the Office of Education, BC Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and Federation of Independent School Association (FISA) through the BC Associate Member Society (AMS). DLS submitted our *Independent Schools ReStart Plan* on August 20, 2020 to our BC Conference Office of Education for approval. It was then submitted to the AMS and the Ministry of Education.

This plan outlines the protocols and practices Deer Lake School will follow during Stage 2 of the BC Ministry of Education's K-12 Restart plan. Our procedures are aligned with the requirements and recommendations authorised by the federal and provincial governments, the Ministry of Education, the Fraser Health Authority and the BC SDA Conference Office of Education.

Deer Lake School is adopting best practices as outlined in:

- [COVID-19 Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities](#)
- [Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)
- [WorkSafe BC Guidelines Education \(K-12\) Protocols for returning to operation](#)
- [Provincial K-12 Health and Safety Guidelines](#)

COVID-19 and Children

- The BC Center for Disease Control and Ministry of Health published the following key information in their July 29, 2020 COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings:
 - In BC, less than 1% of children have been COVID-19 positive, and even fewer are suspected to have been infected based on serological testing. Most children are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection. Children under 10 comprise a smaller proportion of the total confirmed child cases compared to children between the ages of 10 and 19.
 - Based on published literature to date, the majority of cases in children are the result of household transmission by droplet spread from a symptomatic adult family member with COVID-19. Even in family clusters, adults appear to be the primary drivers of transmission.
 - Children typically have much milder symptoms of COVID-19, if any. They often present with low-grade fever and a dry cough. Gastrointestinal symptoms are more common than in adults over the course of disease, while skin changes and lesions are less common.
 - Children who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 can still receive in person instruction. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to consult with their healthcare provider to determine their child's level of risk. Deer Lake School is prepared to support those students whose healthcare provider determines they should remain at home.

STAGE 2 OPERATIONS

Communication Plan

Communications regarding our restart plans, changes to protocol, or a shift in learning delivery are delivered via email and posted on our [school website](#). In instances where information is time-sensitive (unexpected school closing, etc.), the school does have a calling system in place for phone calls and voicemails.

We recognize that parents will have many questions about the delivery of education in the midst of a pandemic. Information beyond that which pertains to an individual student or class learning should be directed to the principal or director of operations.

If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, public health officials will conduct an investigation to confirm if any staff or students have been in close contact with that person and need to self-isolate. The Public Health Authority will inform the school and principal if there are close contacts of a confirmed case within a learning group or school, and if other staff and students' families should be notified and required to self-isolate.

Learning Groups, Physical Distancing and Movement Within the School

A learning group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term (e.g. a school quarter, semester or year) and who primarily interact with each other. A learning group could be made up of a single class of students with their teacher, multiple classes that sometimes join for additional learning activities, or a group of secondary school students with the same courses. As a best practice, within each learning group, minimizing *physical contact* is the rule.

The formation of learning groups permits the maximization of in class instruction for students while maintaining the requisite public health safeguards, as stipulated by the Provincial Health Office, (PHO) Fraser Health and the Ministries of Health and Education. The benefits include:

- Learning – Permits full-time attendance
- Social – Increases peer interaction and avoids isolation
- Emotional – Increases peer support and connection
- Psychological – Decreases negative mental health impact on students

The PHO order on mass gatherings does not apply to schools, as events are defined in the order as an irregular gathering, like a party or celebration. Assemblies, however, are not permitted.

Those outside of a learning group must practice physical distancing when interacting with the learning group. For example, an itinerant educator (e.g. a “specials” teacher teaching subjects like Music or PE, a substitute teacher, or a contracted specialist) can teach/support multiple learning groups but should maintain physical distance from students and other staff as much as possible. Two classes from different learning groups can be in the same learning space at the same time if a two-metre distance can be maintained between people from different learning groups, however, we have done our best to set up our schedule in a way that keeps learning groups from mixing.

All DLS learning groups are smaller in size than the recommended maximums (60 for elementary, 120 for secondary). Except for our senior high students (Grades 10-12), our students will be grouped in learning cohorts of 40-50, and will spend the majority of their day with just their grade-level peers (18-25 students).

Staff outside of a learning group must practice physical distancing when interacting with the learning group. For example, an education assistant, administrator, or chaplain can work with students from multiple learning groups, but they should maintain physical distance from students and other staff as much as possible.

In situations where staff outside a learning group cannot practice physical distancing, other measures must be explored, such as reconfiguring rooms, securing an alternate space to allow for physical distancing, installing a physical barrier made of transparent materials, or providing virtual services where possible.

When staff are interacting with people outside of their learning group, physical distance cannot be consistently maintained, and none of the strategies outlined above are viable options, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield).

Source: [Provincial Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)

Our general practices at DLS will be:

- Students will be reminded to maintain distance between themselves and other people (all hugs, handshakes and physical touch need to be avoided)
- Students will be organized into smaller learning groups, often far less than 60, so that they stay together throughout the day in order to minimize the number of contacts with others
- Desks and tables have been rearranged to allow for distancing whenever possible.
- A minimum number of staff will have contact with the teachers and support staff that interact with groups of students throughout the day
- Students will be assigned specific doors to enter each morning, and where they should dismiss from at the end of each day

- Recess, lunch and class changes will be staggered to provide more space for all students and staff
- Students will have individual supplies that are not shared with other students, and their own storage mechanisms to limit trips to lockers (ie. chair pockets, in-class cubbies)
- Group activities will be adapted to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items
- Students will be working and playing outside as much as possible each day, weather permitting
- Traffic flow will be managed with arrows and signage in hallways to limit the number of students and staff in common areas and hallways.
- Parents and guardians will not be allowed to enter the school unless they have a pre-arranged appointment or are supporting the learning or well-being of students.
- All visitors entering the building will be required to conduct a health check before entering, as well as provide their contact information. They must remain physically distanced from students and staff, as they do not belong to a learning group.
- Signage about physical distancing will be posted throughout the school and all floors and possible wait areas will be marked with social distancing decals. A dividing line will run through the centre of all hallways and common spaces, and students and staff will be told to keep to the right, as they move down hallways and common areas

Health & Safety Measures

Mandatory Health Declaration and Daily Health Checks

- All students returning to the building will be required to have a parent sign the *Deer Lake School Safe Return Commitment Form*, which includes a commitment to daily health checks required by the Ministry of Health. This form will indicate they are responsible for their child's health and acknowledging that they will not send their child to school if they have any of the following symptoms:
 - common cold
 - influenza
 - COVID-19
 - any other infectious respiratory diseases
- Parents and guardians must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory diseases before sending them to school each day
- Students will be asked by a teacher or staff member at their classroom door when they arrive whether they are feeling well. If a student indicates they are not feeling well, they will be taken immediately to the Isolation Room and parents will be contacted immediately to take their child back home with them, to ensure the health and safety of the student and the school community.
- Parents must be prepared to arrange for an individual on the approved pick up list to arrive at the school within 60 minutes of being called if their student is displaying symptoms of illness.

Temperature Checks

As a school, we will not be conducting temperature checks at the door. **Each family will be required to sign a Safe Return commitment indicating that they will be responsible to conduct a health check with their child(ren) each day.**

Our practices are informed by Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry, as well as the guidance of the Ministry of Education/FISA and the BCCDC's guidance for K-12 schools ([see page 18](#)). Temperature checks give a false sense of reassurance because they could miss students and staff who have COVID-19 but are asymptomatic or presymptomatic. Because they've been checked (which may or may not be accurate), staff/students may be less diligent with health and safety once they enter the building.

If a child starts showing symptoms later in the day, somehow bypassing the health check of both their parents and the teacher, we may use a temperature check as part of the data we share with parents when we call home for them to pick their child up.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Masks will be required for all staff, middle and secondary students (Grades 8-12) in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- Exceptions will be made for those who cannot wear masks for medical reasons.
 - In order to acquire an exemption, a student or staff member must provide a medical note that:
 - has been issued by a medical professional
 - is on official letterhead
 - is dated
 - clearly states the student or staff member's name and that they have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask
 - Please send a mask exemption request with attached medical note to admin@deerlakeschool.ca.
- Students and staff are welcome to wear masks even while in their learning groups if they choose.
- Students should choose masks that are in-line with our dress code philosophy; at DLS we “keep first things first”, which means learning is our priority. Masks should not be distracting to others, and graphic designs should be in keeping with core Deer Lake School values. If a mask with an inappropriate insignia or message is worn, the student will be given a disposable mask to replace their own, and will be asked to not wear that mask while at school in the future.
- Face shields will be made available to those staff members who wish to use them in concert with a non-medical mask.

Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette

- Students and staff will be instructed to wash their hands with soap and water (preferred method recommended by the BCCDC) as soon as they enter the building, and throughout the day
- The use of sanitizer will be an alternative when needed.
- Classrooms and washroom sinks will be well-stocked with soap and paper towels each day
- Classrooms without sinks will have hand sanitizer available, and hand sanitizer stations are present around the school hallways
- Opportunities for frequent hand washing throughout the day will be provided
- Students will be instructed to follow respiratory etiquette which means
 - coughing or sneezing into their elbow sleeve or a tissue
 - refraining from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
 - refraining from sharing any food, drinks, or utensils

Handwashing or sanitizing is required for students:

- Before leaving home, on arrival at school and before leaving school
- After using the toilet
- Before and after any transitions within the school setting (e.g. to another classroom, indoor-outdoor transitions, moving to on-site childcare, etc.)
- After sneezing or coughing
- After breaks and sporting activities
- Before eating any food, including snacks
- Before touching face (nose, eyes or mouth)
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Cleaning & Disinfecting Practices

- Based on the requirements of the Public Health Officer and WorkSafeBC, the school will undergo a full deep clean and disinfecting by janitors each evening, using commercial cleaning products listed on the *BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings* webpage.
- Evening cleaning will include cleaning and disinfecting all hallway and classroom floors, tables, chairs, desks, counters, washrooms and offices with special attention to high touch areas such as doorknobs, light switches, keyboards, toilet handles and sink taps.
- An additional level of disinfecting will be utilized each evening with the use of a electrostatic sprayer dispensing a disinfecting mist listed on the *BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings* webpage. (The electrostatic spray disinfection systems turns disinfectant liquid into tiny particles and then applies a charge to each droplet so that they are attracted to and adhere to surfaces. This electrostatic method is presently being used by healthcare, nursing homes, schools and public transit in COVID-19 disinfection.)

- At approximately noon each school day a school staff will disinfect all high touch areas such as desk and table tops, doorknobs, light switches, keyboards, toilet handles and sink taps with a small portable electrostatic sprayer dispensing a disinfecting mist with 60 second bacteria kill rate listed on the *BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings* webpage. The product DIN (Drug Identity Number) allows for safe re-occupancy immediately after application as air concentrations are well below standard acceptable levels.
- The times of the mid-day cleaning schedule as well as the evening schedule will be logged daily in each classroom for regular inspection and quality assurance by school operations staff
- A bio-waste container will be available on site for blood hazard items as well as a larger bio-waste container for masks by mid September.

According to the BCCDC there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or paper-based products. As such, we will not limit the distribution or sharing of books or printed resources for students at school.

Washroom Usage

- All washroom use will be restricted to two individuals at a time when being used by students outside of their learning cohort
- Signage will be posted at the entrance of required washrooms to limit the number of occupants based on size and the ability to be physically distant.
- Washroom usage will be assigned as follows:
 - K-3 students elementary washrooms
 - Grades 4-7 will use the lobby washrooms
 - Grade 8-12 will use the high school washrooms.

Visitor Access

- Visitors, including parents and guardians, will not be allowed to enter the school unless they have a pre-arranged appointment or are supporting the learning or well-being of students.
- Communication should occur via the phone, virtual meeting or email. If access is required, it must be by pre-approval from administration or director of operations and by appointment only unless drop-in access has been communicated ahead of time.
- Alternative methods for completing forms and submitting payments for incidentals will be offered to parents so they do not have to enter the building
- All visitors entering the building will be required to conduct a health check before entering, as well as provide their contact information on a form. They must remain physically distanced from students and staff, as they do not belong to a learning group.

Illness Policy

If ill with any common cold, influenza or COVID-19 like symptoms students or staff must stay home and isolate following the onset of symptoms **until COVID-19 has been excluded via assessment by a health-care provider (family physician, nurse practitioner, telehealthcare provider) and symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours.** Anyone who is unsure of whether they should self-isolate or be tested for COVID-19 should be directed to:

- Use the [BC COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool](#)
- Contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further input; or
- Contact a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.

Students should not return to school until their parent has confirmed a healthcare assessment with the school, indicating the date, name of provider, and nature of the guidance provided (ex. “September 8, 2020; Nurse Sharon W. via 8-1-1; approved a return to the building on September 9”). A note directly from a doctor or nurse practitioner is preferred. After an illness, and before returning to school, please contact the Deer Lake School office to alert the school of a student’s planned return.

If a staff member is uncertain if they or a student should self-isolate or be tested for COVID-19, they should be directed to use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool. If concerned, contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further input. Staff must notify their administrator if they are unable to attend work due to illness.

If staff or students become ill while on site:

- Staff must notify the principal and go home.
- Any child exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms must move to the isolation room.
- Parents/caregivers must be notified and advised to pick-up the child immediately.

Isolation Room

If a student should feel ill during the day, or a teacher believes the student is experiencing symptoms of illness, the student will be directed to the Isolation Room. This room is equipped with chairs and a bench for laying down, a hand sanitizer dispenser, and a waste receptacle. Parents or the designated adult indicated on their form will be called immediately to pick up their child.

Water and Hydration

- While the *Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings* has indicated that water fountains can now be operational, we will attempt to minimize risk and our school water fountains will be closed during the duration of Stage 2. Bottle fillers will continue to be used, as access to water should not be restricted. If using water bottle filling stations, students and staff should practise hand hygiene before and after use, and should not touch or place their mouth on the fountain. Water fountains/fillers will be cleaned as a frequently touched item.
- It is important to stay hydrated. Students and staff should be encouraged to use personal water bottles. Students should bring their own personal water bottles with them each day, to be filled in classroom sinks or the lobby bottle filler (when they receive permission from their teacher).

Classroom Ventilation

- There is no need for enhanced ventilation in public buildings to prevent the spread of COVID-19, according to the BCCDC.
- There is no concern around the use of air conditioning and fans.
- Opening windows for fresh air is encouraged.
- We will operate air conditioning systems throughout the day and night to keep the air moving as weather temperatures permit. In winter all classrooms will maintain regular heating and open one or more windows as appropriate to keep the air circulating
- We will ensure the heating and cooling systems are maintained for optimal normal function.

Outdoor Learning

Teachers will utilize the outdoors as much as possible when weather permits. Parents should make sure all students have protective coverage if they have concerns about sun exposure (ie. sunscreen, hat, or outerwear clothing), and are well equipped for all weather conditions.

Playground and Gym Equipment

The Public Health Officer has indicated that playground equipment is considered safe and can be available for students to use daily.

- There will be a limited number of students from learning groups on the various sections of the playground at any time and equipment will be sanitized regularly.
- Children must wash their hands immediately after returning from the playground.
- When students play indoors in the school gym, the equipment used will be limited to items that the staff select and these restricted items will be disinfected daily.
- Playground equipment will be wiped down with disinfectant periodically
- Our playground will be closed to the general student body after 3:30 PM Monday through Thursday (2:30 on Fridays) to accommodate our licensed after school care program.

Toys and Sports Equipment

- School staff will select the minimum number of toys and sports-related equipment required. Selected items must be easily cleaned. No stuffed toys or porous items should be displayed or used in the classroom
- Parents/guardians must not permit students to bring toys or sports equipment from home, unless approved by administration.

Keyboards and Electronic Devices

Frequently-touched electronics like remotes, keyboards, and mice should be cleaned and disinfected daily. This will be done by evening cleaners with an electrostatic disinfection device for all items other than Chromebooks in carts.

- All Chromebooks are numbered. Students will be assigned the same Chromebook by number each time they are used, and that student should be responsible for lifting it out of the tech cart or shelf and putting it back. (Kindergarten and/or Gr. 1 students may need assistance from their teacher or classroom EA)
- Chromebooks and electronic devices need to be disinfected during the school day only when being moved to another classroom in their learning group or at the end of the day. (DLS will have enough Chromebooks to be able to share them within their learning group only).
- Disinfecting of Chromebooks will be done by students under the close supervision of a staff member with a hydrogen chloride-based disinfectant wipe being run lightly over the keyboard, screen, top and underside of the exterior. All Chromebooks will be disinfected periodically with the electrostatic sprayer

Office Access

Access to the school office will be limited. Students wanting to use the telephone to call a parent will be allowed to do so in their classroom; calling from the office should be limited to emergencies

Student Lunches

- Our hot lunch program will resume on September 21. Ensuring strict health and safety protocols and the wellbeing of our students and staff is our top priority and we have implemented the following protocols:
 - Screening every staff member and volunteer for COVID-19 symptoms before they start their shift through the use of a health check questionnaire
 - Volunteers will be refused entry if they are displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Collecting contact tracing log information from all volunteers.
 - Orientation held daily for new volunteers

- Enhanced sanitizing and disinfecting routines throughout our kitchen space, supported by checklists and logs.
 - Using only trusted suppliers who display their own enhanced safety protocols, both at their facilities and with their delivery personnel.
 - Reorganized spaces to eliminate line-ups or congestion
 - Pre-rolled cutlery and disposable containers will be used.
 - Additional hand sanitizing stations for students
 - Single-use condiments
 - Access to food service preparation area restricted to food service staff and volunteers only
 - Food services staff and volunteers will not share tools such as knives, cutting boards, can openers etc. Any shared equipment such as small appliances, mixers, blenders, etc. will be cleaned between use and workers will wash their hands regularly
 - Delivery of hot lunches to the classroom for K-3 by staff or volunteers with Grade 4-12 picking up at scheduled times by learning cohorts outside of kitchen
- Please see the Food Service Program Health & Safety Plan located on our website for an in-depth review of our health and safety practices concerning lunch.
 - All snacks and lunches will be eaten in designated areas (ie. classroom, outdoor location of the supervisor's choosing) under staff supervision.
 - Students will not have access to microwaves so please prepare lunches that are easily consumed without warming.
 - Students are asked to pack up all their lunch garbage to throw away in one trip when others are not around the trash can to minimize movement around the eating space.
 - There can be no food sharing between students or between staff and no food items/treats should be brought into the classroom by parents. Teachers will work with parents to offer alternative birthday celebration options that don't include food.
 - Students should bring parent/guardian-provided food lunch items only.

Before and After School Care Program

- We are pleased to continue to offer our licensed Before and After School program with both part-time and full-week packages to meet the needs of families.
- Before School programming will run from 7:00-8:30 am and After School Care will run from 3:00-6:00 pm.
- Our licensed care program follows the health and safety guidelines of Fraser Health authority, and as such, has some different practices than the directives of the Ministry of Education and the Public Health Officer's guidance for K-12 schools.
- Students from different learning groups may be required to be together to receive beneficial programs or services, like before and after school care. Our before and after school care team will be implementing other measures that provide layers of protection from COVID-19 transmission, including adapting the space to reduce physical contact, requiring regular hand hygiene and taking students outside more often.

- Although we will try our very best to keep them in their learning cohorts whenever possible, we cannot guarantee that those students coming to childcare may necessarily be in their learning cohorts. This will depend on how many sign up for childcare per grade level. Students will stay in small groups and spend plenty of time outside.
- This program will remain in the assembly and humanities rooms.

Field Trips

While field trips may certainly still be conducted when they can be done safely, field trip preparation will include additional risk assessment and planning, as well as alternate options for families who prefer their student to remain on campus. Transportation cannot include volunteers driving personal vehicles, and any bus transportation must be limited to a single class or learning cohort. There are also no overnight field trips during Stage 2.

Arrival & Dismissal

In order to minimize interactions between learning cohorts, we will stagger our arrival and dismissal times. Please note that these practices may have to be adjusted should we find there are better solutions for meeting the needs of families while prioritizing everyone's health and safety.

It is imperative that parents and teachers work together to honour the scheduling put in place to support health and safety measures. Planning for a generous margin of time will help ensure that parents arrive to pick up their children on time and students are dismissed in a timely manner.

Arrival Procedures

While dropping their child(ren) off, we ask all parents to stay in their vehicle.

Kindergarten and Grade 1

- Arrive between 8:35-8:45 AM
- Students will meet their teachers outside under a designated canopy and then move as a group into the school building
- Kindergarten will enter through the garden entrance
- Grade 1 will enter through the library doors
- Those who arrive after 8:45, need to enter via the front lobby door

Grades 2-12

- Arrive between 8:20-8:30

- Any student who arrives after 8:45 will find the entrances closed and must enter via the Main lobby entrance
- Students will enter the building within their learning cohort:
 - Grades 2-3: Playground entrance
 - Grades 4-5: Library entrance
 - Grades 6-7: Second floor fire exit (follow building pathway through garden to stairs)
 - Grades 8-9: Assembly room entrance
 - Grades 10-12: Main lobby entrance

Dismissal Procedures

During dismissal we ask all parents to stay in their vehicle, and wait for their child to be escorted to the vehicle.

Grades K/1

- Dismiss at 2:50
 - At 2:45, teachers will walk their students out to the covered area by the gate
 - Kindergarten will exit through the garden exit
 - Grade 1 will exit through the library doors
- Afterschool Care staff will meet program students at the gate and then escort them to the Assembly Room
- Staff will escort children from the canopy area to the pick up lane
- Teachers will remain with their students until all have been picked up; siblings of older students who have later dismissal will stay with their teachers until families leave together

Grades 2-5

- Dismiss at 3:00 from the classroom
- Students in After School Care will be dismissed to the Assembly Room
- Students will exit the building when their ride has arrived via staggered exits:
 - Grades 2-3: Playground entrance
 - Grades 4-5: Library entrance
- Classroom teachers will remain in the classroom to supervise younger siblings of older students with later dismissals

Grades 6-9

- At 2:25 Grade 6 and 9 will collect all their items out of their lockers and place them in their last period classroom; they will be dismissed directly from their classrooms and not return to their lockers again
- At 3:05, Grades 7 and 8 will collect all their items out of their lockers and return to their rooms to await dismissal

- Dismiss grades 6-9 at 3:10
 - Students involved in extracurricular activities are held in the room and dismissed at 3:25

Grades 10-12

- Dismiss at 3:20
 - Students will remain in the classroom until 3:20 and then dismiss to lockers
 - They will exit via the main lobby doors to transportation
 - Students involved in extracurricular activities are held in the room and dismissed at 3:25
 - Students with younger siblings will join siblings outside for parent pick-up

Students remaining at school for after school extracurricular activities will meet in the gym or designated classroom at 3:35 with all their belongings; they will not return to their lockers or classrooms.