

## COVID-19 Update: BC's Restart Plan and K-12 Guidelines

June 18, 2021

[BC's Restart Plan](#) is a four-step plan that focuses on a safe and gradual return to normal activities. As part of the Restart Plan, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer has identified several sectors (including K-12 Education) where sector-specific guidance will continue to be required.

For K-12 Education, sector-specific guidance is provided via the BC Centre for Disease Control's (BCCDC) [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) and the [Ministry of Education's Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12](#). The Ministry's K-12 Health & Safety Guidelines, which were developed in collaboration with provincial education partners, build on the BCCDC public health guidance to address a broader range of content and requirements for schools and school districts.

Further to consultation between the Ministry of Education, BCCDC and K-12 education partners, the decision was made for schools to continue to follow the existing public health and health & safety guidelines for the remainder of the 2020/21 school year and for summer programming. This decision reflects the interest from partners in supporting a consistent approach and considerations regarding the K-12 school calendar.

Both sets of guidelines will be updated in August 2021 to support a safe and successful transition to the 2021/22 school year in alignment with the planned move to Step 4 of BC's Restart Plan.

The following key messages may be helpful when communicating with your school community:

- The provincial K-12 education plan is aligned with government's broader Restart Plan.
- We are continuing our current health and safety protocols in line with the school calendar - for the remainder of the 2020/21 school year and for summer programs.
- This decision was made in consultation with BCCDC and K-12 education partners representing teachers, support staff, school leaders, parents and Indigenous Rightsholders.
- We have been able to keep schools open and safe during the pandemic with K-12 health and safety guidelines that have offered multiple layers of protection for students and staff.
- Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools and communities. Everyone who is eligible is encouraged to get two doses of vaccine.
- We are encouraged by the high vaccinations rates for people ages 12 and over, and the corresponding decline in COVID-19 cases and school exposures. Based on this, we expect to return to a near normal school year in September.
- Until then, please continue to follow existing K-12 safety plans. They are working. Because of your efforts we have done what few other jurisdictions could do – we kept schools open all year long.