

December 30, 2021

Dear Families,

I am writing to inform you that under a revised order from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), **students' return to school has been delayed until January 10, 2022**. The aim of this delay is to support a safe return to school in January 2022 by giving public health and schools additional time to assess the impacts of the more transmissible COVID-19 Omicron variant and to implement enhanced safety plans.

Teachers, administrators and district staff will return to work on January 4, 2022 to review the updated health and safety protocols and make plans for the continuity of learning. During this time, no structured instruction will take place, however schools will be open for a limited number of students to support families of essential service workers and vulnerable students. **If you need your child to attend school next week, please send an email to your school principal as soon as possible.** You can find the email addresses for the principal on your school's website.

Ongoing and Enhanced Prevention Measures

The prevention measures already in place in schools (**everyone eligible getting fully vaccinated, doing a daily health check and staying home when sick, wearing masks indoors and cleaning hands regularly**) are effective at reducing the risk of COVID-19 spreading and will continue to be consistently implemented in all schools and district sites.

In response to the recent rise of cases of COVID-19 due to the Omicron variant, by January 10, schools will be implementing **additional actions and prevention measures**. These reflect many of the plans we have used previously to limit interactions between individuals including:

- Using all available space to maximize space between people:
 - For example, different common space, classroom and learning environment configurations (e.g., avoid face-to-face seating arrangements where possible).
- Implementing strategies that prevent crowding during class transition times.
- Holding school gatherings and events (e.g., assemblies, etc.) virtually.
- Holding staff-only gatherings (e.g., meetings, professional development activities) virtually whenever possible.
- Limiting visitors to those who are supporting activities that directly benefit student learning and well-being (e.g., teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.).
- Pausing extracurricular sports tournaments.

Daily Health Checks

The best way to keep COVID-19 out of schools is to keep your child home if they are ill. Please continue to complete the [Daily Health Check](#) and err on the side of caution if your child has any symptoms.

COVID-19 Vaccine

Vaccines continue to be the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 within K-12 school settings. Everyone eligible is strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. You can find more information here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/register>

As always, the safety of students and staff remains our priority. For more detailed information, we encourage you to review the revised provincial guidelines. They are available on the district's website: <https://www.deltasd.bc.ca/news-events/news/information-for-parents-guardians-novel-coronavirus/> and on the [Ministry of Education's COVID-19 Safe Schools website](#). Please continue to visit the COVID-19 information page on the district's website regularly for the most up-to-date information.

If you have any questions, please contact your school principal. Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Best wishes,

Doug Sheppard
Superintendent of Schools