



Decker Lake Elementary School

School District No. 91 (Nechako Lakes)
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September 2020

Hadih and Hello DLES family.

I hope you are all enjoying your summer. The staff has been working hard behind the scenes to prepare for the restart of the school year and we can't wait to see you soon!

As you may already know, the Province has announced that schools will open for full-time, in-school instruction in September based on Stage 2 the government's Five-Stage Plan. The plan for School District No. 91 and Decker Lake Elementary School has been developed guided by the Ministry of Education, the Provincial Health Officer, and the BC Centre for Disease Control. The Ministry's requirements state that students who are registered in a school are expected to attend school in-person unless they have health concerns and a medical note from the doctor.

We are excited to share the details of our plan for Decker Lake Elementary with you. It is our goal to ensure DLES continues to be the safe and welcoming place it has always been.

There is A LOT of information to share so here is a list of Frequently Asked Questions for you. Please don't hesitate to connect with me if there is something more that you may need to know. Also, please continue to check our school Instagram page and the School District No. 91 website and Facebook page for further updates. Things can change quickly as we all live this unique experience together so communication with families is an important endeavor for schools.

When will my child return to school?

Tuesday, September 8 and Wednesday September 9

ONLY staff will attend school. We will be learning and working together to prepare to welcome our students including our health and safety measures and the specifics of our DLES Stage 2 plan.

Thursday, September 10

Students with a last name beginning with A to M will attend a full day of school. Students will be introduced to the health and safety protocols.

Friday, September 11

Students with a last name beginning with N to Z will attend a full day of school.
Students will learn the health and safety protocols.

Monday, September 14

ALL students will return to school full time.

What time do students come and go from school?

Currently, for morning drop-off:

Students who take the bus to school will be contacted by the School District Transportation Department regarding bus schedules.

Students who walk or get a ride to school are asked to **arrive at school as close to 8:45 as possible.**

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For student pick-up:

Students who take the bus to school will be contacted by the School District Transportation Department regarding bus schedules. Bus students will need to report to their bus line-ups, stay in-line, and minimize physical contact while they wait for the bus.

Students who are picked up from school will wait at the parent pick-up/drop-off zone by the ball drop. Student who are walking will be asked to head home immediately.

What are Learning Groups (cohorts) and what will they look like at DLES?

Learning Groups (cohorts) are a group of students and staff of up to maximum of 60. The purpose of the Learning Group is to reduce the number of in-person, close interactions an individual has in a day with different people to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

While our DLES Learning Groups (cohorts) will consist of 2 grade classes (one primary and one intermediate), the main learning group for each student will be their individual class.

At DLES, we will refer to these learning groups as clans. In total, our school will have three student clans: Bear, Frog, and Caribou. There will be a smaller Beaver Clan that will be comprised of some staff members.

Can students and staff from different Learning Groups (cohorts) interact?

During break times (e.g. recess & lunch) or unique learning situations (e.g. academic support), students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they are outdoors and can minimize physical contact or if they are indoors and can maintain physical distance.

Staff who work with a variety of students, such as our Aboriginal Education Worker, Supervisors, Learning Commons Teacher, Resource Teacher, or myself, will strictly follow all Health and Safety Guidelines including wearing a mask and keeping physically distanced.

ALL staff will wear a mask and physically distance when they are outside of their Learning Group (cohort) in common and high traffic areas such as our hallways.

What will students be doing at school?

Students will learn the BC Curriculum as they would normally - lots of learning, kindness and caring!

Will the day be different?

A little. Staff and students will need to wash or sanitize their hands many times throughout the day. Because of these frequent handwashing sessions, you may want to consider sending your child to school with a small bottle of scent-free hand lotion. Be sure to label the bottle with your child's name.

To ensure that children do not share food or drinks, students will eat their recess snack inside their classroom before or after recess while supervised by their classroom teacher.

How will bussing work?

As mentioned, our Transportation Department will contact parents regarding details for the bus schedule and Health and Safety protocols for bus riders. Our Transportation Department will be following safety protocols including cleaning and disinfecting and physically distancing seating.

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Are parent/caregivers/guests allowed in the school?

As much as we always want DLES to be a welcoming building for everyone, we also need to minimize and track contacts within our school. For this reason, access to schools will be limited to staff and students. We ask parents/caregivers to not enter the school and drop off and pick up outside the building. Parents and caregivers and visitors can request an appointment at least 24 hours in advance through the school office.

All visitors will be required to maintain physical distance and wear a mask in high traffic areas such as hallways or whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Upon entering through the main door, visitors will need to sanitize their hands and report immediately to the office.

What if my child or an adult at school is sick?

It is vitally important that students and staff who are sick do not come to school. We will follow this guideline strictly. The BCCDC guidelines state:

- Staff and student **MUST** stay home or go home and follow the direction of their health care provider when sick with common cold, influenza or COVID-19 symptoms.
- All students who have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate.
- **Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. Please use the attached Daily Health Check as your at-home guide (or link to it at https://www.sd91.bc.ca/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1095501&type=d&pREC_ID=1370090).**
- Students and staff who become sick while at school will need to go home as soon as possible.
- **Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should not return to school until they have been assessed by a health-care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases and their symptoms have resolved.**

What should we bring to school?

Please send your child to DLES with a healthy snack and lunch. Please try to send food items that require minimal heating in a microwave or access to hot water.

Ensure that your child is dressed in layers appropriate for the weather conditions as the students will be going outside multiple times throughout the day.

Please avoid bringing toys, stuffed animals, etc. to school as these items cannot be easily sanitized.

Students will not be sharing any items.

For children in grades 4-7, please bring your school supplies on the first day of school. Be sure to label the supplies.

For children in K-grade 3, please pay a one-time school supply fee of \$40.

All students will need to bring a pair of indoor shoes and a backpack.

Classroom water fountains (not hallway fountains) will be disabled so students should bring a juice box and/or water bottle to and from school each day.

Will snack and hot lunch still be available?

Yes. We know food is an important part of our school day. We will continue with our fruit and vegetable program. Also, the PAC will be permitted to continue with the hot lunch program if they have enough parent volunteers to run this program. A big thank you to those of you who already volunteer your time!

Do students and staff need to wear masks?

Staff will wear masks while in high traffic areas, like hallways, and any time they are outside of the classroom or learning group and they cannot physically distance from others. Staff may also choose to wear a mask within the Learning Group (cohort).

Wearing masks for students is a family decision and will be honoured as such.

What are the other Health and Safety protocols at DLES?

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Health and Safety will be our priority for the 2020-2021 school year at DLES. We are using the *Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings* document to guide our planning to keep us all safe. I encourage you to refer to this document as it has lots of great information. I have posted the link to this document at the end of this letter.

Our other Safety Measures include:

Cleaning and disinfecting

DLES will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants guidelines. This includes a daytime custodian and additional custodial staff to clean after each school day.

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact

Physical distancing is something that has become part of our lives. It is also something that is challenging in a school setting, particularly with younger students. As such, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels and activities.

Our students will be supported to have minimized physical contact with one another within their cohort and outdoors. They will be supported to maintain physical distance if they are indoors or not within their Learning Group (cohort).

We will not be gathering in large groups such as assemblies. All students will be reminded not to share their personal belongings, food, or beverages.

In our hallways we will move in directions that minimize physical contact. We teach our students to "move like traffic" which includes "stop, look and listen" at intersections, walking on the right and knowing who has the right of way.

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. We will incorporate hand hygiene opportunities into our daily schedule and teach and regularly remind staff and students about the importance of diligent hand hygiene.

There are sanitizing stations and/or handwashing sinks in each of our classrooms and spaces and at each of our entrances.

Our daily schedule will involve hand washing at the following times:

- When students arrive at school and before they go home.
- Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).
- Between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).
- Before and after eating and drinking.
- After using the toilet.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Respiratory Etiquette

We will teach and reinforce these healthy practices including:

- coughing or sneezing into our elbow sleeve or a tissue. Throwing away used tissues and immediately performing hand hygiene.
- refraining from touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

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We have installed plexiglass barriers at our front office and at our library circulation desk.

Our windows will be open when possible. Our HVAC systems will be set to increase the intake of outside air and to maximize air exchange in classrooms and other spaces.

Thank you for taking the time to review this document as a family. Please don't hesitate to contact me at the school (698 7301), on my cell (692 9372) or by e-mail – wkelemen@sd91.bc.ca if you have questions, concerns or thoughts. If changes happen, we will communicate again at our earliest opportunity. Please ensure that the school has up-to-date contact information for your family.

We can't wait to see everyone!

Respectfully,
Wendy Kelemen
Principal

Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings.

<https://www.google.com/search?q=provincial+covid-19+health+and+safety+guidelines+for+k-12+setting&oq=provin&aqs=chrome.69i59j69i57j0l4j46j0.4971j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&safe=active&ssui=on>

Daily Health Check

1. Symptoms of Illness*	Does your child have any of the following symptoms?	CIRCLE ONE	
	Fever	YES	NO
	Chills	YES	NO
	Cough or worsening of chronic cough	YES	NO
	Shortness of breath	YES	NO
	Sore throat	YES	NO
	Runny nose / stuffy nose	YES	NO
	Loss of sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
	Headache	YES	NO
	Fatigue	YES	NO
	Diarrhea	YES	NO
	Loss of appetite	YES	NO
	Nausea or vomiting	YES	NO
	Muscle aches	YES	NO
	Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	YES	NO
	Dizziness, confusion	YES	NO
	Abdominal pain	YES	NO
	Skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes	YES	NO

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2. International Travel	Have you or anyone in your household returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact	Are you or is anyone in your household a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	YES	NO