

August 31, 2020

I want to first and foremost welcome you all back to Sands and hope that you and your family are safe and healthy. Last school year was a different one and we made it through. This school year will be different again. Below, in this newsletter, is what I know right now. Things are constantly changing and I will update you as quickly as possible.

The Ministry of Education and Provincial Health Officer have created a framework and protocols for us to be able to open up school for all students. The Delta School District has created a schedule and structure for how this will happen. Safety is at the forefront of how school will be operating this year. For a number of you, you will be having reservations about sending your student back to school. I get that but I want to assure you that we are doing our best to create a safe learning environment. If you are looking for other options for your student not to attend Sands for the 2020-21 school year, please see the information below about this. For those that are attending, students will be engaged in a quarter system where they will be enrolled in 2 classes - 2 courses face to face or 1 face to face and 1 hybrid (some face to face time and some independent distance learning) at Sands. Built into the new schedule is time at the end of most days for students to get help from their teachers. We are working to build a schedule that honours student choice but this will not always be possible. The pace of learning will be much faster but students have to concentrate on only 2 courses at a time. I will provide you with a daily schedule once it has been approved – hopefully in the next couple of days.

There will be another newsletter on Tuesday, September 8 with more information on what the orientation days on September 10 and 11 will look like. On Monday, September 14, a full day of classes will begin.

If your child is sick or not feeling well, please make sure they stay at home. Please refer to the attached Daily Health Checklist.

Learning Options Available for Delta Students

At this point for the return to school in September, you have the following options for your child:

- Face to face, in-class instruction at their school.
- Distributed learning – Home Quest (K-9), Delta Access (Grades 10-12).
- Home schooling – Parents assume all responsibility for their child’s learning.

Please note: Both Home Quest and homeschooling are full year commitments. If parents choose either of these options, the earliest that students would be able to return to their home school is September 2021.

For more information please go to: <https://district.public.deltasd.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/Stage-2-Learning-options.pdf>

If you continue to have questions as to which option is best for your child(ren), please do not hesitate to contact me at mrobinson@deltasd.bc.ca. For families with unique medical situations or

concerns, we do have some flexibility and different options available, and so I would encourage you to contact me as soon as possible to discuss your situation.

School Schedule

The year will be broken into 4 quarters of about 9 weeks in length. Each day will have 3 blocks – Blocks A, B and C. We are working to create schedules for students that maximize face-to-face learning in quarter classes. The quarter classes will be 120 minutes in length Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesdays the classes will be 60 minutes. For students in Grades 10-12 there is a strong likelihood that they will have one face-to-face class and one hybrid class in each quarter. Hybrid classes will combine face-to-face learning and distance learning. The reason we might offer hybrid classes is because we cannot adequately distance students from multiple learning group.

In Block C there is a degree of flexibility for students. Generally, it will consist of time for student support for the classes they are taking or a quarter class. For most students, Block C will be like flex time from last year where students can seek out their teachers for help in the courses they are currently taking. If they do not need help then they will be dismissed. For some students they might have a course in Block C (face-to-face or hybrid). There is a possibility that some students will have quarter classes in Block B and C only.

For students who are enrolled in LA/LD/Grad Quest/Supportive learning we are going to have to be creative in how we support those students during the school year. It may not make sense for them to have an enrolling quarter block. They will need support over the course of the school year. Our thinking right now is to use Block C as a way to help and connect with those students on either a drop in basis or a scheduled basis with them. The needs of each student is different and the support teachers will create a plan to support the students.

Learning Groups

Students will be placed in learning groups when they are attending their classes. This will mean that the same group of students will take the same 2 face to face classes each day over a quarter (9-10 weeks). The learning groups may be adjusted after each quarter. Under the Ministry's guidelines, learning groups in secondary schools may include up to 120 individuals (students and staff). Within Delta's secondary schools, we are trying to keep learning groups at 30-60 students as this will result in less disruption for students if the pandemic requires schools to move between other stages of the education framework.

Within the learning groups, masks are not required, but masks and the practice of physical distancing are required when students are in common areas like hallways, washrooms, Library, Cafeteria and whenever students are in contact with students outside of their learning group. Staff will also practice these safety measures if they need to enter a learning group to support students.

Safety Considerations

Also, as of today, there is a form on Parent Connect called a "Daily Health Check". It is required that you acknowledge you have read this form before sending your child back to school.

Students are expected to wear a non-medical masks when they enter Sands and are in common areas of the school. Also they need to wear a mask when they are outside their learning group and cannot remain at least 2 metres from others. While in classrooms and with their learning groups,

masks are optional. In Hybrid classes we are encouraging students to wear masks. Sanitizing hands and not handling other student's property is an important safety measure.

Any student or other person entering Sands must stay home and self-isolate if they:

- are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 OR
- have travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days OR
- have been identified by public health as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate, including children of essential service workers.

Any students, staff, or other person within the school who has cold, influenza, or COVID-like symptoms should not return to school until an assessment by a health-care provider and their symptoms have resolved.

Students may still attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza or COVID-19-like symptoms, provided the student/staff is not actively experiencing symptoms. It is expected that the symptomatic household member is seeking assessment by a health-care provider.

Students and staff who experience seasonal allergies or other COVID-like symptoms, which are related to an existing condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any change in symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health-care provider.

If parents or caregivers need to contact the school principal or their student's teachers, they should be directed to do so by phone or email. In-person visits should be for specific purposes and arranged in advance by appointment. Visitors must be aware of and follow safety protocols and be limited in their access to necessary spaces only.

Within a learning group, minimized physical contact will be strongly encouraged, however physical distancing does not need to be maintained, if not practical. Outside of a learning group, physical distancing of 2 metres remains the expectation for secondary students and for all staff.

Those that choose to wear non-medical masks, face coverings or face shields must still seek to maintain physical distance from people outside of their learning group. There must be no crowding, gathering or congregating of people from different learning groups, even if non-medical masks are worn.

For more specific details on safety plans please see the District Safety Plan.

<https://www.deltasd.bc.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/District-37-COVID-19-SAFETY-PLAN-August-20-2020.pdf>

Entering and Exiting Sands

We are working on a plan for this and should be able to share that with you by September 4. One thing for sure is that students need to stay home with they are sick or exhibiting COVID symptoms. Students also need to be wearing a mask when they enter Sands.

First Week of School

More information will come to you by September 4.

Nutrition Breaks

Between Blocks A - B there will be a 20 minute nutrition break and 30 minutes between B - C . For safety reasons we cannot allow students to be in the hallways or canteen during this time.

Students should bring their lunch, snacks and other required items with them when they arrive at school. Food should be in their own containers and they should take those containers home with them at the end of the day. To maintain physical distancing and minimize contact with others, parents are asked to not drop off student lunches/supplies during the school day. Food drink items, dishes, and cutlery are not to be shared. The only exception is manufacturer-wrapped food products.

Scent Free Sands

Sands is a Scent-Free school. We ask that students, staff and families please refrain from wearing scents while at Sands, even if you are just popping in. If students are wearing scents they may be asked to change their clothes. We have a number of staff and students who are sensitive to certain scents. Please help us in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.

Locks and Lockers

For safety reasons students will not be assigned a locker. It is expected that students will bring with them all they need for the day in a bag or backpack.

Collaboration Days

Each Wednesday, Sands has embedded regular Collaboration Time into the school calendar so staff can engage in collaborative professional learning about effective practice. Students begin the day at 10:45am.

Flextime

There will be a teacher scheduled time on Wednesday morning where teachers can direct students to attend for help in the classes they are taking. The start time for this is 9:40am. For the afternoon student support block in Block C it is more student choice about attending.

Student Timetables

With the new quarter system and learning groups, we have needed to develop an entirely new timetable with learning groups and student requests in mind. This is complex and time consuming as there are so many variables to consider and we have never scheduled in this way before. Normally we would have given your schedule by this time. We are hoping to give it to you by September 8.

Course Change requests

We are going to be very limited in the number of changes that we can make to students' schedules due to learning group restrictions and timetable limitations. Also, once a quarter starts and you have attended a learning group we cannot make a change in that quarter. Students cannot swap a learning group within a quarter. So if you REALLY need a change please contact the counsellor you work with via email. If it is a quarter 1 change you should not attend until we can determine if we can make a change.

Permission Forms

There are a number of forms on Parent Connect for you to review and authorize. Please login to Parent Connect, review the notices and select the appropriate response to each form. It is mandatory that all forms be reviewed and responded to by each student's parent/guardian by Sept 30. Forms are:

Personal Information Consent Form, Outside Media in Schools, Electronic Communications, Walking Field Trips Permission, BC Fruits and Vegetables Program Permission, Demographic Information, and Student Emergency Release.

Communication with Families

Most of our communication with families is done electronically through our website, email and Parent Connect. Please ensure you have provided us a current email address, updated contact information and you are able to log into Parent Connect.

Student Fees

Student fees are assessed during Quarter 1 once class changes have been made. Fees can be viewed on Student/Parent Connect. Fees include a basic student fee, an Emergency Preparedness fee and in some cases, students may be assessed a course fee to cover the cost of consumable materials. Students may also choose to purchase optional 'enhancements' that support a course but are not required for course completion. Yearbook fees will be assessed to all students. New this year, Field Trip fees will be added to students' fees. We are encouraging parents to pay fees on-line using Parent Connect.

Financial Need

Sands realizes that sometimes families struggle financially. Please contact the Principal, Vice Principal or one of the counsellors if you are experiencing financial difficulty. Discretion is paramount.

Reporting Student Absence

To report a student absence please:

1. Contact the school office by phone (604-594-3474) or
2. Notify the school by email sands@deltasd.bc.ca or
3. Send a message through Parent Connect.

Absences should be reported as early as possible on the day of the absence to allow a Parent Advised code to be entered into the system. Any unreported absences will result in an automated email from the student system.

Protocol for Parent Concerns at Sands Secondary

If parents have concerns about general school procedures or issues stemming from their child's classroom, there is a procedure for raising those concerns.

If the concerns originate in the classroom, the first and most important person to communicate those issues with is your child's teacher with a phone call or email. If in this discussion you continue to have unresolved concerns then it is appropriate to be in contact with your child's counsellor.

If your concern is not addressed to your satisfaction after the counsellor has intervened, then please contact either the Vice Principal or Principal.

We are always willing to speak with parents to explain how and why particular decisions have been made and to listen openly to suggestions that might make our school community a better place. We will do our best to work along with you to solve problems.

We want Sands to be a community that supports children's learning and nurtures the hearts of children and families. To maintain a positive working relationship, please follow the protocol as outlined when difficulties arise.

It is imperative that we remain respectful in our interactions and solve problems in a way that benefits everyone. Our students are watching our examples.

Ways to help set your student up for success in the school year

- Set high expectations for your student and encourage them to not accept minimum effort or indifference to quality work;
- Contact teachers directly when you have a question or concern regarding your student's progress;
- Ensure good attendance;
- Provide a quiet place in your home for study;
- Insist that your student accept responsibility for their learning and their conduct;
- Model the importance of life-long learning;
- Encourage a strong work ethic and promote good time management skills;
- Encourage your student to maintain healthy eating and sleep habits.

My School App

Students and parents are encouraged to download the MY SCHOOL APP! The app is now available on both the iOS and Google Play App stores by searching for "MY SCHOOL APP". The SANDS APP that many students and families have become familiar with will be discontinued at the end of August. All students and parents are encouraged to download and use the MY SCHOOL APP.

School Photos

These will take place during Quarter 1. We do not have an exact date or procedure yet for this.

Valuables in Gym Change rooms

Thefts happen in the school gym change rooms. Please do not leave valuables unattended. Either lock them up in their hallway locker or a locker in the change rooms. The school is not responsible for any thefts. We strive to have a safe and secure environment.

Career Life (CL) and Capstone

These courses have replaced Grad Transitions and is a requirement to complete in order to graduate. Mr. Reefschlager is in charge of this and will be providing grade 11 and 12's with more information in the second Quarter. This course will be conducted via a Google Classroom.

Provincial Assessments

We are anticipating the numeracy and literary assessments will continue but we do not have any details at this time. Once we get more information we will share this with you.

Engaging as a Parent/Guardian

We urge parents/guardians to stay engaged with their child's progress at school. Parents can use Parent Connect to monitor student attendance and view report cards. We encourage parents to contact the school and teachers when they have questions.

PAC (Parent Advisory Council)

Sands PAC meets eight times throughout the school year. Meetings take place in the evening, approximately once per month and will be conducted by a ZOOM meeting. The PAC provides feedback and input to the administration, and applies for and allocates gaming funds to support extracurricular programs throughout the school. The PAC typically does not organize fundraising events. All parents, especially new Grade 8 parents are invited to join the PAC, meet other interested parents and learn more about the school and recent changes in education in BC. Please stay tuned for the date of the first PAC Meeting of the year.

This is going to be a different year. We are working as hard as we can to get things up and running for a successful start.

If you have any questions, please call or email me.

Thanks

Mark Robinson
Principal

Joanna Macintosh
Vice Principal