



**Nelson**  
**Elementary School**  
4850 Irmin Street, Burnaby, B.C. V5J 1Y2

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## Message from the Principal

Dear Nelson Families,

The staff at Nelson hopes that your winter break was enjoyable and you all had time to connect with friends and family. Our Nelson community has done really well with managing the Pandemic in a safe and supportive way. We have worked to maintain a continuity of learning in and the Nelson school experience carried on with events like our Terry Fox Run, Volleyball, “Meet the Grade 7’s”, and a Winter Concert.

Into 2022, we continue to face new challenges presented by the ongoing Pandemic. Thank you for your ongoing support with the phased return to school implemented by the Ministry of Education. This allowed us to prepare our staff, school, and programs in order to meet Covid-related challenges with safety and the continuity of learning in mind. We worked on implementing updated safety guidelines and developing contingency plans to support student learning, should school closures be required. **I would like to share what to expect, as students return to full in-person instruction next week on Monday January 10<sup>th</sup>.**

### **Functional Closures**

As you may have heard in the news this week, the Provincial Health Officer has warned businesses to expect as much as a third of their staff to be off sick with COVID-19 at any given time. Schools reflect what is happening in the community and – as Superintendent Gina Niccoli-Moen shared in her [message to families last week](#) – there is a possibility that, at some point, schools may not have enough staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, and/or custodial support to ensure the health and safety of students. If that happens, after consultation with the District, we may have what’s called a functional closure.

We will do everything we can to keep our school open. If we do have to call a functional closure, I will be reaching out to let you know. Please ensure you are checking your email messages from the school, as depending on when we learn of staff booking off sick, it is possible you will receive a message in the morning impacting that same school day.

If there is a functional closure, we will endeavor to move to remote learning as quickly as we can, however depending on available staff, that may not happen the next day.

I recognize that the pandemic has once again thrust a period of uncertainty on us all. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation. You can learn more about functional closures on the front page of the district website [here](#).

### **Health and Safety**

Please read and review with your child the following health and safety updates and reminders that all students and families are expected to follow to preventing crowding.

- Nelson Elementary is fortunate to have 11 outdoor entry/exit points for classes to use. **We will continue to use our outdoor line-up system at the designated locations and have classes enter singly in order to avoid crowding.** This means that our start and end times can remain the same (8:53 – 3:05)
- **Our lunch schedule will be “flipped” and classes separated into “play zones”.** Very similar to our 2020 system, we will have half the students eat from 12:00 – 12:25 while the other half is outside and then the groups will “flip” from 12:25 – 12:50.
- **All large gatherings will continue to be virtual** (e.g assemblies, staff meetings, etc.).
- We have created a schedule with specific divisions using **specific play areas for each day for lunch and recess.** Due to their age, the youngest students have priority on the playground. This will be reviewed by staff in class and on the morning announcements.

- **Avoid crowding before and after school.** We have a wonderful sense of community and often our families and students get together and play on the playground or basketball courts before and after school. Please be mindful that mixing and crowding before and after school counters the efforts made to create schedules and systems that reduce widespread risk.
- **We are postponing “platooning models”.**
- We are postponing extracurricular activities.
- **In common spaces,** we have created visual reminders such as dividing hallways with a “center-line” and using our “bathroom ticket” system.

### ***Other Nelson Elementary Safety Measures***

- **We have closed drinking fountains** but water bottle filling stations are still operable.
- To improve ventilation, we are keeping **doors and windows open** even during cold weather. Even though heating remains on, this makes the building cooler. Please ensure students are dressed in layers to be warm inside (e.g. extra hoodies).
- We will spend **more time outside**, this means students need to have jackets, boots, etc. as well as a **change of clothes on site**.
- **Daily protocols** such as handwashing and the daily Health Check will be maintained. Please go through the Health Check before school. Staff will perform it again upon arrival. To maintain the safest school community possible, **please keep children at home** if they or family members have any symptoms

### ***Ventilation***

The District has been working with the Ministry of Education to improve indoor air quality for schools without mechanical air ventilation in all classrooms. Our school is included in these discussions. As part of its approach to further enhancing classroom safety, the District has ordered HEPA air scrubber systems for each classroom that is not ventilated.

### ***Visitors in Schools***

We are limiting access to the building to students, school staff, and essential adults who are directly supporting activities benefitting student learning and wellbeing. Please contact the school office should you wish to arrange a virtual appointment.

### ***Masks, Maximizing Physical Distance, Hand Hygiene and Cleaning***

The following remains important:

- **Masks.** A reminder that students in all grades and all staff are required to wear a mask indoors at school.
- **Physical Distancing.** We will continue our practice of maximizing physical distance where possible. At this stage in the pandemic many are understandably experiencing fatigue, and we thank you in advance for continuing to model physical distancing with other families while on school grounds.
- **Hand Hygiene.** We will continue to encourage students to wash and/or sanitize their hands frequently.
- **Cleaning.** Surfaces are cleaned and/or disinfected at least once a day.

### ***Daily Health Check***

It remains critical that people continue to do the daily health check (found [here](#)) each morning to determine if they should come into the building that day. Please do not come to school ill. If a student becomes sick while at school, as previously, the office will contact you for immediate pick up of your child. To help the community, please make arrangements to accommodate this.

***School Notification Process and Rapid Tests***

As you may have heard in the announcement from the Provincial Government today, public health is no longer providing individual COVID-19 exposure notifications regarding schools. They shared that public health has transitioned to individual self-management (that is, individuals caring for themselves and engaging with health care providers when needed.) We are awaiting information about the role schools may play in public health's rapid antigen testing strategy.

We are looking forward to welcoming back our Nelson families Monday morning,

Mr. Hamilton  
Principal  
Nelson Elementary