

Frequently Asked *Questions*

Updated April 9, 2020

Internal FAQs for Staff

The purpose of this internal document is to provide employees with consistent messaging that can be found in one place, and guidance when answering questions from staff and/or community. This document will continue to evolve and will be updated regularly. Answers are subject to change.

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Guiding Principles

How is the district prioritizing its focus in the coming weeks?

Health and safety is always our first priority in our learning community. We are also following the direction of the Ministry of Education which has provided all the school districts across the province with guiding principles to ensure there is a coordinated response across the education system. The following principles will help us focus our priorities and next steps:

1. *Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.*
2. *Provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers.*
3. *Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.*
4. *Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.*

The Ministry has also indicated that school districts should have alternative learning solutions by mid-April in delivering the K-12 curriculum. We are working to make that target with a coordinated approach. We will be building these learning opportunities in slow, measured, supported steps. There is no expectation that every learning platform will be fully developed by mid-April.

Human Resources

Is Education considered an essential service?

Yes. Education is an essential service. We are an important part of the social infrastructure to support children, their families and our community in this current public health crisis. We are responsible for supporting a very vulnerable population that rely on us.

As educators and support staff, we have a critical role in ensuring educational continuity and social/emotional well-being for students and their families.

We are part of the system of workers that are needed in our community. We are part of a team that includes doctors, nurses, pharmacists, grocery store workers, truck drivers, first responders, corrections officers (to name a few) that is keeping our communities healthy and safe. We are responsible for ensuring that we keep essential needs met.

Some staff are working from home, why can't I?

The Prime Minister and BC's Public Health Office have told Canadians and British Columbians to stay home. This is in place so that workers critical to the functioning of our health care system, social infrastructure and economy can continue to work as safely as possible.

Some employees need to report in to support our essential functions such as custodians and other facilities workers for the health and safety of schools. Other employees such as clerical staff are needed to answer questions from families and keep our schools functioning for essential service levels. We are helping our employees to work from home as much as possible, but we acknowledge in the coming weeks or months, the burden of supporting our education system will not be shared equally.

What is the expectation of staff working from home?

All staff working at home are expected to discuss the details of those arrangements for approval by their Supervisor or Administrator. Work from home arrangements may vary depending on the nature of an employee's position and circumstances. These arrangements may also be subject to change in the current fluid environment and the District's operational requirements.

In order to ensure the safety of staff working from home and to comply with WorkSafe BC regulations, the following pieces will need to be completed by each employee working from home:

- **COVID-19 Safe Work Practices**
- **Working from Home or Alone**

What is the expectation of staff coming into work?

Staff reporting to work sites/schools in the district will be expected to follow the safe work and health protocols as provided by in the District's site procedures/protocols.

Staff are asked to not enter a building unless arranged with their Supervisor or Administrator.

Fobs for schools have been deactivated to ensure there is no additional traffic going in and out of buildings outside of operational hours and on weekends. Keypads are also being limited to school/site hours. If anyone needs access using the keypad, the Administrator or Supervisor needs to email Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities: cmorris@sd61.bc.ca

Can District Employees bring their children to work/school with them?

No. It is important for the Administrators/Supervisors in each school/site to monitor the safety in each building and ensure touch points are cleaned as per their communication with custodians. All access to the buildings needs to be monitored and controlled for everyone's safety.

Is there a process for TTOCs and Spareboard EAGs?

Information regarding employment status and pay across the public sector will continue to be addressed as we receive further direction from BCPSEA.

What happens if an employee was on medical leave and is informing staff that they can now work from home?

If an employee is currently on a medical leave that was initiated prior to Spring Break, we will require medical documentation ensuring the employee is able to work, even though the work situation is different. An employee cannot make this type of decision on his/her own. Please have the Employee contact Courtney Askew, HR Advisor, caskew@sd61.bc.ca

If a teacher is ill or taking medical time, can we get a TTOC to take over class responsibilities?

There is no standard response. Each situation will be different and include various considerations. Administration and HR will work together to determine if a replacement is appropriate.

If employees have specific circumstances or questions about their own unique situations, who should they contact?

Employee questions regarding employment and circumstances need to be directed to their immediate Supervisors or Administrators. Supervisors and Administrators will help their employees navigate the landscape. If Supervisors or Administrators need help answering questions, they are asked to contact Human Resources. The HR Team is here to help navigate. It's important that Supervisors be the main contact for their employees. In times of uncertainty and fear, it's imperative to have a key person who will help them get answers. If Human Resources gets an indication there are common questions, we can address these as FAQs.

Can school administrators have a telephone distribution list in case there are changes in role responsibilities in district departments?

Yes. Financial Services, Payroll and HR have distributed contact lists as part of their communication with Administrators.

Payroll

How can staff get a Record of Employment (ROE) issued to claim Employment Insurance (EI) Benefits?

If you are a TTOC, CUPE 382 Casual, or CUPE 947 Spareboard employee and you ordinarily request an ROE in order to claim EI benefits for the period of Spring Break, please send an email to Payroll to request your ROE. All other ROE requests submitted will not be processed at this time, as we are awaiting further direction from the Ministry of Education and BC Public School Employers' Association (BCPSEA).

I am a TTOC or CUPE947 Spareboard who was booked to work. Will I get paid?

If you are a TTOC or CUPE947 Spareboard who has received a dispatch that you have been scheduled to work in the period between March 30 and April 30, 2020 you will receive payment for that work. Please verify your dispatches through e-services. CUPE947 Spareboards will need to fill out an electronic timesheet and submit it to their school by Friday. For this week, we will accept timesheets until 9 a.m. on Monday, April 6th.

If a school administrator has scheduled you for work between March 30 and April 30, 2020 and you do not see it in the dispatches information online by Friday for that week, please contact Patti Stevens at ADS by email ads@sd61.bc.ca with the details including the administrator's name and the dates and times you expected to be scheduled to work.

To View your dispatches on e-services:

- Click on "My Info"
- Click on "Time & Attendance"
- Click on "View or Change"

Under the dispatch section, enter your date range and click on refresh dispatches

Facilities

What is the protocol for accessing schools and buildings?

There will be no access to district sites or schools for members of the public.

With the exception of staff that are required to work at district sites/schools, staff are asked not to go into any buildings unless it has been arranged by your Administrator or Supervisor. Controlling access to buildings helps us monitor and limit the areas that will require additional cleaning/disinfecting by custodial staff. Staff members that require access in order to get needed materials should make arrangements with their Supervisor or Administrator.

Once more, school fobs have been deactivated to ensure there is no additional traffic going in and out of buildings outside of operational hours and on weekends. Keypads are also being limited to school/site hours. If anyone needs access using the keypad, the Administrator or Supervisor needs to email Chuck Morris, Director of Facilities: cmorris@sd61.bc.ca

Where can staff entering a school or site find a sign-in sheet?

Sign-in sheets should be located at the front entrance of your building. This should be standard practice across the school district.

Why are custodians at the front main area of schools?

Custodians are helping out at the entrance to take some of the burden off Administration staff when employees enter and exit as scheduled by the Administrator/Supervisor. These custodians are:

- 1. continuing to clean;*
- 2. monitoring traffic during school/office hours;*
- 3. sanitizing the tools and areas around the sign in / out area; and*
- 4. making note what rooms were occupied during the day so the afternoon cleaning staff can disinfect those rooms.*

When can I access my school?

Administrators will reach out to all staff to determine a plan and schedule for staff to enter the building. It is critical that employees connect with their Administrator or Supervisor prior to accessing the school.

Safety being our first priority, Administrators and Supervisors need to control access to buildings to limit exposure, support safe social distancing and ensure visits are in coordination with custodial staffs' cleaning protocols.

Will there be more hydrogen peroxide wipes available in schools and at work sites?

We are attempting to purchase them recognizing the first priority in the province is health care. Next custodians need them for their work. In the meantime, as per the schools' and other sites' protocols, we've provided spray bottles throughout our buildings to disinfect surfaces as they are used. This is a joint responsibility for each employees as they use equipment and their desks, followed up by the custodial crew cleaning.

NEW Information Technology

I do not have a district laptop, how can I work from home?

Please submit a Help Desk ticket so our ITL support staff can review your options with you:
<https://webhelpdesk.sd61.bc.ca>

I would like to take my office/classroom computer, monitor, printer, document camera, etc. home with me. Is that acceptable?

Please do not take any technical equipment home without specific approval to do so.

Can educators use video conferencing tools with such as Zoom and Google Meet (Hangouts) with our students?

We are in the final stages of implementing supported video conferencing services that are suitable for student/teacher communications. Thank you for your patience!

For Zoom Videoconferencing, we are working with the Ministry today to implement the new Zoom for BC service.

For Google Meet, we are configuring the service to enable it for our SD61Learn environment.

For both services we are finalizing recommended protocols of use and family consent requirements. We aim to launch these video conferencing services next week.

How can parents of grades K-8 students consent to GSuite, FreshGrade and other services?

Providing consent for online tools has been a paper process via the school office. We have now developed an online portal to make this process accessible via the web and will be releasing more details next week.

How do secondary school students request a GSuite account online?

Instructions for high school students can be found here: www.sd61.bc.ca/parent-student-resources/student-accounts/student-gafe-account/request-an-account

Where can I find out more about GSuite for Education?

We have a some excellent SD61Learn resources here: <https://techforlearning.sd61.bc.ca/learning-with-gsuite/about-sd61-gsuite>

Will schools be distributing devices to students who need access to technology?

Yes, we are coordinating with schools on the logistics of lending Chromebooks to students who require them. Distribution will begin next week.

What online tools can we use with our students?

We will be posting updated information on our Tech for Learning website: <https://techforlearning.sd61.bc.ca> - so please bookmark and check back.

How do I block my outgoing phone number if needed?

Caller ID can be blocked on iPhones and Android cellphones. Please see instructions here:

<https://techforlearning.sd61.bc.ca/turning-off-caller-id>

Most phone line providers (such as Telus, Rogers, Bell, etc.) also have an option for masking the Caller ID. Please check with your provider and test first to ensure it is working.

Continuity of Learning

Who on the District Team can I ask for support with learning resources & materials?

Elementary: Louise Sheffer, James Hansen and Carey Nickerson

Middle: Tammy Renyard, Dave Shortreed, Denise Wehner

Secondary: Simon Burgers, Jon Hamlin, Leah Moreau

Partnerships & Pathways: Lindsay Johnson

Vulnerable & Diverse Learners: Harold Caldwell, Pam Halverson, Sean McCartney, Jessie Moore

Indigenous Learners: Craig Schellenberg and Shelly Niemi

FRIM: Simon Burgers

ELL: Denise Wehner

How will supports be provided for students with complex needs?

There are many students with complex needs who have extensive services and supports in place at school. At this point in time, following the Ministry and public health recommendations, there is no plan to bring these students into school buildings or to provide face-to-face support for them at home.

District teams are currently exploring ways to keep staff connected to students through technology, as well as exploring ways to support parents/guardians as they work with their child at home. In addition, District staff will be facilitating opportunities for collaboration and sharing between school-based teams (eg. regular snapshots, online counsellor and LST collaboration, resource sharing).

How will families of students with complex needs be able to access essential devices or equipment identified in a student's IEP? (eg. iPad for communication, stander for mobility, etc.)?

The District Team and IT for Learning are developing a process for schools to facilitate distribution of essential devices and/or equipment that are required for students to work on priority IEP goals and access learning. Decisions on what devices and equipment are essential to have at home will be determined by case managers in consultation with families and itinerant specialists (eg. SLP, OT, PT, etc).

NEW

Who do I contact about support for vulnerable learners and/or learners with complex needs?

All questions of this nature should be directed to school-based teams (SBT) and/or administrators. A SBT support framework has been provided to school staff and will continue to be updated with the most recent information and plans.

NEW Are we providing face-to-face support for learners with complex needs?

Providing educational continuity for complex learners will occur in accordance with the BC Ministry of Education's mandate to prioritize a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees. Given this, at the moment, we are not providing face-to-face support for learners with complex needs both at school and in their homes. The only students receiving face-to-face support in schools are the children of Essential Support Workers.

Secondary Programs and Courses

If a child is currently enrolled in a dual credit trades or non-trades course or program, will they be able to continue their course or program and still receive their post-secondary credits?

We are working with our post-secondary and Industry Training Authority (ITA) partners to create a plan for students in these courses and programs.

If a child has been accepted to begin a dual credit trades or non-trades course or program in the near future, will they be able to begin their course or program as planned?

We are working with our post-secondary and Industry Training Authority (ITA) partners, and the Ministry of Education, to create individual plans for students set to begin a post-secondary course or program.

If a student is enrolled in a District Program (TASK, AutoTech, Aviation), will these programs continue?

We are working with our program teachers, post-secondary, Industry Training Authority (ITA), and industry partners to determine how we will move forward with continuation of learning in these Programs.

Will there be supports available if a child is in grade 12 and hoping to access guidance around applying for post-secondary and scholarships?

Our school based educators will be working to create opportunities for students to access information on applying for post-secondary institutions and scholarships.

International Student Program (ISP)

Will international students be able to access continuing learning during this school year opportunities if they are outside of Canada?

According to Ministry of Education, "continuous learning opportunities are to be made available to international students in Canada or outside of Canada until the end of this school year June 30, 2020." In some countries technical consideration may make this difficult (ie China firewall and no google access).

Are international students still able to renew study permits?

Yes, according to Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), it is business as usual and they can apply for study permit extensions within Canada at this time.

Are international students able to re-enter Canada?

Yes, if according to IRCC, if they have a valid study permit issued before March 18, they will be able to re-enter Canada.

What mental health supports are available to international students?

Cascadia Counselling services (registered clinical counsellors)

Guardme mobile doctor (Guardme is a private insurance provider for international students).

Providing Childcare in Schools

- **How to sign up to participate in child care?**
- **Are employees selected by seniority?**
- **Will staff be assigned to their assigned school?**
- **How will Health and Safety (COVID-19) protocols be met?**

School districts have been tasked with assessing childcare needs in the province. Once the needs assessments have been completed and third party providers have been utilized to the full extent, the District will work with local unions to discuss reassignment of district staff to childcare provision. More to come.

Food Distribution

What will the continuity of our food service programs look like?

We will coordinate delivery of food through four zone hubs. At this time, we do not have the capacity to distribute food specifically destined for a particular school. Food arriving at the zone hubs will be distributed to specific families.

The families attending the zone hub are those identified by the school as the most in need. Please request that only one family member arrives for pick up.

What is our schools “zone hub”?

For the safety of all, our district will be divided into four zones with a school in each zone acting as the receiving and distribution hub. For your school’s specific zone, contact your school’s administrator.

Food Zones:

South Zone – Central Middle

East Zone – Lansdowne

West Zone – Esquimalt

North Zone – Reynolds

How do parents/guardians pick up food from “zone hubs”? And when will it start?

Families will be phoned and notified of the time and day for pick-up. We will begin distributing food packages starting the week of April 6th.

South Zone – Central Middle School on Mondays

East Zone – Lansdowne Middle School on Tuesdays

West Zone – Esquimalt Secondary on Wednesdays

North Zone – Reynolds Secondary on Thursdays

What do we do with school based food programs that provide food to our schools (e.g., Breakfast programs)? What about community partners who wish to donate food?

The suggestion is to facilitate having this food distributed through your school’s zone for pick up. We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of this model once it is underway.

What happens if families cannot pick up food supplies? Is there a delivery method?

We will not be delivering food directly to families at this time.

What will we be providing for meals?

Truffles Catering will shift their service to a pick-up model. Each package will contain five individual meals which include Mac & Cheese, SS Meatballs with rice, Cheese Perogies, Meat Lasagna, Beef Chilli with Rice, Pasta Bolognese, Chicken Fricassee with Rice, and Shepherd’s Pie. There will be five different meals in each package and we will not be able to swap out meals. Please consider this menu when choosing students who will receive it as there may be cultural sensitivities to consider. In addition to Truffles, we will provide meals from our restaurant partners.

At this time, we will be providing 10,000 meals per week to our most needy students, with the plan to expand this service as food and funds become available.

Communications

What if the media contacts you for an interview or information?

The only person who will be speaking on behalf of the District to the media is our Superintendent, or a designate approved by the Superintendent. Please forward all media requests to Communications: Lmcpmail@sd61.bc.ca

What happens if one of our parents or students is in the news for having contracted COVID-19?

Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) will handle all the media enquiries and communication with suspected or confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19).

We are to leave the responsibility of alerting community members who may have been in the same location as someone with COVID-19 to VIHA. Any public statements concerning expected or confirmed cases are being managed by VIHA.