

Sept. 1st, 2021

Welcome Back

Our staff are so excited to be welcoming students back into the building on September 7th, for the 2021-22 school year. We know that you have been eagerly awaiting news regarding how school is going to be organized and structured. Over the course of the last week, since the government released their revised *Communicable Disease Plan*, our District set to work to ensure that we have strong health and safety protocols in place for students and staff, aligned with Provincial COVID-19 guidance for K-12 schools. Superintendent Arul-pragasam sent out a letter on August 27th addressing the key points. That information is also posted on the District website. Here's a recap, along with a few notes (in red), specific to Cheam:

Listed below are the preventative health and safety measures that will continue from last year. Please note that the school district will continue to ensure that all infection prevention and exposure control measures co-developed between public health officials, a stakeholder led steering committee, and the Ministry of Education are met or exceeded when students and staff return to school in September.

- Staff and students are to continue to do their own Daily Health Check and should remain home if they are not feeling well.
- Mask wearing indoors for all K-12 staff, visitors and students in Grades 4-12, including at their desks and on school buses.
- Mask wearing indoors strongly encouraged for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3.
- Continued posting of directional signage to manage traffic flow and prevent crowding.
- General cleaning of the premises, and the cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, will occur at least once in a 24-hour period.
- Continued focus on rigorous hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Maintain building air ventilation as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort.

What is different for the 2021-2022 school year:

- Students will no longer be organized in learning groups/cohorts.
 - We will return to one common recess (10:05 am-10:20 am) and lunch hour (12:12 pm-12:55 pm).
 - We will continue to have the lunch eating period within instructional time, to be supervised by the classroom teacher (11:55 am).
- Students/staff will not be required to social distance by 2 metres. Schools will work to implement measures such as respecting others' personal space and engage in outside activities and learning as much as possible.
 - To reduce congestion in the hallway of the main building, classes will enter with their teacher from the side door (opposite the gym), and exit either the front door or the back door (by the library).
 - If you arrive later than 8:25 am, please have your child report directly to the office to check in with Mrs. Adrian. The front door will be open.
- A new *Communicable Disease Plan* will replace our District's *Safety Plan*. It will have many similarities to our current *Safety Plan* but will reflect any ongoing measures and additional measures to be implemented as advised by Public Health.

- More opportunities for extra-curricular activities and field trips will be available.
- Parent volunteers will be welcomed back.
 - Please be patient as teachers develop their routines, and remember we all have different comfort levels. If you are wanting to be able to volunteer in whatever capacity, now's a good time to complete your Police Information Check (valid for four years). Forms are available at the office.
- The playground will be open after school.
 - To avoid congestion, we ask parents to hang back during the dismissal process. Students can play on the playground, under staff supervision, until 2:30 pm. Parents can join their child at that time, or perhaps a little earlier, once the buses depart. Unsupervised children will be asked to wait at the office. Masks are not required, but do be mindful of others. Please note, washrooms will not be accessible after 2:30 pm.
- Regional Medical Health Officers will now have the authority to implement additional safety requirements at a regional, district or school level during times of increased community transmission of COVID-19.

Hopefully this outline provides enough context for the moment. As we get back into the swing of things, you will no doubt have many questions. We will address these as they arise, and deal with any concerns or changes as needed.

The remainder of this newsletter is intended to provide direction for our students in Grades 1-5. For Kindergarten students, the gradual entry plan shared with you in your 'Welcome' package has not changed.

The Plan for Week One

For Grade 1-5 students, the following is what you can expect our first week back.

➤ Tuesday, Sept. 7th (8:15 am-10:15 am)

All students in Grades 1-3 are asked to assemble on the blacktop (basketball court/Gaga Ball area) when the warning bell rings at 8:10 am. All students in Grades 4 and 5 are to assemble on the playing field, just outside the library.

This is a short day for our students, a brief chance to reconnect with some classmates, and a chance to meet the teachers they will be learning with this year. This day is also our chance to confirm our student numbers, and ensure we have our classes configured in the best possible way. Over the first few days of school, your child will have a chance to meet the various teachers at their grade level before we finalize our classes. We expect to have this process completed by Friday, September 10th at the latest. The teachers working with your child this week will clarify the arrival and dismissal expectations for each day, until classes are finalized. Your child will not need any supplies today, nor will they need a snack.

Please note that in an effort to reduce congestion, we ask that parents remain in the parking lot, by their vehicle or on the sidewalk, both at arrival and dismissal. We will have staff out to help direct students

safely. At this time, masks are no longer required in outdoor settings. Please be aware of your surroundings, however, and do your best to respect the personal space of others.

➤ **Wednesday, Sept. 8th (8:15 am-2:15 pm)**

Upon arrival, Grade 1-5 students will report to their designated areas, as communicated yesterday. If your child is unsure where to report, they are to meet on the blacktop where they will be redirected by a staff member.

This is a full day in session. Your child will need a snack and a lunch today. A refillable water bottle would also be beneficial, although the water fountains will be open for use. Students are often hungrier than you might expect with this change of routine, so please pack a little extra. If your child needs a mask, we have disposable ones available at the office.

N.B. All students will wash their hands under the teacher's supervision prior to entry each day. In class, the teacher will regularly review the daily expectations in relation to our health and safety protocols, explaining why it is so important everyone adheres to these guidelines: proper hand-washing, coughing/sneezing etiquette, the proper wearing of a mask (required at grades 4 and 5, encouraged at K-3), and daily health checks. All students will wash their hands again prior to dismissal. We will continue with this regular hand-washing routine, as we did last year, including before and after eating and using the playground. Students will have access to sinks to use soap and water as often as possible, in addition to hand sanitizer.

➤ **Thursday, Sept. 9th (8:15 am-2:15 pm)**

Upon arrival, Grade 1-5 students will report to their designated areas, as communicated yesterday. If your child is unsure where to report, they are to meet on the blacktop where they will be redirected by a staff member. This is another full day in session.

➤ **Friday, Sept. 10th (8:15 am-2:15 pm)**

Upon arrival, Grade 1-5 students will report to their designated areas, as communicated yesterday. If your child is unsure where to report, they are to meet on the blacktop where they will be redirected by a staff member.

We expect to be able to finalize classes today. The students will be notified before they leave at the end of the day. You will also receive a brief email from your child's teacher, confirming which classroom they will be in this year.

Please note that we will correspond via the primary email address you have provided the school. If you do not receive an email, check your 'Junk Mail'. If you have received nothing, or you would like to add to or change the address on file, please contact the school.

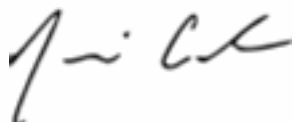
Closing Remarks

Over the course of last year, our community showed a high degree of cooperation, understanding, support, and most notably, patience. While life has returned a little closer to 'normal', we're not quite there yet. It is so important that we continue to support each other, and keep our kids safe.

We are trusting that you continue to show caution, keeping your child home if they show signs of illness. We will also continue to show caution here at school, and if a child begins to exhibit symptoms of illness, we will contact you to ask that you come take them home. In the meantime, we will provide a safe place for your child to wait, away from others to help reduce the possibility of spreading illness.

We recognize how frustrating and inconvenient this can be, but we need to be vigilant in the face of the highly contagious Delta variant. We also understand there are students that may exhibit signs of illness due to a variety of other factors, such as stress or anxiety, or perhaps related to allergies. As we settle into the school year, if this becomes a concern, you can discuss this further with your child's teacher, and we will work through this with you. We want our students to be at school as often as possible, so we will do all we can to mitigate disruptions to your child's education.

As we enter into this school year, we know that we are going to need to continue to be flexible and ensure that our lines of communication are open. If you have questions about our plan, please reach out and connect over the phone (604.792.1416) or contact me by email: (iain_gardner@sd33.bc.ca).



Iain Gardner, Principal

Related Links:

- [BC K-12 Education Recovery Plan](#)
- [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)
- [BCCDC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)