

NANAIMO LADYSMITH PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

INFORMATION SHEET

DATE: February 24, 2021
TO: Board of Education
FROM: Superintendent, Scott Saywell
SUBJECT: COVID-19 Update

Background

This information sheet is intended to provide an update with respect to the recent COVID-19 exposures in our schools and the updated Provincial Covid-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings, Rapid Response Teams, the Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools (NLPS) staff daily health check app and additional supports for learning.

Discussion

The mid island region has been hit hard by Covid-19 in the last couple weeks where we have seen a record number of cases. Snuneymuxw and Cowichan tribes have also seen a record number of COVID-19 cases. Both Nations have enacted a Shelter in Place order and both Nations have experienced deaths due to Covid-19. Our thoughts go out to these Nations as they battle this virus.

The last few weeks have been challenging for a number of south end schools in NLPS. Seven schools in the south end of Nanaimo, as well as Ladysmith Secondary School, have had numerous exposures. Three Schools, Bayview Elementary, Qwam Qwum Stuwixwulh and Rock City Elementary have experienced outbreaks.

As of Monday, February 22, 2021, only Bayview Elementary and NDSS remain on the Exposures in Schools list. Bayview Elementary will be removed on February 23 and NDSS on February 22, 2021.

New Covid-19 Guidelines

[New Provincial Covid-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for k-12 settings](#) were announced by the Ministry of Education/Provincial Health Officer on February 4, 2021. The Department of Learning Services, with help from the NLPS Emergency Operations Committee has updated our local guidelines to ensure compliance with these updates. These updated guidelines have been shared with principals, schools' Health and Safety Committees and staff. Some of the updates to the Health and Safety Guidelines include:

- High-intensity physical activities are to be held outside as much as possible and activities that include prolonged physical contact should not be part of physical education or any other classroom learning

- Shared physical education equipment (weight machines, treadmills) and musical instruments can be used only if they are cleaned between use and students are to be spaced at least two metres apart. Masks are to be used when singing
- Staff should be assigned to one learning group whenever possible
- All secondary students and K-12 staff will now be required to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas, including when they are with their learning groups. The only exceptions are when:
 - Sitting or standing at their seat or workstation in a classroom;
 - There is a barrier in place; or
 - They are eating or drinking

Prior to these changes, masks were required for middle and secondary students and all K-12 staff in high-traffic areas, like hallways and outside of classrooms or learning groups when they could not safely distance from others.

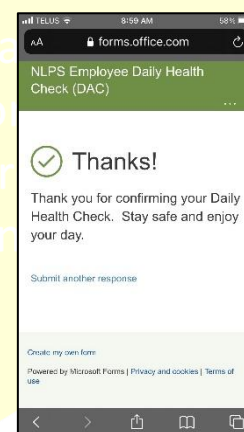
- Staff must practice physical distancing and wear non-medical masks for any face-to-face meetings or interactions, including in the staff room. Staff must also hold meetings virtually whenever possible
- Any visitor to a school is required to wear a non-medical mask

Rapid Response Teams

NLPS has been selected as one of 5 public school regional Rapid Response Teams. Other school districts include Peace River North (SD60), Vancouver (SD39), Central Okanagan (SD23) and Surrey (SD36). The Rapid Response Teams will support schools and school districts regarding their COVID-19 safety plans and conduct assessments of significant school exposure events (e.g. outbreaks, closures). Each lead school district submits proposals to the Ministry by February 26, 2021. NLPS is working with Island Health to submit our proposal by the deadline.

Staff Daily Health Check App

We have heard many times from Dr. Bonnie Henry as well as our local Medical Health Officer, Dr. Allison that the occurrence of Covid-19 in schools is a direct reflection of incidence of Covid-19 in the Nanaimo/Ladysmith community as a whole. One of the primary ways to ensure that Covid-19 stays out of our schools is for staff to stay home when they are sick. A requirement under the guidelines is for all school district staff to complete a “daily self health check” before they come into work. To help staff complete this check more easily, we have created an App that can be downloaded and completed on their phone.



Supports for Learning

Although the majority of K-12 students in NLPS are experiencing high levels of success in school this year, we have a greater number of students than typical who are not experiencing success and are not attached to school as well as they would be in a “normal” year. The threat of Covid-19 in schools has had a number of effects:

- Increased absenteeism
- Increased number of families opting for Distributed Learning at Island ConnectEd as well as other school district DL schools.
- Some parents have withdrawn their student(s) for the year.

The Learning Services Department has added extra staffing to support students who are not attending.

Elementary Supports

Elementary Outreach Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports schools, teachers, students/families with students with integration plans and who have been directed to learn from home both part/full time (including students who are immunocompromised) District-wide 	PRIORITY 1.0 FTE
Elementary Outreach Worker (CYFSW) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports schools, teachers, students/families with students with integration plans and who have been directed to learn from home both part/full time (including students who are immunocompromised) District-wide 	33 hrs.
North Zone Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports schools, teachers, students/families who are not engaging or not attending Dover Bay/Wellington/NDSS family of schools 	1.0 FTE
South Zone Teacher <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports schools, teachers, students/families who are not engaging or not attending JBCS/Cedar/LSS family of schools 	1.0 FTE
Total	3.0 FTE 33 hrs. CYFSW

Secondary Supports

Initiative	FTE is for half year, Feb 1- June 30
Staff Island Connect Ed 10-12 cross enrolled Q3/Q4	5 FTE
Add blocks during Q3 and Q4 for Outreach – students not attending regularly: Dover Bay – 4 blocks NDSS – 4 Blocks Wellington – 4 blocks JBCS – 2 blocks LSS – 2 blocks Cedar – 2 blocks	4.5 FTE
Add staffing Learning Alternatives for students not enrolled at any school (49 students)	0.5 FTE
Release time for ICE teachers to modernize courses	0.5 FTE
Total	10.5 FTE