

July 31, 2020

Dear Parents and Students,

I hope that you are all having an enjoyable summer and spending more time outside and less time on Zoom – and that you, your families and friends are healthy in mind, body and spirit. With the announcement this past Wednesday by the Ministry of Education (MOE), Rob Fleming (Minister of Education), and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), Bonnie Henry, that school will return for all students in September, we thought you might appreciate an update with some information so you can learn more.

We are excited to have the entire student body return to King David in September – and we are committed, as it is always our first priority, to *safety first*. We have heard from many people, even in the past 2 days (and we did have a Zoom parent meeting with approximately 50 participants after the MOE announcement on Wednesday), about both their excitement and their concerns. Please appreciate that every school has the duty to follow the direction of the MOE and the PHO – we do not get to choose. I know that there are many different opinions on what schools should do, and we know that there are many unique student and family circumstances, especially for those who may be at higher risk should they get COVID-19. We will do everything to put *safety first* within the mandate given to us by the MOE and PHO.

This email is not to tell you what King David will do – we learned the plan of the MOE at the same time as everyone else. We are going to think very carefully about what we are going to do. We are working to understand all aspects of the plan and we are working with other schools in our school association, Independent School Association of BC (ISABC). This morning, I was on a Zoom call with many other school Heads including our larger West Side independent schools. What we do know is that the MOE will share, on August 10th, a “Return to School Template” and we are expected to communicate the plan with our families by August 26th. You can expect that we will also be sending a survey home to gather additional information from parents and students. I also anticipate that our plan will evolve and change over time and that all of us will be best served by being curious, asking questions, staying calm and being flexible – and, as always, being kind.

I am going to share a number of links with you so that you can learn more about the Restart Plan as well as some links with other good information about safety. It is too much, in an already long email, to review what the MOE and PHO have said in detail – better for you to look at the documents and get the information in their words. However, listed below are some essential highlights per the MOE and PHO, as they refer to King David specifically as a small high school:

- All students are expected to return for in-school instruction. This is in Stage 2 of the return to school plan, though Stage 2 no longer limits the number of students in the building.
 - (what this means: remote learning is not to be an option when students are expected at school)
- Physical Distancing (PD) of 2 metres is still in place, except that we can organize cohort groups of up to 120 students in which PD will not apply.
 - (what this means: we will create cohort groups that allow for full classes without PD)
- School schedules, including daily schedules, staggered class start times, lunch times, or even how courses are offered, can be adjusted.
 - (what this means: we have not yet determined our daily schedule and are considering options with safety being the primary concern)

- Outside of a designated cohort group, masks should be used where proper PD cannot be maintained (students should have masks with them and if they do not have one the school will provide one). In other situations that are not related to PD, mask wearing is a personal choice.
 - (what this means: we would encourage people to wear a mask. School staff will have to follow PD with all students)

Here are some links that I think you might find very useful with brief descriptions.

1) This site has a number of links including the 5 Stages for school return (we are in Stage 2 in September). It also has links to Learning Groups (Cohorts), Information on the Restart Timeline and Health and Safety Information (within this is a list of FAQs for school staff but I recommend it for everyone).

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school>

2) This from the CDC and it contains Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings

http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf

3) One final link that I found really helpful from the CDC as it links to all sorts of other topics (i.e. masks) and is really easy to navigate.

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

4) Finally – if you did not see any of the original information on the MOE and PHO plan, here are a couple of links to hear from them directly:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/ProvinceofBC>

[https://globalnews.ca/news/7227148/bc-back-to-school-plan-september-](https://globalnews.ca/news/7227148/bc-back-to-school-plan-september-coronavirus/?utm_source=NewsletterBc&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=2020)

[coronavirus/?utm_source=NewsletterBc&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=2020](https://globalnews.ca/news/7227148/bc-back-to-school-plan-september-coronavirus/?utm_source=NewsletterBc&utm_medium=Email&utm_campaign=2020)

We know that there will be lots of questions and I hope you can appreciate that we do not yet have all the answers (you are still welcome to ask me questions – but please, I would appreciate your respecting my position by not ‘venting’ about things I cannot change). The Admin Team has been working this past month and I want you to know that I have insisted that a break be taken – so please do not expect to hear from us in the next 2 weeks – though I will be available on email.

Wishing you all a wonderful BC long weekend – stay safe and be well.

Shabbat Shalom,
Russ