



North Saanich Middle School

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Dear NSMS Parents and Guardians:

I wanted to start by welcoming everyone back to school. Each year the start of school is an exciting time for students, staff and parents, and even as we deal with the complexities of restarting school in these challenging times, this statement is still true. Our staff is looking forward to working again with our returning students, and we are excited about meeting our new students and helping them become Hawks! We recognize that transition for our new Gr. 6 students has been a challenge and will send more information out to all of our new families about an opportunity for a school walkthrough (in small groups and at designated times) on 3 or 4 September. We also have some virtual information on our website that may help as well. We have a great school, and we will work hard as a learning community to help our students grow academically, socially and emotionally.

Since we are in an unprecedented situation this year, school will look different for our students. We are working hard to have our school ready when students walk through the doors in September. This communication aims to provide families with as much information as possible about our planning process. Please understand that this information may need to change and adjust as the situation does. We are committed to ensuring that you have timely information about any changes we need to make throughout the year.

We request that you read the information below very carefully as it is critical to ensure a safe and organized September for all.

School Startup:

- Each student will attend an orientation in the first week on the following schedule:
 - Grade 6: Thursday, September 10, 2020 - 9:30-11 am**
 - Grade 7: Thursday, September 10, 2020 - 1:15-2:45 pm**
 - Grade 8: Friday, September 11, 2020 - 9:30-11 am**
- We will meet students near and around the Hawk's Nest (play structure) in front of the school, and we will have staff there to greet you and direct you to our class lists and student gathering zone on the field. For health and safety reasons, the gathering area on the field will be restricted to students and staff.
- Limited bus service will be provided **only** upon request for the orientation day. To request service, please email transportation@saanichschools.ca
- If you are dropping your child(ren) off, please keep the bus zone clear and drop off **no more than 15 minutes early**.
- Please send your student to school **wearing a mask** (if this is not possible masks will be provided).

- The purpose of the orientation day is to introduce students to their Core teacher and review health and safety routines to be ready for a full start on Monday.
- Further information regarding support for students impacted by immune suppression will be available to families early next week.
- Full school days and bus service will begin on **Monday, September 14**. Please ensure that you have registered for the bus through the Saanich Schools website.

Structure of the School Day

- The school schedule will be available on the school website by Tuesday, September 1, and it will be similar to previous years.
- Students will spend their days with their homeroom class of no more than 30 students.
- Students will have break time with a partner class (maintaining cohorts of under 60 students). Breaks will be divided so that cohorts have separate spaces to enjoy their breaks.
- Students will continue to participate in elective classes (including band) and physical education. If a staff member teaches them outside of their cohort, PPE masks and/or physical distancing will be practiced.

Health and Safety Routines

We are fortunate at NSMS to be a smaller school, which is helping us significantly in developing safe routines and schedules. These routines include:

- Hand washing and hand sanitizing.
- Hallway movement directions and routines.
- Entering into different doors and/or staggered times.
- Requiring masks in hallways/common areas/buses and anywhere where students are not in their cohort. (Students will be provided with two reusable masks at the beginning of the school year.)
- More information regarding daily health checks and other health and safety measures will be shared with families early next week.

Action Items for Parents

- Review the above routines with your student
- Notify the school by Friday, August 28 if you have an alternative plan for your student (i.e Distributed Learning)
- If you require bus service for the orientation day (September 10/11), please contact transportation@saanichschools.ca by **September 2**.

We understand that the COVID pandemic has been extremely stressful for families and that there is significant apprehension regarding the start of school. We are committed to working alongside families and students to make this experience as positive and rewarding as possible. As always, we look forward to having students back at school learning and growing and having some fun along the way.

Sincerely,

Kal Russell
Principal

Steve Newlove
Vice-Principal