



Falkland Elementary School

North Okanagan Shuswap - School District No. 83

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January 6th, 2022

Dear Parents;

Once again, Happy New Year!! We are so excited to see your children back to school Monday, January 10th. We thank you very much for your continued cooperation and patience with the delay of school start up.

Please read this important letter as it contains information about a flood at our school over the break and information about enhanced health and safety measures in place in all schools across British Columbia due to increasing cases of COVID-19 and growing knowledge of the Omicron variant.

In case you haven't heard, over the break a flood occurred at our school which affected classrooms/spaces on the lower level of our school. A water pipe burst in the mechanical room and 2 inches of water flooded the basemen affecting the library, music room, learning resource storage room and our Division 1 (Grade 7/8) classroom. We are looking at a window of approximately 6 weeks (best case) to 3 months (worst case) to have the situation fully restored. In the mean time, Division 1 will be relocating to the StrongStart Space for their learning for the mornings and part of the afternoons. They will also access the gym for part of each day.

We are currently developing plans on how to best provide learning support, music and library with very minimal space, instruments and books. I will keep you informed as the restoration gets underway. Due to limited space available, our Breakfast Club will be operating out of staffroom.

As per the direction of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education (refer to the [Addendum for Covid-19 Guidelines for K-12 Schools](#)) schools MUST ensure enhanced health and safety measures are in place to prevent transmission. These efforts are meant to address concerns of the high transmissibility and shorter incubation period of the Omicron variant making timely case management and contact tracing unsustainable for public health. As expressed in previous communication, our job this week (in addition to dealing with the aftermath of the flood) is to implement the enhanced measures to do our very best to keep schools open and in person learning in place. In addition to implementing the enhanced measures, our job included preparing for the possibility of a functional closure in the event that our school experiences a high volume of student illness and/or an inability to find replacement for affected staff. We are hoping that with everyone's consistent cooperation, we will be able to keep our school open and in-person learning continuing.

In addition to the measures outlined in our existing [site-based Health and Safety Plan](#) we have additional enhancements that will be in place on Monday, January 10th.

Here are the existing measures that will be reviewed/reinforced at school:

1. Providing regular reminders to students, families and staff about the importance of completing the [HEALTH CHECK](#) DAILY and staying home when experiencing symptoms of illness. Please allow your child the time they need to completely heal. It's hard to participate fully in learning opportunities when feeling unwell. Please contact your child's classroom teacher for any missed opportunities for learning that your child can do at home if well enough.
2. Having staff demonstrate, teach, model and review how to practice personal prevention measures at school like hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette and how to wear a mask for proper fit – over mouth and nose.
3. Maintaining respectful space between people.
4. Visitor access is by appointment only and only if determined the visit will benefit student learning and well-being. Visitors must follow all health and safety measures as part of the

[Provincial Return to School Plan](#), [SD83 Communicable Disease Plan](#) and [Falkland School Site-Specific Plan](#).

5. Food programs continue with proper food safe certification. Having said that limited space (due to the flood) may impact our ability to proceed with Hot Lunch as planned. No sharing of food or drink.
6. Playground – students will continue to be reminded to avoid crowding, minimize direct contact and stay off walkways except to line up. Hugging and other hands-on activities is discouraged at school as students are expected to respect the personal space of others and keep their hands to themselves.

Here are the enhanced measures that will be implemented at school:

1. Increased spacing between students (and staff) in our learning spaces. The physical arrangement/set up in each of our classrooms have been adjusted to maximize space, given the space available.
2. Thoughtful and reasonable routines to prevent transmission – continued sanitizing with approved sanitizer supplied by the school as students enter the building and other spaces in our school occupied by students from multiple classrooms, strategic organization of groups accessing coat hooks in our hallways and classrooms to prevent crowding. Vital Oxide disinfectant is available in all classroom/learning spaces to disinfect materials shared by students from multiple classrooms (ie. chrome books).
3. Masking by [Order of the Provincial Health Officer](#) – This order as of December 3rd includes schools and is updated to include [proper fitting masks](#). All students and staff are expected to comply with the mask order. Moving forward, in addition to all students and staff being required to wear a proper fitting mask, procedural masks (3 ply medical mask) in place of cloth masks and gaiters is a MUST for staff and will be preferred and encouraged with our students. These proper fitting masks are believed to be more effective. Parents who are able, are encouraged to purchase a box of 3 ply masks for their child to kept at home or in their backpack. Staff will soon be supplied with N95 masks for a limited time.
4. As part of the [Order of the Provincial Health Officer](#), Mask Exemptions have been clarified to include only individuals who have behavioural and health conditions and physical, psychological, cognitive, and mental impairment. Any previous mask exemptions (staff or student) will need to be reviewed at this time with the Principal (given the higher transmissibility of the new variant) as directed by our Superintendent of Schools, Donna Kriger. Alternate accommodations will be put in place that are student specific and based on the reason for the accommodation to ensure the safety of all children and staff.

The following is important for your follow up as we enter into these enhanced health and safety measures:

1. Confirm/update your emergency contact at school as students who report or develop symptoms of illness (according to the [Health Checklist](#)) while at school will need to go home to heal as soon as possible. Emergency contact will be called if parents cannot be contacted.
2. Secure a back up plan that includes care for your child in the event of a functional school/class closure.
3. Understand that the school may need to implement plans in the moment to deal with increased staff absenteeism to ensure supervision of students.
4. Ensure your child comes to school each day dressed and prepared for the weather. (ie. snow pants, water resistant mittens or gloves, warm winter jacket, etc.). Students may be outside for PE/movement and other times during instruction. If the “feels like temperature” is -13 or above, students are expected to be outside at recess and lunch, rain or shine. Send an umbrella for personal use if you like. Inside days are determined by the Principal.
5. Ensure your child has a water bottle at school each day.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you all very much for all you are doing in support of these enhanced health and safety measures to prevent the transmission of illness at our school. The result will keep our school open and in person learning in place which is what we believe to be best for our students and their learning.

As always, please contact me if you have questions or require further clarification. I am more than happy to hear you concerns and thoughts as we move forward and continue to navigate these changing times.

Sincerely,

Shelly Cull
Principal