



Helen Gorman Elementary School

Home of the Cougars

August 31, 2020

Dear Helen Gorman Families,

RE: THE RETURN OF IN-CLASS LEARNING AT HELEN GORMAN ELEMENTARY

I hope you and your family continue to be safe and well. As mentioned in our recent [Welcome Back newsletter](#), we are looking forward to welcoming your children back to safe classrooms on September 10th and 11th.

- Sept 10 - Only Gr 1-5 students with last names A-K return for full day orientation with their new teacher.
- Sept 11 - Only Gr 1-5 students with last names L-Z return for full day orientation with their new teacher.
- Sept 14 - All Gr 1-5 students begin full-day attendance at school.
- Kindergarten families will receive a separate email with their child's mini-sessions schedule.

Please review the information below for basic procedures for a safe return to school. Staff will familiarize students with safety procedures and ensure clean, safe learning spaces, but knowing our new procedures will help you make sure students travel safely and arrive to school in good health.

Please remember the following key points for arriving to and leaving from school this fall:

- Remind children to keep their distance and refrain from touching others while lining up for entrance to the school via the outside classroom doors
- Parents/caregivers are to leave school grounds shortly after dropping off and everyone must leave the school grounds once students are dismissed for the day
- Learn the drop-off/pickup areas
- Parents/caregivers must not enter the school unless you have a scheduled appointment/invitation from school administrators

Since March, the conditions surrounding the pandemic have changed many times. As a result, the response by the Ministry, our District, and our school has changed as well. Over the course of the school year, this plan will likely evolve, too. We will work hard to communicate any changes to you in a timely manner. We continue to be committed to providing a safe learning environment for students and staff while modeling kindness, empathy, dignity, and respect. Through teaching, learning, and ongoing reminders, we are committed to helping our students be safe through these uncertain times. We want your children to continue to have strong connections and relationships with the adults and other students at our school.

You can learn more about district-wide plans for safety, returning to school, and provincial updates at sd23.bc.ca. Thank you for staying engaged and connected to our school community. By working together, we can help students feel welcome, safe, and ready to learn.

Learning Together

Here is a general overview of our timetable at Helen Gorman Elementary.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:25am	Learning groups line up outside classroom doors for staggered entry				
Morning	Instructional time (staggered “fresh air breaks” scheduled in designated play areas)				
Lunch	Half the school plays while half the school eats, then switch places				
Afternoon	Instructional time (staggered recess scheduled in designated play areas)				
2:25pm	Staggered dismissal of learning groups				

LEARNING GROUPS

Students must stay with their learning group throughout the day to limit interaction with other students, especially in common areas and during breaks.

Primary. For most of the school year, your child will be in one class of students (20-22 students) with one enrolling teacher and perhaps a support staff member. At times, however, your child’s class might join one other primary class to form a learning group for the purpose of activities such as PE or outside learning. The size of a primary learning group will be 40-44 students with two classroom teachers and support staff.

Intermediate. For most of the school year, your child will be in one class of students (28-30 students) with one enrolling teacher and perhaps a support staff member. Once again, one intermediate class might join another intermediate class to form a learning group for the purpose of activities such as PE or outside learning. The maximum size of an intermediate learning group will be 58 students and support staff with two enrolling teachers.

Students & staff in the *same* learning group will minimize physical contact with one another (“keeping our hands to ourselves”). Students & staff in *different* learning groups will maintain physical distance from each other. Schedules & structures will be put in place to maintain physical distance between students & staff in *different* learning groups. Bringing the entire school population together for a traditional assembly in the gym will not be possible.

During Orientation Week, students will learn who the teachers, support staff, and students are within their learning group.

RECESS & LUNCHTIMES

Public health authorities have indicated that playgrounds are a safe environment, and our students will continue to spend recess times outside. Recesses and lunchtimes will be staggered, and different learning groups will have designated areas of the schoolyard in which to play. Learning groups will share non-instructional time to minimize possible contact between students in different learning groups.

Learning Together

HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Routine Daily Health Self-checks

- Parents & caregivers are to answer the following questions in the morning before coming to school. If answers to either question are 'yes,' please keep your child home, self-isolate, & seek care from a health-care provider.
 - Does your child have the symptoms of a common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease?
 - Has your child been outside Canada in the last 14 days?
 - Has your child been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak?
- Families will be given a [Daily Health Checklist](#) for reference which they may post on their refrigerator for convenient daily access. A regularly updated list of [COVID-19 symptoms](#) can be found on the BCCDC website.
- School staff & other adults are responsible for conducting daily self-checks prior to entering the school.

Allergies & Other Considerations

- Students & staff experiencing seasonal allergies which are related to an existing condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience a change in their symptoms, they should see their health-care provider.
- Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms, provided they are asymptomatic. Any student, staff or other person within the school who was identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate.

Staff or Students Developing Symptoms at School

If staff or students develop symptoms at school, arrangements will be made to send the person home (ie, call child's parent). If a student is waiting for a ride, they will be brought to a location away from other students. A mask must be worn as long as the child is able to tolerate it. As with any illness or injury which prevents a child from attending school, the classroom teacher will ensure continuity of learning at home in cases where a student is required to self-isolate or quarantine. **The school has no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are left for healthcare professionals. If someone in the school displays symptoms of COVID-19, we will take direction from public health authorities.**

SCHOOL DAY PROCEDURES

Before you go...

- **Drop off should be no earlier than 8:15 am** - Students should line up outside the classroom door by 8:25. Parents dropping off their children by car may park in the diagonal parking spots at the front of the school or along Salmon Road. Please note that the City of West Kelowna asks that parents avoid the no parking areas on the south side of Salmon Road when dropping off or picking up their children.
- Please send your child each day with:
 - A water bottle
 - Suitable, healthy snacks and lunch
 - Clothing appropriate for the weather
 - A beach towel when sitting on the ground during outside learning time (optional)
 - Any personal items (ie, toys, food) brought from home will be for individual use only. Teachers will develop classroom structures to ensure that these items are not shared.

Daily Entry Procedures

- Students in the same learning group will line up outside their teacher's classroom door while minimizing physical contact.
- As students enter, they will sanitize their hands by applying hand sanitizer or by washing their hands with soap & water. If hands are visibly dirty, soap & water works best.
- Students also should sanitize hands before they leave for outside time or leave the room (ie, go to the washroom) or return to the room.
- Teachers may add additional safety steps to this procedure to meet the needs of their students.
- Students' access to classroom cubbies will be staggered so to minimize physical contact.

Other Considerations

- Classes will enter the building ONLY with their teachers and in a specific, staggered order to facilitate immediate hand washing
- Through the day, access to hallways will be limited to classes moving together, bathroom breaks, and essential travel
- Washrooms will be designated for certain learning groups and be limited to a certain number of students at a time (line-ups will be marked outside bathrooms for students waiting).
- We will encourage minimizing physical contact, maintaining physical distancing, and hand washing routines through frequent, kind, and gentle reminders.
- There will be custodial staff on-site for regular general cleaning and disinfecting of the premises which will occur at least once a day, and frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day.

MASKS

Elementary school students are not required to wear a mask. However, students may choose to wear one. Your child likely will see some staff members wearing masks at school. In some common areas of the school, your child may see plexiglass barriers. We will continue to strive to provide a safe learning environment for students and staff while modeling kindness, empathy, dignity, and respect regardless of whether a member of our school community is wearing a mask or not.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Parents are always welcome to be involved at Helen Gorman Elementary School. Given these unique circumstances, however, we ask that parents support students and staff by honoring the following expectations:

- Parent/guardian access to the school building will be by appointment only, or by invitation by the school principal or designate. Primary families are welcomed to wait in the line-ups outside until the teacher arrives to bring the class inside. Thank you for practicing physical distancing.
- Parents & visitors should not enter a classroom occupied by a learning group. Any visitor to a learning group will need prior approval from the school principal as well as partake in a health and safety orientation.
- Whenever possible, please communicate with teachers or the office through email or telephone.
- If you need to drop-off late or pick-up early, please pull into the round-a-bout at the front of the school and call the office to wait for someone to come out and meet your child. In order to limit congestion, please avoid the use of the round-a-bout for general pick-up and drop-off.

- The Hot Lunch or Pizza Wednesday food service will not start right away. Further information will be forthcoming.
- Since we currently cannot have a traditional assembly, the District is reviewing fees for cultural performances. In September, your child's school fees will only include the school supply fee.

PLEASE NOTE: We will be making every effort to keep our school clean and safe - including specific teaching and learning about safety routines, procedures, and expectations for safe behavior and physical distancing. However, the nature of working in a facility with young children makes it difficult for us to guarantee continuous sanitization and complete adherence to minimizing physical contact or maintaining physical distancing.

Thank you for your ongoing care, support, and patience as we navigate our response to the pandemic. If you have any questions or comments, please contact the school office at 250-870-5116 or hge@sd23.bc.ca.

Sincerely,

Rob Aviani, Principal

eSchoolBC Option – For students who are immuno-compromised, please contact your school for information about enrolling in distributed learning options through eSchoolBC.