

Our Lady of Mercy School

7481 10th Avenue
Burnaby, B.C.
V3N 2S1

“Amid so many passing things, the Lord wants to remind us of what will remain forever: *love*, because God is Love”.

-Pope Francis

First and foremost, thank you for your support and for trusting my staff and me.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted so many of us in a variety of ways and the start of the 2020-21 school year will look differently because of it. We are genuinely excited to have students return to school and to bring some normalcy back into your child’s life. Our plans prioritize student learning, safely maximize instructional time while strictly adhering to the Health and Safety measures prescribed by the Provincial Health Office.

The Ministry staff has reviewed the OLM Safety Plan and has confirmed that few are in alignment with the requirements set out in the COVID-19 Operation Guidelines and the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings.

The following questions are in no particular order.

1. **NEW** *What day do the students return to school?*

Students whose last name is from A to L return to school on Thursday, September 10, 2020 from 9:00 to Noon (12:00) to receive his or her safety orientation.

Students whose last name is from M to Z return to school on Friday, September 11, 2020 from 9:00 to Noon (12:00) to receive his or her safety orientation.

Students will line up outside his or her classroom door.

Full Day school starts on Monday, September 14, 2020 for Grades One to Seven.

Kindergarten will either come at 8:45-11:30 or 12:30-3:00 as previously indicated on Thursday, September 10, 2020.

2. *Can parents accompany their child?*

Yes. However, the guidelines that Dr. Bonnie Henry has put in place apply.

ALL adults **MUST** wear a PPE (mask or shield) on the school grounds and stay 2 metres away from any adult or child that is not in their bubble.

We hope that eventually your child will be comfortable lining up at their classroom door on their own. This will vary depending on the child and the grade.

Kindergartens have a NEW DOOR to line up at. Mrs. Grout and Miss Brown will assist you.

3. **NEW** *Is OLM offering a Temporary Transition Option?*

Yes. As per the Catholic Independent Schools Vancouver Archdioceses (CISVA), the Superintendent has stated,

“It is the intention of the Ministry of Education that students return full-time, in person attendance at school on September 10, 2020. However, some families may not be ready to have their children return to full-time in-person instruction on this date.”

The *Temporary Transition Option* allows your child to receive an at-home learning. It is important to note that this support will not be the same as that which was offered following Spring Break 2020.

“Your child will maintain their classroom placement at their school and will be able to transition to full-time in-person instruction at selected dates in the fall. This is NOT intended to be a full-time option. Normal tuition applies for this option.”

OLM is in alignment with the current Burnaby Public school model. However, because OLM has 1:1 devices we are in a better position. However, parents must remember this model is not like last year.

Transition Option

This option is for families who are not ready to have their children return to in-person instruction at the beginning of September.

- Students from Grade 1 to 5 will receive an OLM electronic device. Grade 6 and 7 if they do not have a device may borrow one from the school.
- Kindergarten parents will pick up a package every week from the school
- Educational assignments will be sent to the students from their classroom teacher
- Parents are responsible to support and ensure their child completes the assignments
- Students will receive periodic check-ins from a staff member
- This option is designed to be short term, to help students transition back to in-class instruction as quickly as possible

- Families choosing this short term, transitional option will keep their space within the school (see above)
- More information regarding this option will be forthcoming

As more information regarding this option becomes available I will inform the OLM parents.

4. *Is my child safe going to school?*

This is an ongoing question we as parents ask ourselves. My children are in their late twenties and they still give me grey hairs wondering if they are safe. It's a big world out there. When your child was a baby or toddler, you were always there, or you left your child in the care of a trusted adult. But as your child gets older, you'll be holding his or her hand less and less. You're bound to worry. And when kids begin to navigate the sidewalks or even public transit by themselves, it can be positively nerve-wracking. And yet, it's our job to gradually give our children more and more independence, so we need to teach them how to keep themselves safe in the world without undermining their trust that the world is a good place.

The COVID-19 world as we know it is not any different. There are guidelines that Dr. Bonnie Henry has set out in the [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#).

OLM has not only complied with the guidelines as indicated in the OLM Safety Plan but has increased safety by:

- **Ventilation:** Purchasing surgically clean air JADE Air Purifier (www.surgicallycleanair.com) which has a 6 stage filtration system, MERV (Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value) of 19. The Ministry requires a MERV of 13. A MERV rating of 13-16 is considered for hospitals, clean rooms and nuclear power plants.
- Increased **sanitization** including electrostatic spray which gives objects an even, 360-degree coating made possible by the negative charge of the sprayed solution as it exits the tool's nozzle and the positive charge of the surfaces it reaches. It uses electrostatics to attach to and wrap around harmful microorganisms and remove them from surfaces. Once a week SterilePro Services will be sanitizing the school.
- Citron Hygiene Company commercially disinfects and cleans our washrooms
- Installing plexiglass stands for teachers to use
- Removal of other extraneous classroom furniture for better traffic flow
- Re-arranging specialty courses to decrease adult contact
- Washroom Protocols and increased cleaning
- Classroom Learning Bubbles
- Designated Play Areas (one area per Bubble)

- Hygiene Practices, such as, washing of hands, respiratory etiquette, social distancing etc.

5. *When are masks mandatory?*

Staff: a PPE (mask or shield) is mandatory when a staff member steps outside their classroom.

A staff member must wear a PPE if they are working 1:1 or in small groups.

Plexi-glass barriers are being used in the classroom where appropriate.

Students: “Non-medical masks are not recommended for elementary school students.”
(Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings)

However, it is at the discretion of the parents. If you choose to have your child(ren) wear a mask or shield. This decision is a personal preference and will be family dependent.

6. *Can a student attend school if a member of their household has a cold or the flu?*

As per the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings:

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household has the cold, influenza, or COVID19- like symptoms, provided the student/staff is asymptomatic. As per public health guidance, it is expected the symptomatic household member is seeking assessment by a health-care provider.

7. *Can my child come to school if they have known allergies?*

As per the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings:

Students and staff who experience seasonal allergies or other COVID-19-like symptoms, which are related to an **existing condition**, can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any change in symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health-care provider.

8. *What are the protocols if a student/staff develops symptoms of illness at school?*

PROTOCOL IF A STUDENT/STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS AT SCHOOL as per the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings.

If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school, schools should:

- Provide the student/staff with a non-medical mask if they don't have one (exceptions should be made for students and staff who cannot wear masks for medical and/or disability-related reasons).

- Provide the student/staff with a space where they can wait comfortably that is separated from others. The student is to be supervised and cared for, when separated.
- Make arrangements for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible.
- Contact the student's parent/caregiver with a request to have their child picked up as soon as possible.
- Clean and disinfect the areas the student/staff used.
- Encourage the student/staff to seek assessment by a health-care provider.
- Request that the student/staff stay home until COVID-19 has been excluded and symptoms have resolved.
- Schools and school districts should notify their local medical health officer if staff and/or student absenteeism exceeds 10 percent of regular attendance, to help with the early identification of clusters or outbreaks.

9. *What if my child has asthma or is immune compromised?*

As per the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings, most children and to the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control, most children who are immunocompromised can return to in-class instruction when safety measures are in place. Protective self-isolation is only recommended for children who are severely immunocompromised.

Children with immune suppression are usually followed by a specialist. There are different types of situations where your child is considered to have immune suppression:

1. They have a medical condition that affects their immune system
2. They have side effects from medications that cause a very low white blood cell count
3. They are taking medication that suppresses their immune system. Children may be taking these medicines as treatment for:
 - o autoimmune or rheumatologic disease
 - o inflammatory bowel disease
 - o immune-mediated kidney or liver disease
 - o organ transplant
 - o bone marrow or stem cell transplant
4. They are having chemotherapy, or they had chemotherapy recently.

As per the CISVA, parents requesting schooling accommodations due to an immunocompromised diagnosis are asked to review the information given to them by their principal and to submit appropriate documentation from your child's specialist team.

10. *Will there be a hot lunch program?*

The hot lunch program will **not** resume until further notice.

11. Will there be specialty subjects like music, French and technology?

Yes. However, to decrease the amount of adult interactions students have, we have modified these subjects.

Each bubble (learning cohort) will receive 9 weeks of instruction in a specific area.

For example, Grades 6 and 7 will receive French instruction for the first nine weeks. (Each class has their own separate instruction time.) Therefore all their music, French and tech blocks have been converted to having only French.

After 9 weeks, Grades 6 and 7 will stop receiving French and will start their music instructions.

By the end of the year they will have had intense instruction in all specialty areas.

NOTE: Grade 7 French will be evaluated and reviewed. If further instruction is needed to get them ready for Grade 8, then a plan will be put in place.

Music: AS well as following the protocols from WorkSafeBC , OLM is following the Guidance for Music Classes in BC During COVID-19 which was developed by the B.C. Music Educators 'Association and the Coalition for music Education in B.C.

12. Will there be competitive sports program such as volleyball, soccer, cross country etc.?

There are no competitive sports programs.

13. Will there be Physical Education and do students change into gym strip?

P.E. will take place and will adhere to the PHE Canada guidelines.

Students will not change into their gym strip. If there are circumstances where a student needs to change into their gym strip, the administration will take this into advisement with the student's parents.

Sharing of equipment will be kept to a minimum and will be cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfection Section. (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings)

Community soccer and baseball clubs have been running successfully over the past few months and we will model our program after theirs.

14. Will there be choir?

Choir is cancelled until further notice.

15. Will there be any field trips?

At this time there will be NO field trips.

16. What is the washroom protocol?

The maximum occupancy per washroom is two.

Each classroom is given two cards which are color coded and labeled with that specific grade.

When the student goes to the washroom they must put their card into the designated spot. If another student comes who does not have the same colored card then that student must wait in the designated which is socially distanced 2 meters until the student comes out of the washroom.

The washroom entrance doors are to be left open but will not jeopardize privacy.

17. Will there be school masses?

There will be NO school masses; however, eventually there will be scheduled individual class masses.

18. Will there be morning weekly masses for students?

The morning weekly masses are a parish mass. Therefore, if you would like your child to attend morning mass, please register at the church as per their instructions.

19. Can parents purchase disinfectant sprays instead for the school supplies?

Yes, however, our preference would be the wipes especially for the younger students.

20. Will there be a YouthCat Club?

Yes. The YouthCat Club will be held in the gym from 3:00 to 6:00. They will follow the OLM Bubble Classes, hand washing protocols and staff will be required to wear masks.

The gym will be divided into four which accommodates these bubbles. There will be no drop-ins and pre-registration is mandatory.

More information will follow.

*Please note the OLM Safety Plan that is on the website will be updated with the new information by next week. This Q & A has the most updated information.