

Our Lady of Mercy School

7481 10th Ave.
Burnaby, BC
V3N 2S1

May 19, 2020

“My family would like to thank you and the staff. OLM is working their best to help students continue their learning. We have friends in other schools whose children are not learning. We are blessed and so happy with OLM. We are looking forward to September.”

-OLM Parent

On Friday, May 15, 2020 the Minister of Education Rob Fleming announced B.C. K-12 students will have **optional** access to in-class instruction starting on June 1, 2020 under Stage 3 of the education restart plan. However, it is up to individual schools to decide what is best for their specific community. Next steps for Our Lady of Mercy School will be determined through our own local planning and consultation with parents via a survey.

Below are important Questions and Answers to consider for the month of JUNE.

What can parents and students expect to happen in Stage 3?

- Schools will determine scheduling for classes
- Optional in-class learning for students in K- Grade 5 on a part-time basis
- Optional in-class learning as needed for Grades 6 and 7, maximum one day a week
- **On-line learning will still continue**
- Parents will continue to receive regular information updates

What is the transition plan?

- As the Premier has said, it won't be like flipping a switch. Parents have the option of sending their child back to the physical school building in June, however, the ultimate goal of having all students back to class won't be realized until September.

Is it safe for students to go back to school?

- The health and safety of staff and students is our top priority
- Parents need to protect their child not only physically, but also take into consideration their child's emotional well being
- Parents must assess their child for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID19, runny nose, allergies, cough, tiredness, sore throat etc. If any of these symptoms are present the child must stay home

What do these safety measures look like?

- All boards of education and independent school authorities will be required to implement the strict health and safety measures endorsed by the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC to reduce the risk COVID-19 transmission, which include the following procedures:
 - The number of students in school will be limited
 - Physical distancing will be maintained

- Students will sit in a designated area (our school gym) and be required to bring school supplies back and forth from home
- Students may bring a snack from home but all garbage is to be brought home
- Students will not be permitted in hallways unless going to the washroom
- After the students leave, high-contact surfaces will be cleaned
- Students and staff will be required to clean their hands upon entering school property
- There will be staggered drop-offs and pick-ups
- Parents will not be allowed to exit their cars
- Parents and staff will be asked to assess themselves daily for symptoms
- If any student or staff member has even mild symptoms, they must return home or be picked-up immediately

Will there be Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for students and Staff? Will students and staff be encouraged to wear masks?

- Students and staff will not be required to wear masks and gloves

Will students and staff have access to hand sanitizing stations?

- Soap and water supplies will be available
- Hand washing signage will be posted
- Hand sanitizer is not needed if soap and water are available

What will OLM do if there is an outbreak or suspected case of COVID-19 in or near our school community?

- Dr. Bonnie has a plan in place to be implemented in the event of an outbreak in the school setting

Will my child be taught by their classroom teacher?

- There is no guarantee that your child will be taught by their classroom teacher
- Families who have students in Grade 6 and 7 and who also have younger students may not be able to be scheduled on the same day

What are the emotional and psychological implications for my child going back to school?

- For some students another change in their learning environment will be stressful and anxiety provoking, especially if your family has developed a successful learning routine at home
- As a parent you know how your child has coped with the stressful situations that occurred during the pandemic and how they are currently doing emotionally
- School in June will *not* look or feel the same way as before Spring Break
- How will your child handle another transition back to school for a maximum of 6-8 part time days, or for 3-4 for days for Grades 6 and above and then transition back to home for the summer?

Why not just wait until September to bring students back into the classroom?

The government is aware of the growing inequality between schools:

- Some students ZOOM or Google Meet with their teacher once a week
- Some schools email the parents worksheets
- Some schools only use the government website for student learning
- Unfortunately, for some students who are abused at home, school is a safe place

If students only go back to school part-time, one day or for a half-day, how can parents be expected to return to work?

- As the Ministry take steps to remove some restrictions, the government continues to recommend employers be flexible when it comes to parents of school-age students

How is OLM different then most elementary schools in BC?

- Our Lady of Mercy is unique in their on-line delivery model because students from Grades 1 to 7 have been provided 1:1 electronic devices to use at home. This access to devices has allowed the continuation of learning through assignments, teaching, small groups and assessment practices
- Our students are online learning from 9:00a.m. to 12:00p.m. and students have access to their classroom teacher through email and SeeSaw
- Our parents have the ability to view their child's learning at any hour of the day and are able to communicate with their child's teacher
- Students and families have developed a learning routine at home and the evidence is clear in the students' assignments

Please remember this is not forever. This is for now and is on a volunteer basis for the few days we have left in June.

Although many parents have already communicated they will not be sending their child to school until September I will be sending out a survey later this week regarding your child.

“Prayer belongs to everyone: to men and women of every religion, and probably even to those who profess no religion. Prayer is born within the secrecy of our being, in that interior place that spiritual writers often call the heart.”

-Pope Francis