

BALDONNEL ELEMENTARY

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Principal: Christine Todd
Secretary: Tasha McDermott

Baldonnel Elementary School Update

September 2nd, 2020
Dear Parents/Guardians,

We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our families for the 2020-2021 school year. In this email, I will update you with our Back to School plans and general information about Baldonnel School. This email will contain a lot of information but hopefully this will answer questions and give you more clarification about what things will look like at our school. Thank you for your patience in getting through all of this. We are very excited to see all of our students. We understand that families and students may be anxious about coming back to school. Please remember that we have your best interests at heart and we are confident that we will restart safely. **Grades 1-6 start-up will be a partial day on Thursday, September 10th. Students will finish for the day on Thursday at 10:55 am. Friday, September 11th will be the first full day for grades 1-6. Kindergarten start-up will be a full day on Thursday, September 17th. Please also note that on Friday, September 25th, school will be closed as this is a Provincial Wide Professional Development day.**

I will send an update on September 8th about how and where students will go on the first day of school.

Communication:

Our main form of communication is through emails. Newsletters and important information will be communicated through email. If your child is going to be away please email or call into the school. If we do not hear from you, Mrs. McDermott will be calling to make sure your child is safely with you. You can email at any time of day or night and she will get the email first thing in the morning. Baldonnel@prn.bc.ca

We have two places to get information from:

1. Our Website: <https://baldonnel.prn.bc.ca/> Our website is full of information. One of the most important places for you to find information is the SCHOOL CALENDAR of EVENTS. You will find this link on the home page, in the black section at the top of the page, on the bottom row. If you click on the link, it will take you to the calendar, and you will find all upcoming important dates and events. Very helpful.
2. Facebook page: Here is the link for our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/sd60baldonnel> Here we post up to-date information. Make sure you like and follow our page so that you will see the posts. The more you interact by liking a post or commenting, the more you will see the posts. You can like and follow our page by doing the following: On our main page at the top, look for the bar that says Home, Jobs, Events and if you follow across you will see a link with two dots. Click on that link and you will see the spot to follow and like our page.
3. Email us: Baldonnel@prn.bc.ca or myself ctodd@prn.bc.ca

Bell Schedule

Warning Bell: 8:50
Classes Start 8:55 am
Recess 10:30-10:45 am
Lunch 12:00-12:45 pm
Dismissal 2:56 pm

Safety Procedures for Back to School:

The School District Health and Safety Department have been working tirelessly this summer to ensure that all protocols and safety procedures are in place to keep students and staff safe. Earlier last week, Superintendent Mr. Stephen Petrucci sent out a parent letter Via MyEdBC outlining the Restart Plan and Safety Procedures. This document can be found at the following link:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-education-restart-plan.pdf>

Closed Campus:

During the pandemic we will be limiting the number of visitors to our school. Parents and caregivers must drop off and pick up children to our school **without** entering the school. If you have questions, please call or email instead of visiting. Please DO NOT enter the school without calling the office first to make an appointment. People can come into our school through the accommodation of making an appointment only. We will also be allowed to have school volunteers but please talk to your child's teacher first so they can set appointment times for volunteer work as we will be unable to accommodate random drop-in support. However, you can set a specific day and time that works for you as well as the teacher. If you are picking up your child for an appointment during school hours, call in to the office upon your arrival and we will send your child out to you.

Entering the building:

All scheduled visitors will have to follow a safety protocol for entering the building. Each person must use hand sanitizer, which is available on the cart as you first enter. You must use the hand sanitizer upon entering and leaving our school. You must sign in and out of our building on the provided sheet, also found on the cart. We are trying to ensure we have safe protocols in place to help all of us. We need to keep a record to know who has been in our building.

Classrooms and Cohorts:

Currently at Baldonnel we have five homeroom classes. You have probably heard the term **learning cohorts** and in fact this has been a regular occurrence for our school. I will explain how this will work more thoroughly. A **cohort** is like a buddy classroom. A cohort is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term. Cohorts reduce the number of in-person close interactions a person has in school without requiring physical distancing to consistently be practiced. Students are still placed in their classrooms. Cohorts will not always be working together for the whole day. Sometimes they will be together and sometimes they will just be with their own classmates and their classroom teacher. Also, within a cohort, minimized physical distancing is encouraged, however, a 2-metre physical distance does not need to be maintained.

Where might you see a cohort working together?

We often have classrooms paired up for activities such as reading time. Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Gardner will be a working cohort. The Kindergarten class and the grade 5/6 class have always worked together over the many years at Baldonnel. The grade 5 and 6 students do buddy reading, and a variety of other big buddy/little buddy activities. Another learning cohort will be Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Merrill's class. Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Merrill have been team teaching with each other for many years. One will take all of the students from both classes at one time for example for noisy reading or small groups for centres while the other teacher may take a few students to do some more individual guided reading or reading support. Mrs. Louie will have a partner cohort if our school grows to accommodate another classroom of students.

What does this mean to have working cohorts for our school?

At this time, I will not be able to have large assemblies with all students in the gym at one time. If I want to work with groups of children for assemblies or monthly readings in the library, I will work with individual classes or the cohort groups. We can't have big competitions, tournaments or festivals. In fact, after hours even our gym is not available to staff or outside groups at this time.

Masks:

Elementary students DO NOT have to wear masks. This is not a requirement. If you choose for your child to wear a mask that is completely up to you. All choices are respected. Some of the teachers will be wearing masks. Masks are available upon request.

Handwashing:

Students and staff will be required to wash their hands frequently. We have always taught the children to wash their hands as part of our regular school routines. What the difference will be during the pandemic is students will be asked to wash their hands more often. They will wash their hands when they first enter their classrooms at the start of the day, before eating and drinking, after using the washroom, when they come in from outside, or from transitions such as from the gym back to class after using the equipment. Teachers will go over hygiene routines, such as proper hand washing, how to sneeze into their elbow or arm etc. We also have hand sanitizer in every room.

Snacks and Lunch:

At this time, we can't have any homemade school treats or snacks sent in from parents for the whole class or staff. Students should not be sharing food at all. We will still have hotdog days as we are allowed to serve food cooked in our canteen.

Recess and Lunch Recess:

We have a large outdoor play area so recess and lunch time outside will be the same. Students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they are outdoors and can minimize physical contact.

Daily Health Checks:

Attached to this email is a Daily Health Check. This checklist is to be used daily by staff and parents to ensure that everyone that comes into our school will be healthy. If the answer is yes to any of the questions, then staff or students may not come to school. This is a very important piece of the back to school plan. Students and staff must NOT enter the school building at all if they are sick. **If your child becomes ill during school, you will be phoned for immediate pick up. Please have a back-up plan if you yourself can't come immediately.**

If you have any questions please feel free to call or email the school. We hope you are as excited as we are for the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Christine Todd
Principal