



W.L. McLeod Elementary School

School District No. 91 (Nechako Lakes)

P.O. Box 559 Vanderhoof, BC V0J3A0

Phone (250) 567-2267

Fax (250) 567-5791

September 1, 2020

Bonjour, Hadi and Hello McLeod family,

I hope you are ready to enjoy what I hope will be a wonderful September in many ways.

There is so much information in the news, social media and in conversations people are having. I want to make sure our McLeod family has the most recent and accurate info. To help avoid confusion, I am not providing a new letter but, instead, I am adding and clarifying information already contained in our first letter from August 25th. The new details are in red. **Really important stuff is highlighted.** 😊

We value the relationship we have with every McLeod family. There is nothing more important to us than the safety of our students and staff. If you have a question or concern please just call (567-2267), text (567-8539) or e-mail me (lhart@sd91.bc.ca). I hope to be able to answer any question you may have and if I can't provide an answer, I will find one for you.

As you may already know, the Province has announced that schools will open for full-time, in-school instruction in September based on Stage 2 the government's Five-Stage Plan. The plan for School District No. 91 and W. L. McLeod Elementary School has been developed based on information from the Ministry of Education, the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control. The Ministry's requirements state that students who are registered in a school are expected to attend school in-person.

We are excited to share the details of our plan for McLeod Elementary with you. It is our goal to ensure McLeod continues to be the safe and welcoming place it has always been.

There is A LOT of information to share so here is a list of Frequently Asked Questions for you. Please don't hesitate to connect with me if there is something more that you may need to know. And, please continue to check our school website, our PAC Facebook page and the School District No. 91 Facebook page for further updates as we know things can change quickly as we all live this unique experience together. I have also created a McLeod COVID-19 Action Plan One-Pager. Hopefully it provides a quick look at our McLeod Plan.

When will my child return to school?

Tuesday, September 8 and Wednesday September 9

ONLY staff will attend school. We will be learning and working together to prepare to welcome our students including our health and safety measures and the specifics of our McLeod Stage 2 plan.

Thursday, September 10

Students with a last name beginning with A to J will attend a full day of school.

Students will learn their class and Learning Group (cohort) at this time.

Friday, September 11

Students with a last name beginning with K to Z will attend a full day of school.

Students will learn their class and Learning Group (cohort) at this time.

Monday, September 14

ALL students will return to school full time.

"We're all in this together. Learning, kindness and caring, being safe and calm."

What time do students come and go from school?

At this time, for morning drop-off:

Students who take the bus to school will be contacted by the School District Transportation Department regarding bus schedules.

Students who walk or get a ride to school are asked to **arrive at school as close to 8:50 as possible.**

At this time, for student pick-up, we are still waiting for specifics regarding times as we must coordinate with all other Vanderhoof schools and busses. We do know:

Students who take the bus to school will be contacted by the School District Transportation Department regarding bus schedules. Bus students will need to report to their bus line-ups and stay in-line, minimizing physical contact, while they wait for the bus.

Students who are picked up from school will wait at the primary end by the basketball hoops. Student who are walking will be asked to head home immediately.

What are Learning Groups (cohorts) and what will they look like at McLeod?

Learning Groups (cohorts) are a group of students and staff of up to maximum of 60. The purpose of the Learning Group is to reduce the number of in-person, close interactions an individual has in a day with different people to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

While our McLeod Learning Groups (cohorts) will consist of 2 or 3 similar -grade classes, the main learning group for each student will be their individual class.

Can students and staff from different Learning Groups (cohorts) interact?

During break times (i.e. recess, lunch) or unique learning situations (i.e. academic support), students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they are outdoors and can minimize physical contact or if they are indoors and can maintain physical distance.

Staff who work with a variety of students such as our Aboriginal Education Staff, Farm to School Staff, supervisors or Mrs. Lawrence or me 😊 will strictly follow all Health and Safety Guidelines including wearing a mask and keeping physically distanced.

ALL staff and visitors will wear a mask and physically distance when they are outside of their Learning Group (cohort) in common and high traffic areas such as our hallways.

What will students be doing at school?

Students will learn the BC Curriculum as they would normally. LOTS of learning, kindness and caring!

Will the day be different?

A little. Our school is big, so in order to maximize our ability to minimize physical contact we are going to approach our school as two teams. One team will be mostly our primary classes and the other team will be mostly our intermediate classes. These teams will allow us to stagger mornings, recess and lunch and reduce the number of people in our hallways and on our playground.

Mornings – teams will alternate days of outside DPA and inside classroom time

“We’re all in this together. Learning, kindness and caring, being safe and calm.”

The following is the weekly schedule for our staggered morning start:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday:

Students in our intermediate team will be outside in the morning and will do DPA before coming into the school to start the day.

Students in our in our primary team will be supervised inside in their classrooms.

Tuesday and Thursday

Students in our primary team will be outside in the morning and will do DPA before coming into the school to start the day.

Students in our in our intermediate team will be supervised inside in their classrooms.

Recess and lunch – teams will have a different recess and lunch.

Our recess times will be:

10:20-10:35 – primary team

10:40-10:55 – intermediate team

Our lunch times will be:

11:40-12:00 – primary team eats

12:00-12:25 – primary team play time outside

12:10-12:30 – intermediate team eats

12:30-1:00 – intermediate team play time outside

We will also be enjoying the great outdoors throughout the day as much as possible.

How will bussing work?

As mentioned, our Transportation Department will contact parents regarding details for the bus schedule and Health and Safety protocols for bus riders. Our Transportation Department will be following safety protocols including cleaning and disinfecting and physically distancing seating.

Are parent/caregivers/guests allowed in the school?

As much as we always want McLeod to be a welcoming building for everyone, currently we also need to minimize and track contacts within our school. For this reason, access to schools will be limited to staff and students **and only at our front office door**. We ask parents/caregivers to not enter the school and instead, drop off and pick up outside the building. Parents and caregivers and visitors can request an appointment through the school office.

With an appointment, please:

- DO NOT ENTER if you have any symptoms of a cold, flu, or COVID-19.
- Sign-in.
- Use our sanitizer or wash your hands in our handwashing room.
- Practice physical distancing always.
- Wear a mask if physical distancing is not possible.
- Report to Ms. Swanson.

What if my child or an adult at school is sick?

It is vitally important that students and staff who are sick do not come to school. We will follow this guideline strictly. The guidelines state:

- Staff and student **MUST** stay home or go home and follow the direction of their health care provider when sick with common cold, influenza or COVID-19 symptoms. *In addition, from the August 28, 2020 update of the Health and Safety Guidelines for K -12 Settings – Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should not return to school until they have been assessed by a health-care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases AND their symptoms have resolved.*
- All students who have travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate.
- **Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. Please use the attached Daily Health Check as your at-home guide (or link to it at https://www.sd91.bc.ca/apps/pages/index.jsp?uREC_ID=1095501&type=d&pREC_ID=1370090).**
- Students and staff who become sick while at school will need to go home as soon as possible.

The information circulating regarding what happens when a child or staff member is sick seems to be the most inaccurate. Please call me directly if you have any questions. To clarify some misconceptions:

- The school **does not** administer COVID tests.
- The school **does not** contact Northern Health about individual students or staff who are sick. We will report to Northern Health when over 10% of our school population are away due to sickness. No individual names are shared. This was a requirement before COVID time as well.

What should we bring to school?

Please send your child to McLeod with a healthy, peanut-free snack and lunch. Please try to send food items that require minimal heating in a microwave or access to hot water.

Ensure that your child is dressed in layers appropriate for the weather conditions as the students will be going outside multiple times throughout the day.

Please avoid bringing toys, stuffed animals, etc. to school as these items cannot be easily sanitized. It can be hard on little hands to use sanitizer and to wash hands with soap so often. Feel free to send a tube of hand lotion with your child but please make sure it is scent-free and labelled.

Students will not be sharing any items. **Please send minimal school supplies on the first day of school (snack, lunch, inside shoes and a pencil case with a pencil, colouring stuff, scissors and a glue stick)** Teachers will send further details regarding when to send supplies after the first day of school.

Will breakfast, snack and hot lunch still be available?

Yes. We know food is an important part of our school day. We will continue with our breakfast, snack and lunch program with very enhanced safety protocols. We will also be continuing with our food hampers/backpacks.

Do students and staff need to wear masks?

Staff will wear masks while in high traffic areas, like hallways, and any time they are outside of the classroom or learning group and they cannot physically distance from others. Staff may also choose to wear a mask within the Learning Group (cohort).

Wearing masks for students is a family decision and will be honoured as such.

What are the other Health and Safety protocols at McLeod?

Health and Safety will be our priority for the 2020-2021 school year at McLeod. We are using the *Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings* document to guide our planning to keep us all safe. I encourage you to refer to this document as it has lots of great information. I have posted the link to this document at the end of this letter.

Our other Safety Measures include:

Cleaning and disinfecting

McLeod will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines. This includes a daytime custodian and additional custodial staff to clean after each school day.

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact

Physical distancing is something that has become part of our lives. It is also something that is challenging in a school setting, particularly with younger students. As such, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels and activities.

Our students will be supported to have minimized physical contact with one another within their cohort and outdoors. They will be supported to maintain physical distance if they are indoors or not within their Learning Group (cohort).

We will not be gathering in large groups such as assemblies. All students will be reminded not to share their personal belongings, food or beverages.

In our hallways we will move in directions that minimize physical contact. We teach our students to "move like traffic" which includes "stop, look and listen" at intersections, walking on the right and knowing who has the right of way.

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. We will incorporate hand hygiene opportunities into our daily schedule and teach and regularly remind staff and students about the importance of diligent hand hygiene.

There are sanitizing stations and/or handwashing sinks in each of our classrooms and spaces and at each of our entrances.

Our daily schedule will involve hand washing at the following times:

- When students arrive at school and before they go home.
- Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).
- Between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).
- Before and after eating and drinking.
- After using the toilet.
- After handling common resources/equipment/supplies or pets.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Respiratory Etiquette

We will teach and reinforce these healthy practices including:

- coughing or sneezing into our elbow sleeve or a tissue. Throwing away used tissues and immediately performing hand hygiene.
- refraining from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

"We're all in this together. Learning, kindness and caring, being safe and calm."

We have installed plexiglass barriers at our front office and at our hot lunch serving windows.

Our windows will be open when possible. Our HVAC systems will be set to increase the intake of outside air and to maximize air exchange in classrooms and other spaces.

Thank you for taking the time to review this document as a family. Please don't hesitate to contact me at the school (567-2267), on my cell (567-8539) or by e-mail lhart@sd91.bc.ca if you have questions, concerns or thoughts. **If changes happen, we will communicate again before we welcome students on September 10th and 11th.**

We can't wait to see everyone!

Proud to be McLeod,
Libby Hart
Principal

Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings (updated August 28, 2020)
<https://www.google.com/search?q=provincial+covid-19+health+and+safety+guidelines+for+k-12+setting&oq=provin&aqs=chrome.69i59j69i57j0l4j46j0.4971j0j1&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8&safe=active&ssui=on>

| Daily Health Check | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|----|
| 1. Symptoms of Illness* | Does your child have any of the following symptoms? | CIRCLE ONE | |
| | Fever | YES | NO |
| | Chills | YES | NO |
| | Cough or worsening of chronic cough | YES | NO |
| | Shortness of breath | YES | NO |
| | Sore throat | YES | NO |
| | Runny nose / stuffy nose | YES | NO |
| | Loss of sense of smell or taste | YES | NO |
| | Headache | YES | NO |
| | Fatigue | YES | NO |
| | Diarrhea | YES | NO |
| | Loss of appetite | YES | NO |
| | Nausea or vomiting | YES | NO |
| | Muscle aches | YES | NO |
| | Conjunctivitis (pink eye) | YES | NO |
| Dizziness, confusion | YES | NO | |
| Abdominal pain | YES | NO | |
| Skin rashes or discolouration of fingers or toes | YES | NO | |
| 2. International Travel | Have you or anyone in your household returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days? | YES | NO |
| 3. Confirmed Contact | Are you or is anyone in your household a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19? | YES | NO |

“We’re all in this together. Learning, kindness and caring, being safe and calm.”