



NOTRE DAME SCHOOL

925-104th Ave. Dawson Creek, BC, V1G 2H8

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February 8th, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians;

At this time, we the staff of Notre Dame school, would like to thank you for the ongoing support you have given since we returned to school in the fall. Whoever thought in 2020-2021 that we would be dealing with an ongoing pandemic and working our way through a 'new' normal for delivering and celebrating our school days.

Notre Dame School has been diligently following all guidelines and requirements as outlined by the Provincial Health Officer, the Ministry of Education, and the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control, and will continue to do so. At times, it has been a challenge. However, our first priority in all this is your child/ren. Their health and wellbeing are the most important issues we need to address. The stress of trying to just be a 'kid' and follow COVID -19 guidelines can be tricky. It is important that we have grace and take the time to remind the students that we understand the frustrations with all the guidelines but that the guidelines are there for all our safety. If we follow them now, it will help us get back to our normal routines and the rest will fall into place...maybe not this week, but perhaps in the next few months or maybe longer.

In the meantime, we need to take care of each other. If at any time your child(ren) feel overwhelmed, please reach out to the classroom teachers and/or myself as principal. Notre Dame School staff will listen and support. It's through this communication that we can continue to build and reshape what we have already started. It is so important that each teacher understands the triggers and stressors of our students and parents. Like a giant classroom, we need to adapt and modify to the situations and work together for the best of all our students. If we hear from you, we can make changes or give reassurances that we are on the right track together. We don't all learn the same way, or understand things in the same way. If we do not know, we cannot help...and neither can your neighbour who you might be talking to. Turn to the teachers and myself, we are here for your child(ren) and you.

The new protocol changes that include staff being required to wear a non-medical mask at all times, both within and outside of their learning group, (except when sitting in or standing at their seat or desk/workstation in a classroom or learning space, where there is a barrier in place, when eating or drinking or when outdoors) will be an adjustment for staff and students, but for now it is what we are being directed to do for the safety of all. Please let your child(ren) know it is ok to ask for clarity if they cannot hear well or don't understand what was said. All staff will offer grace and understanding, as we struggle at times to hear each other in large groups. We do understand and have some of the same feelings the students do with all the guidelines but in the big picture we are glad we are all together in the brick walls of a school not over a screen on Zoom.



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One guideline we at Notre Dame would like to remind everyone of is around 'Food Services'. We are allowed to offer our hot lunch program as long as we follow the 'Food and Beverages Sales in BC Schools' guidelines which includes having a trained person with Food Safe Level 1 at the school when the hot lunch food is being delivered to the students. All food is prepared by outside businesses that follow stringent health and safety, COVID-19 preventative guidelines.

We are directed not to allow homemade food, or food that is not purchased in individually wrapped packages, to be made available to our students at this time (e.g.: birthday treats, bake sale items). If parents are wanting to send in a special treat and have spoken to the classroom teacher, the treat must be **prepackaged food** purchased from a traditional store or bakery that follows the strict health and safety standards. For example, sending in 6 or 12-packs of cupcakes does not meet the guidelines because they are not individually wrapped and must be handled in handing them out. Similarly, separating and packaging items at home means other hands are on them.

Please know that the school must answer directly to the BC Ministry of Education, WorkSafe BC, and follow all recommendations from the BC Centre for Disease Control. Anytime exposures happen, guidelines change, or areas for improvement are noticed, the school's volunteer Health and Safety committee has to ensure the school is following all protocols. This allows us to remain open, ensure the health and safety of all staff and students, and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Reminders are necessary for staff and students - not to discipline or embarrass, but to support and redirect.

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we continue to work through this pandemic. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely

Your Partner in Education,

Colleen Richard

Principal, Notre Dame School