



VANCOUVER COLLEGE

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Friday, August 21, 2020

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Greetings to all of you in our truly special Vancouver College community! We are very excited to welcome your sons back on our revitalized campus in the weeks ahead. Speaking of finalizing construction, we have decided to align our school start-up with the rest of the province, to ensure we are ready in every way: Thursday, September 10, will be our first official day of school this year. As our world continues to grapple with many challenges, know that together, we are stronger, mutually supportive, and thoughtfully prepared to face any difficulty. In fact, it is appropriate in this undoubtedly special school year that our focus will be on the importance of our identity as a community. Our Essential Element that will underpin all we do this year is:

Proclaim and witness to our Catholic identity

We will ensure that our Catholic identity permeates all endeavours: all classes and activities, procedures and policies, services, and programs. At home, I encourage you to delve deeper as a family into what it means to be Catholic, not only in its beautiful rituals, symbols, and devotions but in the loving faith and inclusiveness that is held in the very meaning of the word 'catholic'.

With this in mind, we have spent the summer preparing for a full return to campus this September. While the details are laid out below and in the accompanying message from your Assistant Principal, our underlying guiding principles are threefold:

- ❖ Safeguarding the health of our students, staff, and entire community as much as is reasonably possible.
- ❖ Optimizing the learning experience of every boy on a daily basis.
- ❖ Ensuring our culture is nourished by supporting what makes VC special: our relationships, our co-curricular athletics & arts programs, and, especially, our faith community.

Using these, and in consultation with our faculty and a parent focus group, we have developed a comprehensive [operational safety plan](#) (complementing our official [Worksafe safety plan](#)) along with a reimagined academic and co-curricular program that supports these priorities. Some key features of this action plan include:

- Full daily return of all students in Kindergarten through Grade 9; and alternating attendance of Grade 10-12 students, with each Senior School grade divided into two 'learning groups', one cohort learning in-person on campus while the other cohort works from home.
- A 'mini-semester' approach that keeps Middle & Senior School students in four classes only for periods of three to four weeks, after which they switch to their other four classes. This would continue yearlong, resulting in four 'mini-semesters' per term, and twelve in total.
- A shortened [academic day](#) due to the removal of much unstructured time, keeping students in classrooms or outdoors as much as possible, limiting their exposure to others. Lunch will be eaten in classrooms.

- An optional co-curricular period at the end of each day, allowing all boys to join an athletic, arts, or club-based activity each term, while following all safety protocols.

While on campus, your sons will be protected by a variety of safety strategies, including increased cleaning and hand-washing protocols, the use of shields and barriers in all classrooms, set movement patterns including designated entry and exit doors, no use of lockers, and staggered arrival and departure times. These protocols will be reviewed in our opening days and regularly monitored and adjusted as necessary. Further details are in our safety plan and in your Assistant Principal's notes below. However, I do need to highlight a few specific procedures we need your help with in particular:

- ❑ Daily health checks - While your son's teacher will verbally check with him at the beginning of each day, it is the responsibility of the parent to go over [this health checklist](#) with your child each morning. Please take the time to do so carefully, and err on the side of caution by keeping him at home if any symptoms manifest.
- ❑ Illness while on campus - If your son develops symptoms while at school, he will be isolated in one of our two designated sick rooms near the Main Office, and you will be required to take him home as soon as possible. After he no longer exhibits symptoms, or has stayed at home for 14 consecutive days, he may return to Vancouver College.
- ❑ Travel or exposure - If your son has traveled outside Canada or has been in close contact with anyone with a confirmed Covid-19 case, he is required to stay at home for 14 consecutive days before returning to Vancouver College.
- ❑ Staggered arrival and departure times - Please adhere to the times listed on our [daily schedule](#). With the completion of construction, all Elementary and Middle School students should arrive on Cartier Street northbound, while Senior students are required to enter on the Hudson Street side while heading southbound. If you have multiple sons, we ask that you drop off all your children following the LATEST assigned arrival time.
- ❑ Mandatory masks - We are asking all students from Grades 4-12 to wear a mask while on campus. Teachers may give students permission to remove masks appropriate to the activity and social distancing requirements throughout the day. Please provide your son with three reusable non-medical masks labeled with his name; if he forgets, he will be required to wear a disposable mask provided by the school.
- ❑ Reduced parent presence on campus - As much as we continue to partner with you as your son's primary educator, we are asking all parents to avoid being on our campus. Please allow your son to walk onto the campus without you, and arrange virtual meetings with any school staff as needed.

At this time Vancouver College's Cafeteria will remain closed. While we are hopeful that in the coming weeks, we will be able to roll out an online lunch ordering system, we ask that for now, parents pack a lunch for their children. We recommend packing a lunch for your son that does not require reheating.

We ask that you pay close attention to our two weekly newsletters; the Vancouver College Newsletter sent on Mondays and the VCPA Newsletter sent on Thursdays for further information and updates. Our [school calendar](#) will continue to be updated as the academic year progresses, and all COVID-19 information will be placed on our [COVID webpage](#).

These continue to be unprecedented times, and I deeply appreciate your support, co-operation, and prayers as we shift our practices to protect and nurture your son. We will focus on making this school year as inspiring, innovative, and fulfilling for your boys as we normally do, within our safety practices and in these fluid times. Know that we still need and value your involvement in our community, and do not hesitate to reach out to me to discuss any matter. The collaborative nature of VC is our strength, and it will continue to make Vancouver College the special faith and learning community that it is.

Semper fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daryl Weaver', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Daryl Weaver
Principal