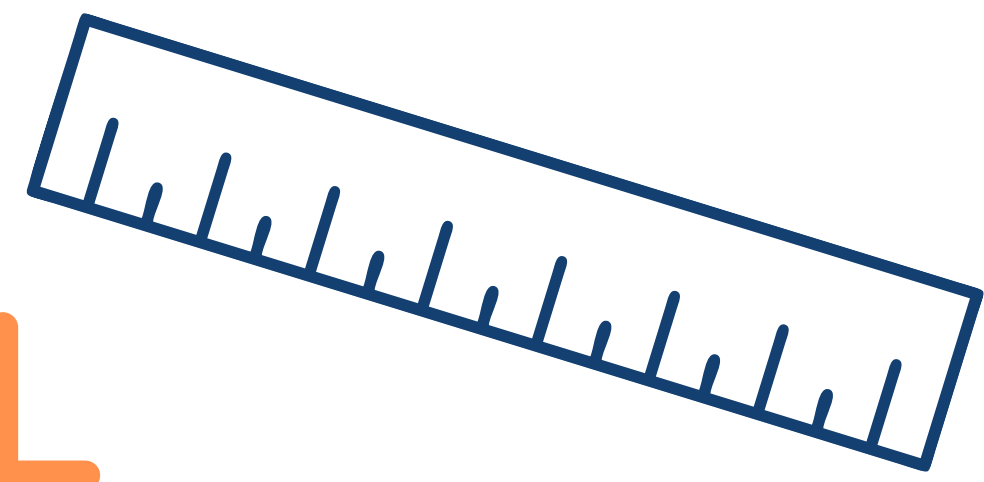


BACK TO SCHOOL



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ABOUT RETURN TO SCHOOL DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Many parents are concerned about sending their children back to school amidst uncertainty around the risks of COVID-19.

Parents are encouraged to weigh the potential advantages of returning to school alongside the risk of infection. In addition, families should consider their decisions about return to school in their own personal, family and community contexts.



Did you know...?

- Community spread of COVID-19 is closely monitored. We are in a much different place than at the beginning of the pandemic when there were many more unknowns. Data from BC and other Canadian provinces is available to inform our planning.
- Our collective change in behaviour has helped. We have had time to increase capacity within our public health and hospital systems to meet demand. We have taken measures to protect our vulnerable populations and limit the spread of COVID-19.
- We are prepared for cases of COVID-19 to appear in schools. We know that illness, especially in children, is likely to be mild. If we all keep up with all the measures we have taken thus far during the pandemic, the risks are manageable.



What BC Doctors are saying about sending their kids back to school...

"I have a seven-year-old and a nine-year-old going into grade 2 and grade 4, and they are going back to school. I live in Vancouver in a pretty dense area. So, my decision is framed by a couple of perspectives including trust that public health officials would tell us if community cases rise too much and we shouldn't go to school, trust in safety protocols, and knowledge that children infrequently get severe disease."

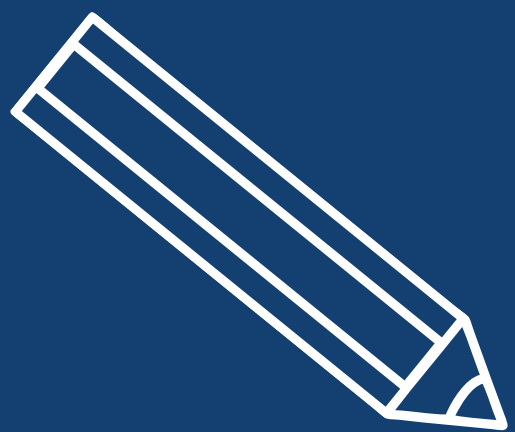
– Dr. Srinivas Murthy, Critical Care physician and specialist in Infectious Diseases, Parent

"I'm cautious by nature. I didn't send my kids back to school in June. But at a certain point, it became a balance of risks and needs. I had to look at my actual family health risks (low), the rate of community transmission (currently low enough), my kids' specific personal needs (more routine, more social connection, education) and my capacity to provide it at home (low). It wouldn't be the same math for another family, but for mine, the answer led back to school."

– Dr. Ashley Miller, Mental health physician, Parent

"Returning my teenagers to school wasn't a straightforward decision for me and my family as we live with a grandparent who has chronic health issues; however, I work in a hospital and I have witnessed how public health measures kept our staff and patients safe when a staff member tested positive for COVID-19. So with this, we will continue to wash our hands, wear our masks, distance as best as we can and my kids will be returning to school in the fall. At the same time, we will remain open to shifting our perspective if things change."

– Dr. Linda Uyeda, Family physician with focused practice on youth, Parent



Resources for parents



- [BC's Back to School Plan](#)
- Webinar: [Setting Children & Youth Up for a Successful Return to School](#)
- Article: [COVID-19: Going the Distance for our Kid's Mental Health and a Safe Return to School](#)
- Article: [Are Canadian Doctors Sending their Kids to School this Fall?](#)
- Blog Post: [5 Tips for a Successful Return to In-Person School During COVID-19](#)

Benefits of Returning to School

- Continuing academic and social growth
- Opportunities to re-connect with peers and teachers and reduce social isolation
- Increased structure/routine
- Return to work for parents

Risks of Returning to School

- Possibility of infection for your child and family members
- Some youth are thriving at home and face significant challenges at school

Other Factors to Consider...

- Infection risk: Is your child or a family member at increased risk for serious infection?
- Infection rates: Is there a high infection rate in your community?
- Child's needs: Does your child rely on specialized school-based services?
- Do they do better with structure and routine?
- Feasibility of alternatives: How feasible is it to homeschool your child?