

What to Expect if a School Has to Close

As the context of the COVID-19 pandemic changes, disruptions to school operations are possible. School District No. 8 (Kootenay Lake) is prepared to support our learners and families in the face of possible school closures due to infections from the Omicron variant.

Each decision about a school closure is made separately based on what is happening in each school. Students affected by closures will transition to remote learning. All families that require child care support to continue their employment are considered essential workers and can continue to attend school, as can students with diverse learning needs and Aboriginal students. It is especially important that we support the health care sector as this will be important to our communities.

These are the different types of closures possible if schools or district operations are impacted by disruptions for health or staffing issues:

- **Health closure** of a school determined by the local health authority due to the COVID-19 case count in, or related to, a school.
- **Functional closure** of a school determined by the school or school district due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial to ensure the health and safety of students. This would likely be due to a high absenteeism of all staff or certain employees required for a school to function and the inability to replace those absences.

A school could also experience a service disruption that will not cause the school to close:

- **Transportation Closure** due to a lack of staff to be able to provide the required level of transportation services for students. This would likely be due the absenteeism of bus drivers and/or mechanics and the inability to replace those absences.

Here's what you can expect if a school closure happens:

- **Day 1:** Students and families will be informed of the upcoming closure and the school will remain open on the first day the closure is announced.
- **Day 2:** Transition day - only students of essential service workers, students with diverse learning needs, and Aboriginal Education students as requested will attend school.
- **Day 3 and beyond:** The closure will be scheduled for seven days thereafter. People on site will include school administrators, TTOCs, educational assistants as required, custodians, clerical staff, students of essential service workers, students with diverse learning needs, and Aboriginal Education students as requested. All other staff and students will work remotely.

Principals and teachers will provide more detailed information about the remote learning process to their students and to families if a school is closed.

Notice of any closure will also be communicated through the following:

- School and district websites
- SD8 app and social media
- Email from the school principal
- Other media, as appropriate

Thank you for your continued patience and participation while we all work together through the complications of this pandemic. At the core of everything we do is providing a nurturing environment so all learners can excel.

Sincerely,

Trish Smillie, Superintendent of Schools