

BACK TO SCHOOL EDITION

# THE MOUNTAINEER

At Buck Mountain Central School, we passionately engage our diverse students every day by genuinely connecting and supporting them on their learning journey towards high school completion and life beyond our doors.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I hope that this letter finds you and your family well and everyone has been able to enjoy our summer break. As we approach the end of August we are busy planning to open BMC once again for all our students. As you are aware, the Minister of Education announced in July that schools would be opening up under near normal circumstances for the 2020-2021 school year. Since that announcement, WRPS has been busy planning for our students to return to school. There have been many things to consider and many recommendations from the Government of Alberta that we will be implementing to make sure BMC is a safe, welcoming, caring, and respectful learning environment for our students.

I know there are still many questions about what BMC will look like this year, but rest assured, we will be providing the same level of instructions and support to our students. On Friday, August 14th, WRPS released our division's re-entry plan which can be found on our website ([www.buckmountain.ca](http://www.buckmountain.ca)). It is important that all parents and students read through this document as it specifies the changes that will be taking place in our schools this fall. With Covid-19, school will be different. We will be adapting our practices, our schedules, and our routines which will mean things will feel different for a while. What we will not be changing is our commitment to student learning, well being, and academic success.

Throughout the rest of this newsletter, I will be highlighting some of the more significant changes students can expect to see in the coming weeks. Our administration is currently preparing for the start of school by putting strategies in place that follows the WRPS re-entry plan and the guidelines from Alberta Health Services. These measures will mitigate risks to our students and staff, but at the same time, we will be creating an environment where our students feel safe, valued, and engaged in their learning.

As of August 24th, our Office will once again be open for phone calls and our administrative team will be available to answer any questions you may have. While the majority of students and families are preparing to return to BMC, we understand, there is a sense of apprehension in our communities. We are in unprecedented times and we have all had to adapt to keep our loved ones and ourselves safe. Our administrative team and staff are here for our students. Together with our parents, we will make the 2020 -2021 school year a success for each of our students.

Jon Meyers, Principal

## SCHOOL COUNCIL MEETINGS

This year, we will be hosting our School Council meetings online using Google Meet. Our first meeting will be Tuesday, September 15 at 7:00 pm. We will be reviewing our re-entry plan and discussing our strategies for the 2020-2021 school year. If you are interested in taking part, please fill out the form contained in the below.

[September 15 Parent Advisory Meeting Sign Up Form](#)

## SCHOOL ENTRY

As outlined in the WRPS Re-Entry Plan, we will be using a staggered entry to the start of the school year.

September 2 → Grade 9 & 12 only

September 3 → Grade 8 & 11 only

September 4 → Grade 7 & 10 only

September 8 → All Grade 1- 12 students attend and regular classes begin.

This staggered entry will reduce the number of students on the first day to provide them with the opportunity to become familiar with new routines that will be in place in the school and classrooms. New students at BMC should register using the Online Registration form which is located on our school's website (<https://www.buckmountain.ca/parents/online-registration>), but are welcome to make an appointment to come into the school. Students will receive their textbooks on their first day of school.

## HEALTH REQUIREMENTS TO ENTER A SCHOOL

Parents, students, and staff all have to get accustomed to the new reality that if they are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, no matter how mild, entering the school is prohibited. The WRPS Re-Entry plan is very specific - before leaving home, staff, students, visitors, and volunteers who will access the school for work or education, must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire.

For the safety of students and staff, parents, visitors, and other service providers should only enter the school facility if absolutely necessary, and an appointment needs to be made in advance.

Please note if a student starts to exhibit symptoms while at school they will be isolated and need to be picked up immediately from school. Additional information pertaining to symptoms and pre-existing conditions is located in the WRPS Re-Entry Plan.

## COHORTS - CHANGES TO STUDENT SCHEDULES

The risk of transmission of COVID-19 is reduced by limiting exposure to others. Where possible, we will be placing students in a cohort by their class. In order to limit the number of cohorts that each student is part of, we have made a significant change to our timetable. Many high school courses will be quartered this year meaning students will only take 2 or 3 classes a day.

## **COHORTS - CHANGES TO STUDENT SCHEDULES CONTINUED**

- Grade 10 - 12 will be moving into a quarter system in which students will have 2 or 3 classes per day, and for the most part, only take 2 or 3 courses per quarter. This will limit the number of cohorts a student will belong to.
- Grade 7 - 9 will be cohorted into a homeroom model in which they will be together for the year. A Grade 7 - 9 cohort will be taking all the same classes aside from options.

Students can also expect to have staggered breaks and staggered lunch times with their cohorts.

## **STUDENT SCHEDULES AND POWERSCHOOL**

Currently students are not able to view their timetable in PowerSchool as changes are still being implemented. Parents and students will receive an email when PowerSchool is available for viewing. Please note that at this time we are planning to offer all core and options to our students.

## **PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND TRAFFIC FLOW**

Physical distancing (2-metre spacing) is a useful public health measure to help prevent the spread of disease. Increasing the space between persons decreases the risk of transmission. BMC will be implementing various procedures such as creating designated student entrances and exits in the school, reducing seating in the Galleria, staggering break times and class changes, and changing the arrangement of desks in all classrooms. To help physical distancing in the hallways, students will be given the option as to whether or not they will use lockers this year. Students will need to ensure they have a backpack for their lunch and school supplies. A water bottle should also be used (please note: water fountains will be available for students to fill water bottles; however, drinking directly from a water fountain is not permitted).

## **MASKS**

As indicated in the WRPS Re-Entry Plan, all teachers, students, school staff, and contractors will be issued two reusable masks. It is mandatory for all students to wear masks on the bus and in all school settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained. This includes wearing masks in classrooms and shared areas such as hallways.

For many of us, this will take some getting used to, but all individuals entering the school need to be wearing a mask. We will be looking at how to implement "mask breaks" for students throughout that day, but students and staff need to be prepared to wear their mask throughout the day while they are at school.

## **EXTRA- CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

BMC will still be offering extra-curricular activities to students following Alberta Health Services Stage 2 protocols. This will mean that each staff supervisor will be adapting and changing our programs to adhere to these strict health guidelines. BMC athletics teams will be following these protocols as well as the guidance set out by the Alberta School's Athletic Association. Specific information about individual activities will be available to students and parents when we return to school in September.