

September 28, 2021

To: SD40 School Trustees,

In light of last night's Vancouver School Board decision to unanimously pass a motion to extend the Grade 4 to 12 mask mandate to K to Grade 3, we ask that the SD40 Board of Trustees urgently consider the same motion.

*That the Grade 4 to 12 mask mandate be extended to K to Grade 3 students subject to the same exemptions as currently provided.*

Rationale:

- Rising rates of infection for ages 10 and under went from roughly 12 per day for every 100,000 people during the first week of September to 19 on Sept. 23. (Reference: <https://bc.ctvnews.ca/covid-19-cases-among-children-soaring-in-b-c-but-hospitalizations-stable-for-now-1.5600276>)
- No published data distinguishes children aged 5 to 8 from those aged 9 to 12 who have caught COVID-19.
- PHO decision to not include K to Grade 3 students in the mask mandate seems based on the misperception that children that age find it difficult to wear masks at that age.
- The district is already encouraging mask wearing in K to Grade 3 classroom, this is just one more tool and layer of protection
- New Westminster School District puts safe and caring schools as a top priority. As stated on the website: <https://newwestschools.ca/about-us/safe-and-caring-schools/>
  - *New Westminster Schools is committed to creating and maintaining a respectful, welcoming and nurturing environment for all staff, students and families. Why? Because learning and growing is impossible if you don't first feel safe and welcome. And we take that very seriously.*

Thank You,  
Kathleen Carlsen  
Chair, SD40 District Parent Advisory Council

CC:

Connaught Heights Elementary School, École Qayqayt Elementary School, F.W. Howay Elementary School, École Herbert Spencer Elementary School, Lord Kelvin Elementary School, École Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary School, Queen Elizabeth Elementary School (K-4), Skwo:wech Elementary School