

August 20, 2020

Dear BK families,

Welcome to Bertha Kennedy and the 2020/2021 school year. As we start this new school year in unprecedented circumstances, we believe that it is crucial to have open communication with the parents and guardians of our school. We recognize that this is going to be a very different school year as we incorporate a range of health measures for the safety of students and staff. We will need to be flexible as we encounter new and emerging issues related to the pandemic.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself and our new VP, Josie Cancian. Although Josie is not new to our school, she has stepped into the role of Vice Principal from her previous role as Learning Support Facilitator. We are lucky to have her expertise in this regard, as well as her dedication and enthusiastic nature. For myself, I am making the transition from the junior high world as I was the VP at Richard S. Fowler for the past few years. I am truly looking forward to working with the wonderful families at BK and am a little saddened I can't meet you all face-to-face. With that being said, there are many ways we can maintain a connection as I am only a call, virtual meet, or email away.

As the principal of BK school, I am very proud to share that we have an excellent staff that is committed to working with parents and guardians to support you and your child/children through the transition of a new school year and beyond. In addition to the implementation of health and safety protocols, we will also focus on building connections, relationships, and learning excellence. Students have been out of school for a long period of time so we will make sure they feel safe, secure, and have a sense of belonging to our school community.

Division Guidebook

On Thursday, August 13, our Superintendent of Schools released our Division guidebook specifically for parents/legal guardians. The Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020/2021 provides essential information concerning:

- Programming
- Health and safety protocols
- Transportation
- Communication
- Logistical information

As health measures are continually evolving, we will be responsive and flexible as the year progresses. As such, this Guidebook will be updated and revised as new information becomes

available from the Prime Minister of Canada, the Premier of Alberta, the Minister of Education, and Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

You can access this resource here: [Parent Guidebook for School Re-entry: 2020-2021](#)

Our School Communication Plan:

This is the first in a series of communications that will be going out to all of our families that will provide more specific information as it relates to our school context. Over the next week, parents and guardians can expect school communication on the following topics:

- How to best prepare for the start of the school year.
- Kindergarten class placements and start-up.
- The Safe and Caring element - how we are mitigating risks related to COVID within our building.
- What can parents and guardians expect for the first couple of days.
- Information on pick up and drop off.

In order to facilitate communication, we will also update our website with all of the information we send out to parents. You can access our website here: <https://www.berthakennedy.com/>

Office Opening:

Our school office is now open; the hours of operation will be 8:30 am - 3:30 pm. Please do not hesitate to contact the school office if you have any questions or concerns. You can contact by telephone call (780-458-6101) or email (nbaker@gsacrd.ab.ca and jcancian@gsacrd.ab.ca).

As per the August 6 Communication from our Superintendent of Schools, families will be required to set up an appointment in advance in order to enter a school for any face-to-face appointments.

School Supplies:

All school supply lists can be found on our website. Although all items will be required throughout the school year, I will be sending communication with a list of items that are to be brought on the first day. With limited storage space, we are unable to store all items at once. If possible, it is highly recommended for students in grades 3 - 6 to come to school with a robust device (chromebook or laptop) each day. As we progress through this year, it will be important for students to access online materials at all times. The school does have a limited supply of chromebooks that can be lent out for long periods of time to individual students; we can no longer share these resources amongst each other. Please let me know if you will require a school device.

Staggered Entry for Kindergarten - Grade 6:

GSACRD has implemented a staggered start for K - grade 6 for the 2020-2021 school year. This will allow all students to learn all expectations and protocols in a smaller class setting.

August 31, 2020: Only students who have last names beginning (A - K) will attend school on this day.

September 1, 2020: Only students who have the last names beginning (L - Z) will attend school on this day.

September 2, 2020: All students (K-gr. 6) will attend regular classes.

September 8, 2020: Pre-K start

Online Learning:

Our division has started an online education pathway called the ***Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools Online Learning Pathway***. This pathway is a choice for your child to be part of our school community and to choose to stay at home or a caregiver's location to engage in online education. Online students would learn away from the school building and only come to the school for pre-planned gatherings as health measures permit.

To assist you to understand online education, I have provided answers to common questions about how this programming will work.

What will programming look like?

The programming would be very similar to what is being offered in face-to-face classes. Your child would take core courses: English/French Language Arts, Math, Social, Science, Religion, Physical Education and Health). Once the online core courses begin, teachers will review what is possible for option courses. Both face-to-face and online education teachers will use common course outlines and key learner outcomes so what is studied is the same whether your child is face-to-face or online. The topics will be paced to enable a student to shift from one mode to another, if necessary. Online education is available to all students, including students who are registered in our academies, IB, or AP courses

What do I do if my child starts in online programming and then would like to switch back to face-to-face programming?

Your child will start in his/her pathway of choice in our school. Because you are one of our families, you will have opportunities throughout the year to indicate whether or not you choose to stay in

online education. Each reporting period, you will receive an email on certain dates as outlined on page 12 of the GSACRD Parent Guidebook for School Re-entry.

Will my child have a teacher for his/her grade level?

Yes, we expect to have a designated online teacher for Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 12, depending on the number of students enrolled. We also hope to offer both French and English programming at Pre-K-Grade 12.

Will my child have more than one teacher?

If your child is in Pre-K, K, Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, or Grade 5, we expect to assign one homeroom teacher to each grade of the online class of students. If your child is in grades 6-9, we will assign Humanities (English/Social) and Math/Sciences teachers to each grade level. So, if your child is in grade 7, for example, he/she would most likely have two teachers. Additionally, these two teachers would each teach either Physical Education/Health and/or Religion. In high school, your child will have subject-specific teachers.

How do I register my child and get my child's timetable/class schedule?

Right now, you will respond to this email and let me know that you would like to have your child enrolled in online education for the Fall. Once online staffing is complete, I will confirm your teacher's name and register you in all classes for your child's level (Pre-K-Grade 12). If you haven't already done so, you would complete a registration form for our school. I will notify you about whether or not your registration is accepted. Then we would register you in classes through our school office (i.e., we will contact you and ensure that your child and you know which courses your child will be registered in).

When do classes start?

Classes start at the same time as everyone else and follow the staggered entry schedule:

Staggered Entry for Kindergarten-Grade 9.

August 31, 2020: Only students who have last names beginning (A-K) would attend school on this day.

September 1, 2020: Only students who have the last names beginning (L-Z) would attend school on this day.

Regular Classes

September 2, 2020: Regular classes resume on this day.

PreKindergarten programs and High Schools (Grades 10, 11, and 12) and MCHS will follow their own schedules for school entry.

Bus routes stay the same for all families and only need to get on the bus the day that they attend school as stated above.

When do I need to make this choice?

I ask that you indicate your preference as early as possible by answering this email. A final deadline for making this choice is: **August 28, 2020.**

As previously stated, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs. Cancian or myself with any questions or concerns. I am very much looking forward to working with you and your children. Please enjoy the rest of your summer and God bless!

Mrs. Nicole Baker
Principal, Bertha Kennedy Catholic Elementary School