



**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF  
SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 58 (NICOLA-SIMILKAMEEN)**

**ADMINISTRATION OFFICE**

Stephen McNiven, B.Ed., M.A., Superintendent of Schools  
Barbara Ross, C.P.A., C.G.A., Secretary Treasurer

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January 14, 2021

Good Afternoon School District No. 58 Families:

It is my hope that all of you are staying healthy and doing as well as possible under the current circumstances. I am writing today in follow up to the recent COVID-19 exposure letters that were sent to the staff, students, and families of Merritt Secondary School. These exposures have heightened the level of concern for some of our community members and this is completely understandable. In response to these exposures and increased level of anxiety, we want to remind and reassure you that we are following both Public Health and Ministry of Education COVID-19 protocols in all of our schools. These protocols provide greater control over the learning and work environment and are helping to provide increased safety for both students and staff. The protocols in place at all schools help reduce the likelihood of transmission and have proven to be effective across the province in supporting the health and safety of the members of our learning community.

In addition to letting you know that we are following all the recommended protocols, we also want you to be aware that we are working closely with Interior Health to support any contact tracing that is needed. We are committed, under their guidance, to communicating any COVID-19 exposures directly to those who work and learn within the impacted school, as well as to the public on our website. We encourage you to be mindful of unverified information and to contact the principal or vice-principal of your school if you have questions or concerns. We believe our schools are safe places to learn and work and it is our hope to have all students in attendance on a regular basis, as this will help support both their learning and well-being. If you have concerns about your child's attendance, please contact the school to discuss the options that are available.

Lastly, we want to remind everyone in our community to follow the Provincial Health Officer's orders and recommendations for staying healthy. Our actions and our commitment to following these directions help keep our schools safe places for students and staff. I want to thank all of you for your dedication to the well-being of our children and encourage you to stay vigilant during these winter months. The safety and well-being of our students and staff are our top priorities, and we will continue to keep our schools as safe as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'SMN', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Stephen McNiven  
Superintendent of Schools