

Newsletter August 14

Refocus on Pandemic safety – More Contact Tracers – School Orientation – Climate Change Solutions funding – Childcare Numbers in Courtenay-Comox

In these last weeks we have seen the COVID-19 numbers increase in BC. This is definitely a reminder that the virus is amongst us and we must all recommit to the health and safety practices that will keep us all safe and break the chains of transmission. We're counting on each other to get through this pandemic safely. Remembering Dr. Bonnie Henry's mantras:

Fewer faces, bigger spaces

Keep your bubbles small

Monitor yourself for symptoms regularly

Self-isolate if you are sick

Keep 2 meters distance from others

Put on a mask safely, if you may not be able to keep a safe distance from others

Don't touch your face

Wash your hands

Be kind, be calm, and be safe – always!

Hiring Contact Tracers

The Province will hire approximately 500 additional health professionals to increase contact tracing around British Columbia, helping keep communities safe as it continues its COVID-19 restart plan. Some of these positions will also help to support public health services, such as providing education in communities, and possibly immunizing for influenza and other diseases. This will allow health authorities to increase their local pool of available public health professionals, while also providing a team of people that are available to be deployed throughout the province as needed. The Ministry of Health is working with Health Match BC and the health authorities to manage the recruitment process.

Orientation week ensures a safe, ready and welcome return to school

As we move forward to address the educational and emotional needs of students during a pandemic, it is important to also recognize the fear that comes with the uncertainty of this pandemic. We have all trusted in the expert guidance of our Public Health Officer, Dr. Bonnie Henry, and she has always been mindful of the potential impacts of school closures on the whole child. It is great to witness the collaborative approach that everyone has taken to put our best foot forward for a strong and safe September restart to our kids' education.

To ensure schools are ready to welcome students into classrooms, there will be a gradual restart to allow extra time to orient students and staff on the new health and safety measures in place. Starting Sept. 8, staff will meet with their school's joint health and safety committee to receive instructions about the updated guidelines and students will be welcomed back to class for orientation by Sept. 10. Students will use their orientation time to get familiar with classrooms that will look different than they did before the pandemic. Students will be assigned to their class, find out who is in their learning group, practice their new routines and familiarize themselves with how to safely move from the class to

outdoor and common areas of the school. As Minister of Education Minister Rob Fleming said, “By working collaboratively with leaders in our education system, we are making sure students and staff are safe, ready and welcome when they return to school in September.”

Funding for Climate Change Solutions

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy has just announced that commencing Wednesday August 12th, the second intake for funding applications is open for projects that manage renewable energy, improve access to clean-energy transportation, improve energy efficiency of buildings or help generate clean energy to reduce community reliance on fossil fuels. If you are involved in local government, Indigenous organizations, not-for-profits and for-profits, we encourage applications to the \$47M CleanBC Communities Fund for clean-energy infrastructure projects that will create jobs and help build back a better, greener, more affordable province.#CleanBC Learn more here:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/22849>

Childcare Numbers Courtenay-Comox

And finally, some wonderful updates for local childcare. As of July 22, 2020, 255 spaces have been approved in Courtenay-Comox, with public investments, including Temporary Emergency Funding, totalling \$15M. The amount that has gone back to parents, through reduced fees and benefits, is nearly \$7M. These numbers are a testament to this government’s commitment to making childcare in communities more accessible and affordable.

My constituency office remains open by phone or email. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca if you have any questions or need assistance with provincial supports.

Sincerely,

Ronna-Rae Leonard
MLA Courtenay – Comox

COVID Resources:

- For medical info, visit www.bccdc.ca or call 811
- For non-medical info and provincial supports visit www.gov.bc.ca/covid19 or call 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300
- Take the self-assessment at covid19.thrive.health
- For seniors looking for additional support, or for those looking to support seniors, call 2-1-1 or visit bc211.ca

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