



## GENERAL INFORMATION

### **What parts of the school were damaged in the fire?**

The fire was contained to A-wing, which includes the gym, mezzanine, multi-purpose room, teaching kitchen, stage, and lower classrooms. B-wing also sustained smoke and water damage. Thirteen teaching spaces were affected by the fire, including five classrooms in B-wing and two classrooms in A-wing.

### **When did students return to school?**

Students were able to return to Carihi on Monday, December 2. The former Oyster River school is being used as the main satellite location for Carihi Secondary while B-wing is being repaired.

### **How long will students have to attend class at Oyster River?**

Oyster River will be used until repairs to B-wing are complete. Our hope had been that B-wing would be able to be repaired and ready for students again after the Winter Break, it looks like repairs will take up to two months. At this time, we don't expect any B-wing classrooms to reopen until the entire wing has been repaired and all the B-wing classrooms can be reopened at the same time.

### **Is Oyster River the only satellite location being used while Carihi is repaired?**

No. Oyster River is the main satellite location, but some classes are also being held in extra space at École des Deux Mondes Elementary and gym classes are being held at Robron Centre.

### **Where is the former Oyster River school?**

The address for the former Oyster River school is 2250 Terrain Road.

### **How do students get to and from Carihi and Oyster River?**

Students are being transported between Carihi Secondary and Oyster River by school bus.

### **How long is the drive between Carihi Secondary and Oyster River?**

Approximately 20 minutes.

### **Why was Oyster River chosen as the main satellite location?**

School administration and district leadership thoroughly investigated all possible options before landing on Oyster River.

The school district doesn't have a supply of portables and to purchase them, have them delivered and set-up with heat and electricity would have taken upwards to three months. We also tried to get construction trailers but couldn't get any large enough.

Robron Centre houses our district's alternate programs and much of the building is leased by outside tenants. We couldn't displace these students, staff or tenants. Similarly, shared use of Timberline Secondary would have meant disrupting another school community and would have meant students attending in shifts, with classes extending into the evening.

Discovery Passage is being used for district storage. It would have taken at least a month to get the school cleared out and ready for school use.

Oyster River, because it has been recently leased, was the most ready, allowing us to get students back to in-person learning in the quickest amount of time.

**If a student has their first class of the morning at one of the satellite locations, can they be dropped off there instead of coming into Carihi first?**

Yes. If students have their first class at Oyster River, École des Deux Mondes or Robron they can be dropped off there instead of coming to Carihi Secondary first.

**Has the fire department determined the cause of the fire?**

The fire department has concluded their investigation and determined that the fire was caused by spontaneous combustion due to a reaction between cooking oils on fabrics, heat after laundering, and inadequate ventilation. It was accidental and not the result of arson or any suspicious activity.

## **ACADEMIC IMPACTS**

**Did students need to do school work while off school?**

Teachers reached out to students to connect and possibly share some remote assignments. Students only needed to do school work if directed by their teacher.

**Why didn't the school go to online learning?**

Our priority was to get students back to in-person learning as quickly as possible. Online learning was considered as an absolute last resort given social isolation and mental health concerns we saw after the pandemic, as well as unequal access to technology, difficulty with student engagement and motivation, difficulty monitoring student progress, and disparities for vulnerable students.

**Were there changes to the timetable and classroom locations?**

Yes, to try to minimize lost instructional time because of travel to and from the satellite locations the school has gone to a simplified Day 1 and Day 2 rotation and double block schedule. Day 1 will have blocks A and C and will be on Mondays and Wednesdays; Day 2 will have blocks B and D and will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Fridays will alternate between Day 1 and Day 2. Some classes at Carihi also had to be moved to accommodate the resource needs of certain classes.

**Won't students lose instructional time if they are being transported back and forth between Carihi and Oyster River or other satellite locations?**

Yes, there is some lost instructional time, but we have minimized it as much as possible with the change to the timetable and move to a double block schedule.

**How will exams, projects or major assignments be impacted?**

We are hoping for the least amount of impact possible. Teachers will adjust their lesson and assessment plans to still meet learning outcomes in consideration of this time the school has been closed.

**Where are gym classes being held?**

Robron Centre has generously opened their gym to Carihi PE classes. Students are transported between Carihi and Robron. PE teachers are using the Robron gym, weight room, and the community fields for the continued delivery of PE programming. PE classes will run out of Robron until further notice.

**Has the school's start and dismissal times changed?**

No, the school day's start and dismissal times stayed the same so that there was no change to the morning and afternoon school bus schedule.

**Why was the Hockey Academy able to start running again before school at Carihi was back in session?**

The Hockey Academy is a private program that accesses resources outside of Carihi. The program was unaffected by the fire.

## **FACILITIES & ACCESS**

### **If the fire wasn't in the entire building, why weren't we able to return to the school until December 2?**

While the fire didn't affect the entire building, WorkSafeBC required air quality testing and occupancy approval before re-entry. We also had to restore heat, power, and water, which were shut down during firefighting efforts, and to secure access to the affected areas for safety.

### **Has restoration/repair work started in A-wing and B-wing?**

Restoration and repair work in A-wing or B-wing had to wait for an assessment by a structural engineer. Unfortunately, we have been told that there can be no access to A-wing as there is a risk that the roof will collapse. B-wing has to have asbestos abatement done as part of its restoration and repair work, requiring specialized management.

### **Are students and staff allowed to retrieve belongings left in A-wing or B-wing?**

No. Students and school staff are not allowed into A-wing or B-wing for their safety.

### **When can A-wing and B-wing students get into their lockers?**

Students with lockers in unaffected areas of the school were able to access them as soon as students returned to school. We are working with a remediation company to remove and salvage any personal items that can safely be returned. B-wing lockers will be accessed by the remediation company in the next couple of weeks. Given the structural engineer's assessment of the possibility of a roof collapse on A-wing, A-wing lockers will likely not be able to be accessed at all.

### **What types of items will be able to be returned from lockers?**

We have been told that we must assume, given the age of the school, that the ash in B-wing contains asbestos. This means that any fabric or porous items (for example hoodies, running shoes, backpacks, etc.) cannot be returned and must be safely disposed of by the remediation company. Hard surface or non-porous items may be able to be returned if the remediation company determines that it can be cleaned and decontaminated. Only the remediation company can decide whether an item can be safely returned or not.

### **Are personal items in lockers covered by insurance?**

Unfortunately, personal items that were in student lockers are not covered by the School Protection Plan (the insurance provider for school districts across the province). The replacement of personal items must be claimed through home insurance. Families that do not have home insurance are asked to contact the school office as we are seeking to establish a hardship fund with support of community organizations.

### **How long will it take to repair the damaged areas of the school?**

It will likely be 1-2 months before B-wing can be fully repaired and estimates are now indicating that it could take 18-months to 2 years before A-wing and the gym is rebuilt.

### **How will affected spaces be managed during repairs?**

Access to A-wing and B-wing have been securely sealed off within the building to prevent access. The front of the gym and B-wing have also been fenced off and exterior points boarded up.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Is it safe for students and staff to be back in Carihi Secondary?**

Yes, we have taken all the necessary precautions to ensure that the school is safe before allowing staff and students to return to the building.

### **If there is risk of roof collapse in A-wing is the rest of the school structurally safe?**

While a structural engineer has determined that there is a risk of the roof collapsing on A-wing, the rest of the school is structurally sound. Access to A-wing has been completely restricted and signage is up warning against trespassing and the potential hazard.

### **Do we have to be concerned about asbestos/air quality in the reopened parts of the school?**

Asbestos was held in the fire area, and it was thoroughly hosed down through the firefighting efforts. Asbestos does not become airborne through smoke, but it can be in the ash. Any ash (and within it, asbestos) is contained within the fire-affected areas of the school which have been boarded up and sealed off. The fire-affected areas of the school have also

been disconnected from the air system for the rest of the school. A hazard assessment was also done before any repair work started to ensure asbestos is stabilized and removed by trained personnel.

**Has the air quality in the building been tested?**

Air quality testing was completed by an independent third party, as required by WorkSafeBC, and the building was cleared for re-occupancy before students returned on December 2.

**EXTRACURRICULAR & SPECIAL EVENTS**

**Will this impact grad?**

No. While the fire may affect the location of some grad events, it will not impact students' ability to graduate or prevent the school from having commencement and other grad events.

**Will sports, clubs, or other extracurricular activities be affected?**

We are working to establish alternate locations within the district and the community to ensure that sports, clubs and extracurricular activities can continue.

**LONG-TERM PLANS**

**Will extra days be added to the school year?**

No, we don't anticipate having to add extra days to the school year. We are confident that teachers will be able to adjust their lesson and assessment plans to still meet learning outcomes.

**Will the school district take this opportunity to update or renovate other areas of Carihi Secondary?**

While we understand there may be interest in updating or renovating other areas of Carihi Secondary, significant capital improvements require approval and funding from the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The school district does not have surplus funds available to independently finance large-scale capital projects.