

Greater St. Albert  
Catholic Schools



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# Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry 2020-2021

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*Updated August 13, 2020*

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## *Message to Parents/Legal Guardians*

Dear Parents and Legal Guardians:

We look forward to continuing to work together as partners in school re-entry. This guidebook is written for parents/legal guardians to prepare you with programming details for school re-entry. We have written the date on the cover of this guidebook because we expect to revise it as new messages are provided through the Minister of Education, Premier, Prime Minister, and Chief Medical Officer of Health in Alberta. Health measures are changing and we will be responsive and flexible as the year progresses.

Multiple health measures have been put in place to ensure that students, staff, and parents are safe. On July 21, 2020 the Minister of Education announced that students will return to school face-to-face in the Fall, at near-normal operations, with health measures in place. On August 4, grades 4-12 students and all staff have been asked to wear masks and mask use will be mandatory in common areas and when physical distancing of 2m is not possible. K-3 students are not required to wear masks.

On August 6, 2020, you received a survey from the Superintendent to assist our Division to gain clarity about whether parents/legal guardians preferred online or face-to-face education. While the majority of students in K-12 prefer to return to school face-to-face with health measures in place, a minority of students in K-12 have expressed interest in online programming. Therefore, face-to-face and online programming options will be provided to all parents with flexibility to move between these options throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

### **Face-to-Face Instruction (Return to School with Health Measures in Place)**

If you prefer that your child comes to school for face-to-face instruction, you will proceed to register at your designated school if you have not already done so. If you have already registered, you will receive a letter from your school that confirms your registration and some general guidelines for what to expect (i.e., how to start your day by screening for COVID-19, what to do if your child has symptoms, what to expect when your child rides the bus or is dropped off at school). Additionally, in every school, the following health measures will be in place:

- Anyone coming into the school will be expected to do the daily prescribed [COVID-19 Information Screening Questionnaire](#).
- Parents/legal guardians are expected to do this daily checklist with their children before coming to school each day. If students show any signs of illness, they are not to come to school unless the signs are established as part of a pre-existing health condition.
- Strict stay-at-home protocols are in place for those who are feeling unwell.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting in schools and on buses is in place.
- Encouraging physical distancing, where possible, is a focus.

- Creating cohorts of students will be implemented as much as possible.
- Mandatory masks for students from grade 4–12 and for all staff in settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained, as outlined in provincial guidelines, is required.
- Asking K–3 students who are physically, psychologically or developmentally able to wear a mask, to do so.
- Recognizing that individuals who under any protected grounds of the Alberta *Human Rights Act* may be excused from this health protocol.
- Following prescribed hand hygiene requirements for students and staff is required.

### **Online Learning (Stay at home/caregiver and participate in online education)**

Online learning will be offered in the 2020–2021 school year. Based on your response to the survey sent on August 6, you will be contacted by your school principal/designate to learn more about what to expect to prepare for online education. Teaching staff will be designated to online teaching assignments over the next few weeks and your child will have a homeroom teacher who will communicate with you directly as to the classroom routines and expectations, supplies to keep at home, communication protocols, face-to-face opportunities, and how to meet when necessary, and where to find classroom assignments and assessments. Your online teacher may or may not be at your school even though your child will be registered at your designated school. These teachers are Division staff members.

If your child becomes ill and cannot attend face-to-face school, the classroom teacher will continue to maintain contact with your child unless the illness is lengthy. If the illness is longer than two or more weeks, you will have the option to register in online programming. If you are registered in online programming, the online teacher may offer face-to-face opportunities for the class to get together for a safe gathering. The health measures would be fully explained to you. You and your child would decide whether or not to take part in these opportunities.

As your child engages in either face-to-face or online education, there will be opportunities for you and your child to consider whether to stay or switch from one to the other based on whether the programming is working well for your child. Details about programming opportunities and flexibility are outlined in this guidebook. We hope to be flexible and adaptive to students' needs as they arise in the school year.

Our goal is to answer questions that you may have as you prepare for school re-entry. If you have further questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [schoolreentry@gsacrd.ab.ca](mailto:schoolreentry@gsacrd.ab.ca).

## Scenarios for School Re-entry

Our school re-entry plan is designed to prepare students, parents, and staff for school re-entry based on one of three scenarios:

- **In-school classes resume** (near normal with health measures)
- **In-school classes partially resume** (with additional health measures)
- **At-home learning continues** (in-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

In the [School Re-entry Guidelines](#) from the province, it was stated that:

*As we approach the new school year, the direction provided in this draft plan will be updated as circumstances change. Alberta Education is committed to providing the final plan no later than August 1, 2020 to allow school authorities time to make any additional adjustments to their own planning for the new school year.*

*It is imperative that school authorities plan and prepare for all of these three non-mutually-exclusive scenarios as the COVID-19 pandemic may change at any time and school authorities may be required to transition from one scenario to another with short notice.*

Alberta Education is collaborating with Alberta Health to decide when to transition from one scenario to another— depending on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic in communities across the province. The province has decided that students will return to school in September under [Scenario 1](#) of the provincial re-entry strategy.

Therefore, at any point during the school year, the province could decide whether schools across Alberta, schools in a particular region, or individual schools and classrooms need to move from one scenario to another. This decision will always be made by a medical officer of health in collaboration with education officials.

Our Division has worked in close partnership with surrounding school divisions, the ministry, and with our system leaders to ensure that we follow all health measures. We have developed general guidelines for our Division, and individual schools will implement the guidelines in ways that are responsive to the needs of their families. To help families better understand the provincial school re-entry plan, Alberta Education has developed the [Parents' Guide 2020–2021 School Year](#) and [Get the Facts: Back to Class for 2020–2021](#).

# Safety Measures

*Safety depends on us working together as partners.  
Multiple strategies will keep everyone safe.*

We have worked with the ministry and with our partner jurisdictions to ensure similar approaches to implementing multiple health measures to keep everyone safe. These protocols are intended to reduce the risk of COVID-19.

## Cleaning

Our Division has been working in the summer to prepare for schools re-opening. Air handling units and coils have been pressure washed and pleated air filters have been installed. We are attentive to ventilation practices suggested by Alberta Health such as encouraging proper ventilation using open doors and windows, holding classes outside, and holding classes in larger spaces with greater air volume and air flow.

Approved cleaning protocols have been put in place in all Division buildings. Custodial staff have been trained to identify high touch areas and to know how to clean, sanitize, and disinfect them. Soft furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned have been removed from classrooms and common areas. More frequent cleaning protocols have been put in place with respect to washrooms, high traffic areas, and common areas. All schools have approved cleaning supplies as well as microfiber cloths that are sent to be laundered on behalf of staff. Staff will work with school principals to identify high touch surfaces within classrooms and learn how to wipe them down should it be necessary in the day.

## Screening

Before coming to school each day, all staff and students must complete the Alberta government's [COVID-19 Information Screening Questionnaire](#), which is [available in multiple languages](#), to determine whether they can attend or must stay home. Students who have any symptoms noted on the questionnaire cannot attend school. The form does not need to be submitted to the office. If your child has any symptoms, contact your school office to let your child's school know. Everyone who enters a school will see a sign that reminds them to complete the daily [COVID-19 Information Screening Questionnaire](#) before entering the building.

## Illness Protocols

If your child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be brought to a designated area in or near the office. Your child and any staff member aiding him/her will wear a mask and any other required safety items (face shield, gloves, gown) if necessary. The reason for having a designated area in the school in case of illness is to ensure that the child is safe and that others stay safe. Your child will have a temperature check with a contactless thermometer to inform you as to whether he/she has a fever.

If your child is sick, parents or guardians will be contacted to pick up their child immediately. It is important for you to provide the school with your current contact information and updated emergency contacts to help us to keep your child safe.

## Testing Protocols

Students with pre-existing health conditions that cause symptoms of illness should be tested for COVID-19 at least once before returning to school. A negative test will help show that symptoms are related to their pre-existing conditions, and not to COVID-19. This will establish what their baseline for being healthy looks like. Families should notify their school about any pre-existing condition and the symptoms it causes. As long as these symptoms remain the same, the student can attend school.

If symptoms change or worsen, the student will need to leave the school, follow illness protocols and have another COVID-19 test to determine if the symptoms are still related to the pre-existing medical condition. If the test is negative, the student may return to school. Families can learn more about COVID-19 testing and book a test online through Alberta Health Services.

## COVID-19 Protocols

If health officials confirm a case of COVID-19 in a school community, Alberta Health Services will take the following steps:

1. The zone medical officer of health will work with school authorities to quickly:
  - identify cases
  - identify close contacts
  - create isolation measures when needed
  - provide follow-up recommendations
2. A COVID-19 case will not automatically lead to school closure—it could be that only the group of students and staff who came in close contact will be required to stay home for 14 days.
3. Parents will be notified if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed at school and public health officials will contact those who were in close contact with the person.
4. Each school authority will support students and staff to learn or work at home if they are required to self-isolate.

## Hand Hygiene

Staff and students will learn about and implement [Alberta Health Services' hand hygiene practices](#). Everyone who enters a school will use hand sanitizer or wash their hands immediately. Students and staff will be required to wash and/or sanitize their hands throughout the day, including every time that they enter or exit the school/classroom, before and after using shared equipment, and before and after eating. Schools will provide hand sanitizer throughout the building to support these requirements. ***It is also encouraged that families send their children to school with personal hand sanitizer.*** Schools will also promote proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette with verbal reminders and posters throughout the school. Parents can help their children practice these hand hygiene practices at home before returning to school.

## Cohorts

A cohort is defined as a group of students and staff who remain together. The size of the cohort will depend on the size of the classroom and the number of students assigned to the teacher. Every effort will be made to keep the same students and staff together and limit contact between cohorts within the school. Strategies such as staggering breaks and limiting gatherings will lessen the chances of an outbreak and ease contact tracing.

## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is one health measure to reduce risk of transmitting COVID-19. At times, students and staff will be sitting, walking, talking, or doing activities that require them to be closer than 2m, so varied strategies will be put in place to promote physical distancing throughout their buildings, where possible, including in classrooms, hallways, washrooms, and common areas.

Strategies include but are not limited to:

- removing excess furniture in classrooms to make more space to spread student desks and tables farther apart;
- removing or rearranging seating in common areas to prevent students from gathering;
- staggering the start/end/break times for classes to prevent crowded hallways;
- posting signs and using floor markers to control the flow of foot traffic and support physical distancing; and
- using plexiglass shields.



## Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as masks, face shields, gloves, and gowns are provided to staff who work with students in classrooms, in Division programs such as our RISE program and our Sports Academies, or who come into contact with students or staff who are ill. All Division staff will be provided with two reusable masks and a face shield to support a safer return to school. Face shields do not replace masks; masks are still required for staff who are wearing face shields.

Masks are an important way to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19, particularly when people are indoors and physical distancing of 2m or more is not possible. The Minister of Education and the Chief Medical Officer of Alberta have mandated that all staff and all grades 4-12 students wear a mask when physical distancing at school is not possible. It is recommended that K-3 students wear masks, although this is not a requirement in schools at this time. Masks are required for students on buses, as buses are an environment in which students from multiple cohorts come together and social distancing is difficult to maintain. Individuals who are physically, psychologically or developmentally unable to wear a mask or who are protected by the Alberta Human Rights Act may be excused from wearing a mask.

Proper mask use will be taught and promoted, and it is our collective responsibility to adhere to mask protocols. Masks will be provided to students. That said, we encourage families to send their children to school with a mask and to practice [proper mask protocols](#) prior to coming to school. Emergency supplies of masks, face shields, gloves, gowns will be kept at the school office.



# Programming Options

## Faith-based Education

As a Catholic school division, Religious Education and faith permeation are central to who we are. We seek to nurture your child's faith through religious education, and through opportunities to participate in prayer (personal prayer and class/school celebrations and liturgies).

## Face-to-face Education

In Scenario One, **In-school classes resume** with health measures in place. Just as in any school year, students will be assigned to their classes with a designated teacher(s). When possible, the teachers will move to the classrooms to limit the movement of students in the hallways.

If a student needs to stay home due to illness, their classroom teacher will provide work to support their learning. If the student is away for an extended period of time, there will be an option for the student to be supported online (i.e., scheduled Google Meets, email support).

## Online Education

Students who learn online will be part of an online learning group with an assigned teacher from the Division. Online students will remain enrolled at the school where they registered for 2020-2021. If you have not yet registered your child, to get started, please follow one of the links below. *Please note: A registration is not considered complete until reviewed and approved by the school Principal.*

[2020-2021 School Year NEW STUDENT INQUIRY FORM](#) - For new students, inquiry review will occur within 2 business days.

[2020-2021 School Year CURRENT STUDENT REGISTRATION](#) - For returning students, please contact your school principal for the school snap code.

Based on the recent survey, principals will be contacting those parents who provided contact information to enroll their child(ren) in online education. If you did not complete the survey but are interested in online learning, please contact your school principal. Once your child is enrolled, you will have a teacher assigned who will then share information required for school start up.

This learning format will include live online teacher instruction, directed activities and assignments that students will complete independently. Teachers will focus on the core subject areas (English/French Language Arts, Math, Science, Social, Religion, Physical Education and

Health). Students who are also registered in Sports or Recreation Academies will continue in these programs which are more fully described in the section on Starting School. Options will be provided, when possible. The teacher will assess and report on student progress in these areas. The parent would need supervision of their children in their daytime environment (home, caregiver), but the parent would not require that supervisor to teach their children.

If your child becomes ill and cannot attend face-to-face school, the classroom teacher will continue to maintain contact with your child unless the illness is lengthy. If the illness is longer than one-two weeks, you will have the option to register in online programming. If you are registered in online programming, the online teacher may offer face-to-face opportunities for the class to get together for a safe gathering. The health measures would be fully explained to you. You and your child would decide whether or not to take part in these opportunities.

## Home Education

Some parents may confuse doing online education at home with home education. To clarify the difference, online education is provided by the Division and home education is provided by the parent. Home Education is provided by the parent and governed by the [Home Education Regulation](#). Our Division has prescribed requirements in our [Home Education and Shared Responsibility AP 230](#). A parent may start a home education program at any time but needs approval from a supervising school authority.

## International Education

Only international students already here in Canada and who have pre-registered for the 2020–2021 school year will be accommodated. The province has indicated that after Canada lifts current travel restrictions and non-essential travel resumes, international education programs can resume. Any students would need to follow quarantine requirements and any relevant public health orders.

## Reporting and Notification Periods

Once you have started the year in either face-to-face or online education, you will receive report cards based on the school's reporting periods. Between reporting periods, you will be notified by your school principal to decide whether your child will attend school in person or choose to learn at home through online instruction. Between notification periods, if your child needs to switch from online to face-to-face programming, this would be handled on a case-by-case basis by your school principal.

Please use this chart as a guideline for notification periods:

Reporting Periods	Notification periods
<p align="center"><b>Elementary Schools</b></p> <p>Reporting Period 1: August - November 2020            Reporting Period 2: November - March 2021            Reporting Period 3: April - June 2021</p>	<p align="center"><b>Elementary Schools</b></p> <p>Notification Period 1: October 15, 2020            Notification Period 2: December 15, 2020            Notification Period 3: March 15, 2021</p>
<p align="center"><b>Junior High Schools</b></p> <p><b>École GH Primeau</b>            Reporting Period 1: Aug. 31- Dec. 4            Reporting Period 2: Dec. 5 - March 19            Reporting Period 3: Mar. 20- June 25</p> <p><b>École Secondaire Sainte Marguerite d'Youville</b>            Reporting Period 1: Aug. 31- Dec. 4            Reporting Period 2: Dec. 5- March 19            Reporting Period 3: March 20-June 25</p> <p><b>Legal School</b>            Reporting Period 1: Aug. 31- Nov. 29            Reporting Period 2: Nov. 30- March 21            Reporting Period 3: Mar. 22-June 25</p> <p><b>Morinville Community High School- Gr. 9</b>            Reporting Period 1: Aug.31-Jan. 31            Reporting Period 2: Feb. 1- June 25</p> <p><b>RS Fowler</b>            Reporting Period 1: Aug. 31- Dec. 4            Reporting Period 2: Dec. 5- March 19            Reporting Period 3: Mar. 20-June 25</p> <p><b>Sister Alphonse Academy</b>            Reporting Period 1: Aug. 31- Dec. 6            Reporting Period 2: Dec.7 - April 4            Reporting Period 3: Apr. 4 - June 25</p> <p><b>Vincent J Maloney</b>            Reporting Period 1: Aug.31-Jan. 31            Reporting Period 2: Feb. 1- June 25</p>	<p align="center"><b>Junior High Schools</b></p> <p><b>École GH Primeau</b>            Notification Period 1: October 15, 2020            Notification Period 2: December 15, 2020            Notification Period 3: March 15, 2021</p> <p><b>École Secondaire Sainte Marguerite d'Youville</b>            Notification Period 1: October 15, 2020            Notification Period 2: December 15, 2020            Notification Period 3: March 15, 2021</p> <p><b>Legal School</b>            Notification Period 1: October 15, 2020            Notification Period 2: December 15, 2020            Notification Period 3: March 15, 2021</p> <p><b>Morinville Community High School- Gr. 9</b>            Notification Period 1: Nov. 5, 2020            Notification Period 2: April 15, 2021</p> <p><b>RS Fowler</b>            Notification Period 1: October 15, 2020            Notification Period 2: December 15, 2020            Notification Period 3: March 15, 2021</p> <p><b>Sister Alphonse Academy</b>            Notification Period 1: October 15, 2020            Notification Period 2: December 15, 2020            Notification Period 3: March 15, 2021</p> <p><b>Vincent J Maloney</b>            Notification Period 1: November 5, 2020            Notification Period 2: April 15th, 2021</p>
<p align="center"><b>High Schools</b></p> <p><b>Morinville Community High School- Gr. 10-12</b>            Quarter 1-August 31 - November 15            Quarter 2-November 16 - January 31            Quarter 3-February 1 - April 20            Quarter 4-April 21 - June 25</p>	<p align="center"><b>High Schools</b></p> <p><b>Morinville Community High School- Gr. 10-12</b>            Notification Period 1: September 14            Notification Period 2: November 30            Notification Period 3: February 15            Notification Period 4: May 5</p>

<p><b>St. Albert Catholic High School</b>  Quarter 1-August 31 - November 15  Quarter 2-November 16 - January 31  Quarter 3-February 1 - April 20  Quarter 4-April 21 - June 25</p> <p><b>St. Gabriel Catholic High School</b>  Reporting Period 1: Aug.31-Jan. 31  Reporting Period 2: Feb. 1- June 25</p>	<p><b>St. Albert Catholic High School</b>  Notification Period 1: September 14  Notification Period 2: November 30  Notification Period 3: February 15  Notification Period 4: May 5</p> <p><b>St. Gabriel Catholic High School</b>  Notification Period 1: November 5, 2020  Notification Period 2: April 15th, 2021</p>
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## Common Course Outlines and Online Materials

A group of 50 K-12 teachers met over the summer to identify essential outcomes to be used by online and face-to-face teachers for common course outlines across our Division. Therefore, students will be engaged in similar learning whether they are in online or in face-to-face contexts.

Also, this group of teachers prepared online lessons and materials for school start up and will continue to meet throughout the year to further develop this repository of lesson materials. This is an opportunity for us to learn collaboratively and to share across face-to-face and online teaching contexts to support students who may have to switch between face-to-face and online education.

*Smooth transitions between face-to-face and online education based on common outcomes and course outlines.*



# Starting School

## Communication from the Division

You will continue to receive weekly updates through the Superintendent about school start up in August and early September. This week's update was designed to provide more details about programming, and the guidebook will be revised as necessary to further address questions arising from families. Regular updates are posted on the Division's [website](#), our [schools' websites](#), and our official social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)).

## Communication from the School

Following the survey sent on August 6th, if you provided your contact information, the school principal or designate from the school will contact you to confirm who will be teaching your child(ren) and how online education will start. Throughout August and into the school year, you will receive a message from your school principal about orientations, classes, and any other important programming requirements at the school level.

## Getting to School on the Bus

Before coming to school each day, all staff and students must complete the Alberta government's [COVID-19 Information Screening Questionnaire](#), which is [available in multiple languages](#), to determine whether they can attend or must stay home. Students with COVID-19 symptoms or experiencing illness will not be permitted on the bus.

Because physical distancing is not possible on a bus, to help keep students and staff as safe as possible, the following protocols will be followed:

- Students in Grades 4–12 who are physically, psychologically or developmentally able to wear a mask will be required to do so.
- K–3 students are strongly encouraged to wear a mask on the bus.
- Students will be assigned seats using a seating plan that limits close contact with others when possible.
- Students will sit with members of the same household when possible.
- Students will be taught and reminded of how to respect physical distancing.
- There will be a protective zone between the driver and student passengers, and no person will sit in the seat directly behind the bus driver.
- The bus will be cleaned according to COVID-19 cleaning standards.
- High contact areas will be cleaned throughout the day.
- A deep clean of the bus will be completed daily.

## Arriving at School

All students will have an assigned door to use every time they enter and exit their school.

When students arrive at school, they will:

- go to the area outside their assigned door
- follow physical distancing guidelines to stay at least two meters apart while they wait outside
- follow physical distancing guidelines to line up when it is time to enter the school
- wait for staff to bring them into the school

School staff will be outside to remind students of these requirements, and to help students line up and keep an appropriate distance from each other. Many schools will develop staggered entry schedules to limit how many students enter the school at once. This schedule may be slightly different from the regular bell schedule. During extreme weather, such as severe cold or rain, schools will have a plan in place so students can enter the school early. Adults bringing students to school will be asked to stay in their vehicle or outside the school, and to maintain a safe physical distance between themselves and others. Those who need to enter the school must book an appointment with the school office. Individuals without an appointment will not be able to enter the school.

## Signs and Arrows

Schools will use information on posters and on the floor (arrows/footmarkers) to help students to maintain physical distancing within the school and to know which way to walk through the hallways.

Laminated signs will be displayed throughout the school as reminders to:

- [Help Relaunch Safely](#)
- [Please do not enter, if...](#)
- [Self-screening Questionnaire](#)
- [How to wash your hands](#)
- [How to use hand sanitizer](#)
- [How to wear a face mask](#)
- [Practice physical distancing](#)
- [School closure](#)
- [Elevator safety](#)

## Lockers, Coat Hooks, and School Supplies

At this time, students will not access lockers or coat hooks. Students will keep their personal belongings with them at all times. Teachers will direct the best way to store items, and, in consultation with the school principal, this guideline may change as health guidelines change or as protocols are developed to ensure that health measures can be met by accessing lockers and coat hooks.

Students will have their own personal supplies to use that are stored separately. Teachers will plan learning activities to reduce or minimize the need to share equipment, textbooks or materials. If items are shared, they must be cleaned and disinfected after use. Students will wash or sanitize their hands both before and after using the shared items.

## Washrooms and Common Areas

Washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day. There will be a maximum number of students permitted in the washroom at one time. Depending on the size of the school and the location of washrooms, schools may assign students to specific washrooms. Areas such as libraries and gymnasiums may be used as classrooms and this will be determined by the school principal. Gatherings will be discouraged in all common areas, and limitations placed on resource sharing to ensure that all health guidelines can be met.

## Open/Closed Campus

Junior high and high schools will work with their school community to decide if students will be allowed to leave campus during lunch breaks. If students are permitted to leave the school building, they must:

- exit through their assigned door
- respect physical distancing and all other COVID-19 health protocols when off campus
- assess whether they have any symptoms of illness before they re-enter the school—students with newly developed symptoms will not be permitted to return to school
- re-enter the school through their assigned door

Additionally, high schools will need to determine if students may leave campus and return to the school building during a spare period. Schools will also need to identify a space or spaces in the school where students on spares can be accommodated while physical distancing.



## Playgrounds

With this in mind, schools will not be assigning staff to supervise playground equipment before and after school. To support safety, this equipment will be off limits to students during these times. Families who wish to take children to the playground at other times of the day are encouraged to follow the province's [Guidance for Playgrounds](#) to use the equipment as safely as possible.

## Prekindergarten and Kindergarten

Early childhood education is following many of the suggestions provided by the Government of Alberta's [Guidance for Daycare and Out-of-School Care](#). Like all classrooms, PreK and K classes focus on creating **cohorts** (a group of children and staff members assigned to them who stay together throughout the day). As much as reasonably possible, teachers will group students into **subgroupings or sub-cohorts** for play and activities. In this way, smaller cohorts play or work together and limit their social interactions and contact with other cohorts within the same room/space at the same time. In addition, extra attention is paid to limiting interactions while waiting for parents at pick-up times and while students are waiting to enter school at drop-off times. These smaller groupings/sub-cohorts also spend time together at mealtimes, playtimes, and outdoor activities.

## Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 9 Classes

In Pre-K-9, Pre-K-5, Pre-K-6, 5-8, and 7-9 schools, students will stay with their classroom as a cohort and teachers will travel to classrooms as much as reasonably possible. Core (English/French Language Arts, Math, Science, Social, Religion, Physical Education and Health) and option courses will be offered unless health guidelines make it impossible (e.g., no singing or playing of wind instruments). For example, Foods in junior and senior high would be limited to students making and sharing their own equipment to make individual meals. Also, other options could continue as normal (Dance, Drama, Art, Photography, Sports Medicine, Outdoor Ed., FSL) by following all health guidelines in this handbook or that emerge. Construction would be limited based on how best to share and cleanse tools. Robotics would be limited to the number of students compared to kits so that there are no shared kits.

## Grades 10, 11, and 12 Classes

In high schools, we are implementing a **quarterly schedule** for all courses. This means that students will take core and option classes in a compressed schedule of Sept.- Nov., Nov.- Jan., Jan.-April, or April - June. The reason for this scheduling is to have students take part in fewer classes to maintain smaller cohorts. This will also maintain minimal disruption to writing diplomas and completing high school programming if schools are required to switch between scenarios one, two, and/or three.

## Provincial Exams

**Grade 3 Student Learning Assessments** will be optional. **Grades 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests** will not be administered. **Diploma Exams** continue to be mandatory. Diploma schedules will be communicated by your school. All diploma exams will be offered every quarter.

## Respectful Inclusive Supported Education (RISE) Anchor Programs (Jr./Sr. High Schools) and Inclusive Education

Our RISE program students will come to school as a cohort (the same students with the same staff) every day. Students will continue to take part in classes face-to-face unless those students choose online education. Students will continue to take part in classes face-to-face and access resources virtually (e.g., Google Classroom) to ensure that they have necessary medical care, when needed, and targeted and individualized support to meet their personalized education goals. Staff who are working with RISE students face-to-face in closer than 2m proximity will be provided with masks, face shields, gloves, and gowns, to be used when necessary based on Alberta Health Services' guidelines.

For students who have diverse learning needs, returning to school can cause additional concern or anxiety. We are taking steps to support students, which include:

- working with Alberta Health Services on COVID-19 safety protocols for some of the complex medical interventions and supports that some students require, to keep both students and staff as safe as possible.
- applying COVID-19-specific strategies to Individual Program Plans (IPPs), Individual Care Plans or Individual Student Behaviour Plans.
- addressing effective learning strategies for online learning in IPPs.

More information about how we're supporting students with diverse learning needs during COVID-19 will be available in school and division communications, including this guidebook, as we move forward. School principals and Division staff will work with families who have specific questions about school re-entry.

## IB and AP Exams

IB and AP exams will continue to be administered in May 2021. IB and AP courses will be offered according to when it is possible based on school staffing and scheduling requirements. Some considerations may be off-schedule times (lunch, after class). Teachers who teach an AP or IB course will have certain courses scheduled in certain quarters that each school will communicate to AP and IB students. Teachers will follow up off-schedule to work with students to be prepared for exams in May.

## St. Gabriel High School (Outreach, Distance Education Centre)

In outreach and distance education programs, we serve students who may need greater flexibility than a quarterly schedule provides, so these students will choose to take their courses in quarters, semesters, or as a full year program based on what they determine with the school principal or vice principal of St. Gabriel High School. Students will have access to diploma exams every quarter.

## Physical Education, Extracurricular Activities, and Athletics

Schools will continue to provide physical education instruction. The province's plan indicates that delivery of programming outside is most desirable, and activities that support physical distancing, such as badminton, are recommended. Schools will evaluate whether they can offer extracurricular activities that follow COVID-19 protocols, and let families know which activities are available. Extracurricular activities and athletics requiring mingling of students between cohorts and/or close contact will be suspended until further notice. The introduction of any extracurricular or athletic activities will be coordinated by the Division as a whole and will be in compliance with any current guidance from Alberta Health Services and the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA), as applicable.

## Sports Academy

If your child is registered in Hockey, Soccer, Gym/Cheer/Dance, or Recreation Academies, your child will be participating in these programs with safety measures that meet the Chief Medical Officer's and Alberta Health's guidelines:

- Physical distances of 2m between students will be maintained in most activities.
- When students are required to be less than 2m apart (i.e., on buses, in change rooms, certain activities), they will wear masks.
- There will be no food consumed in any location during academy time.
- All athletes will have their own water bottles that they will not be sharing with any other students.
- Prescribed hand hygiene protocols will be taught and reinforced before entering and exiting any facility, and before entering and after exiting a bus.
- All facilities that we use will be vetted to ensure that they meet the provincial and Division health measures.

If your child is in face-to-face education or in online education, your child has the opportunity to continue in academy programming for the 2020-2021 school year. Geoff Giacobbo, Sports Academy Consultant, has and will continue to be in touch with families who are registered in academies. If you have an interest in registering in Sports/Recreation Academy, please contact him: [ggiacobbo@gsacrd.ab.ca](mailto:ggiacobbo@gsacrd.ab.ca).

## Food

Activities that involve the sharing of food between students are suspended until further notice. Classes that teach food preparation may occur as long as students do not share the food they prepare with other students or staff.

### **For lunches and snacks:**

- No Skip-the Dishes or food services (e.g., hot lunches) will be available in schools.
- Food provided by the family should be stored with the student's belongings.
- Students/children should practice physical distancing while eating.
- There should be no common food items (e.g., salt and pepper shakers, ketchup).
- If families forget to send lunch, you will need to contact the office to arrange to drop off the lunch as opposed to walking through the school to the student's classroom.

Parents can help by discussing these measures with your children before the start of school.

## Field trips

Field trips that require students to ride a bus are currently postponed, in keeping with provincial guidelines. The status of such field trips will be reviewed as provincial guidelines continue to evolve. All international, provincial, and local field trips that require travel are suspended but will be reviewed as chief medical officers of health adjust recommendations about traveling between provinces (learn more about Alberta's COVID-19 travel restrictions). Virtual field trips, in-class/classroom field trips and socially distanced community walking trips that follow COVID-19 health and safety protocols are permitted.

## Assemblies and Special Events

Gatherings that bring multiple cohorts of students together are not permitted at this time. This includes such things as performances, book fairs, guest speakers, school dances, in-person meet-the-teacher events and group fundraisers like bike-a-thons. Virtual assemblies may be held within the school community. This year's READ IN Week event will be limited to school staff reading with students and virtual guest readers.

## School Council Meetings

School council meetings for the 2020–2021 school year may go ahead as long as they meet Alberta Health restrictions for social gatherings as well as the safety protocols and expectations of the Chief Medical Officer and Division health guidelines. School principals will support their school council members to determine if they will hold in-person meetings and/or online virtual meetings. Any in-person meeting must adhere to COVID-19 health and safety protocols.

## Libraries/Learning Commons

Schools will decide if they will use the learning commons or school library space as instructional space. Schools that decide to use this space for instruction must follow COVID-19 strategies that support physical distancing. These spaces will be cleaned and disinfected between each cohort of students. If the libraries/learning commons are used to share resources, a protocol will be reviewed to loan materials that will be in keeping with COVID-19 health measures.

## Supporting Mental Health and Well-being

In our Division, we provide all students with access to school counsellors. Please contact your school principal if your child experiences signs of mental duress or requires proactive support to have a successful schooling experience. In addition, parents or guardians who are concerned for their child's well-being can reach out to these community resources:

- **Mental Health Helpline: 1-877-303-2642**  
This toll-free helpline provides confidential and anonymous services, crisis intervention, information about mental-health services and referrals to other agencies.
- **Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868**
  - kidshelpphone.ca
  - Text CONNECT to 686868
- **Health Link: 811**
- **Alberta Health Services**
  - Help in Tough Times
  - Healthy Together
- The federal First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line, at 1-855-242-3310 and online chat (in [English](#) and [French](#)), is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.