

August 6, 2020

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Update: Students, Parents/Legal Guardians, and Staff

I am excited to serve Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools as Superintendent and am blessed to be able to work with our faith and learning community, including our Board of Trustees, parents/legal guardians, students, staff, and community partners, especially in these challenging times.

On July 21, 2020, the Alberta Government [announced](#) that students and staff will return to in-class learning this fall, with enhanced health and safety measures in place. As [outlined](#) by the Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Education, and Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, on August 4, 2020, the province has [announced](#) additional health measures as part of its [school re-entry plan](#).

> > [Watch the news conference](#)

When classes resume this fall:

- mask use will be mandatory for staff and teachers in all settings where physical distancing (of at least two metres) cannot be maintained;
- students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks in all common areas, including hallways and on buses;
- mask use for students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be optional but encouraged;
- exemptions will be made for students and staff who are unable to wear a mask due to medical or other needs;
- two reusable masks will be provided to each student and staff member at no cost to them or to the Division;
- staff will receive one reusable face shield in their schools to use at their discretion. A mask must be worn while wearing a face shield;
- the Province will provide a supply of hand sanitizer for use in our schools; and
- each school will receive two contactless thermometers.

Alberta Health Services is working diligently to expand testing capacity and reduce turnaround times for testing.

We are grateful to the provincial government for providing these essential supplies and services, which will help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and help keep our schools safe.

Working with our community partners, we have developed a [school re-entry plan](#) that ensures that all provincial health measures are enacted. We will revise this plan as new information becomes available.

Preparing for school re-entry

- Anyone who plans to enter a school building **must** complete the **daily Screening Questionnaire** (available in both [English](#) and [French](#)) prior to arrival. This **mandatory** checklist will help parents/legal guardians determine if their children are well enough to attend school. Parents/legal guardians have a responsibility to complete this simple questionnaire for their child every morning before sending their child to school or putting them on the bus. Parents/legal guardians and

students will be provided a copy of this screening tool upon school registration and/or commencement of classes with the expectation that it be completed on a daily basis. For assistance, please refer to this easy-to-follow [Parents' Guide](#).

- With a few exceptions, and until further notice, no volunteers or visitors will be permitted in our schools.
- All persons who enter schools or other Division buildings must wear a mask and will be required to sign in.
- Families will be required to set up an appointment in advance, in order to enter a school. Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to enter the school by appointment. All health protocols must be followed.
- Students should bring their own water bottles to school and must not share them with others.
- Only one entrance to a school building will be open; all other doors will stay closed and locked.
- Your child's principal will share information with you about students' drop-off and pick-up routines and strategies that support physical distancing, where possible, between all persons (except immediate household members).
- Arrows on school floors will direct the flow of students and staff and aid in maintaining physical distancing, where possible.
- Signs and posters reminding students and staff of appropriate health measures will be displayed throughout each school. These notices include information concerning proper hand-washing techniques, use of hand sanitizer, maintaining physical distancing, and what to do if someone feels sick.
- Hand-sanitizer dispensers will be installed in several locations throughout each school. Students are encouraged to bring their own small bottle of hand-sanitizer, to carry it with them, and to use it regularly throughout the day.
- Everyone must practice proper hand hygiene (hand-washing and -sanitizing), in accordance with [Alberta Health Services' guidelines](#).
- Students will keep their personal items in their classrooms and not in lockers.
- Students will be assigned specific seats in classrooms to facilitate easy tracking if someone contracts COVID-19.
- Students and staff will be kept together in "cohorts" as much as possible. Cohorting decreases the number of close contacts staff and students will have in school and will assist in contact tracing if there is a case or outbreak of COVID-19.
- If a student becomes ill at school, he/she will be supervised in a designated area until he/she is picked up.
- High-contact surfaces will be cleaned as necessary by school staff throughout the day.
- Schools will follow the Government of Alberta's [Guidance for Playgrounds](#) when using schoolyard and outdoor equipment.
- Anyone who reports symptoms of COVID-19 should stay home and seek advice from a qualified healthcare professional, as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner, or 911 in an emergency).
- For students who use bus transportation, fixed seating plans will be implemented to assist contact tracing, and, wherever possible, to maintain physical distancing between students. Students from the same family will sit together. Transportation Services will communicate to parents the seating assignments prior to the first day of school.
- Regular cleaning of high contact surfaces on buses will be completed between routes. A deep-cleaning will be completed nightly.

The aforementioned information is also available on our Division [website](#), as well as all of our school websites.

GSACRD School Re-Entry: Online Education Survey

We recognize that, even with these additional health measures in place, some parents/legal guardians may still feel uncertain about sending their children to school for regular (face-to-face) instruction. Therefore, our Division is considering how to support families who desire online education for their children. Online education provides students with a designated teacher to support instruction, learning, and assessment at home.

We invite you to provide your input through this short online [survey](#) (it should take you no more than one to two minutes to complete). Your feedback will help us determine the best way to allocate staff and resources to support online education for Pre-K to Grade 12 students. **The deadline to complete this survey is Thursday, August 13, 2020.** Thank you in advance for taking the time to share your thoughts.

More information

Just as we continue to closely follow and implement the direction of Alberta Health Services, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and all levels of government, we encourage you to do the same. You can find credible and relevant information, as well as important updates about COVID-19, via the sources below:

- [Health Canada](https://canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html): canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html
- [Alberta Government](https://alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx): alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx
- [Alberta Health Services](https://albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx): albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx
- [City of St. Albert](https://stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources): stalbert.ca/city/eps/preparedness/resources
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](https://who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019): who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

I encourage you to visit these websites often and to follow the suggestions to keep you and your family healthy.

Alberta Education has developed the following downloadable resources to help families better understand the provincial school re-entry plan:

- [Parents' Guide 2020–2021 School Year](#) and
- [Get the Facts: Back to Class for 2020–2021](#).

We will continue to keep our faith and learning community informed. [Regular updates](#) are posted on both the Division's website and our schools' websites, as well as our official social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#)). Feel free to reach out to [your child's school](#) directly if you have specific questions or concerns.

I look forward to hearing many positive stories as we travel this journey together. I wish you blessings for a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clint Moroziuk
Superintendent of Schools