



Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry 2020-2021

Last updated: November 25, 2020
(new/updated information is noted in red)

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Message to Parents/Legal Guardians

Dear Parents and Legal Guardians:

We look forward to continuing to work together as partners throughout the pandemic. This Guidebook is written for parents/legal guardians to help prepare them with programming details for this purpose. We have written the effective date on the cover of this Guidebook, because it will be revised and updated as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, and as new information is available from the Government of Canada, the Alberta government (through the Premier, the Minister of Education, and Chief Medical Officer of Health in Alberta) and other health and government authorities. As the situation continues to change, we will be responsive and flexible as the year progresses. **Revisions** will be written in **red**. All of the information in this Guidebook is also available on our [website](http://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/schoolreentry) (www.gsacrd.ab.ca/schoolreentry).

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 will be required to wear masks, and mask use will be mandatory in common areas and when physical distancing of two metres is not possible. K-3 students are not required to wear masks but will be encouraged to do so.

On Aug. 31, 2020, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health released [CMOH order 33-2020](#), which outlines the requirements for non-medical mask use for Grade 4 to 12 students, all staff, and visitors in indoor spaces, including on school buses and shared areas, such as hallways. On Sept. 8, 2020, all school jurisdictions received a [letter](#) from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health restating and clarifying guidance for school re-entry.

On October 7, 2020, she and Health Minister Tyler Shandro, [announced](#) the likelihood of more stringent health measures should numbers of COVID-19 cases continue to increase in especially Edmonton and surrounding areas. On October 8, 2020, Dr. Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer, noted in the [media](#) that changes are voluntary but may become mandatory. In addition, there is an updated [Alberta's Daily Checklist](#), which is to continue to be used daily by students and staff and anyone who enters schools and division buildings. The information has stayed the same, but the symptoms that legally require someone to isolate are highlighted. Just a reminder that any changes to information about public health measures are communicated at www.alberta.ca/returntoschool.

On October 13, Minister LaGrange announced that she had made the decision to allow students and parents to choose whether or not to write diploma exams for November. Through Colin Aitchinson, LaGrange's press secretary, the reason provided was: *"We know these are challenging times and that's why we want to ensure students and their parents have the flexibility to make the best decision for their own situation this exam season."* Our

Division supports this decision and is working with students and parents to assist in individual student choices about whether or not to write diploma exams for particular courses.

On November 12, 2020, Premier Kenney announced that the Priorities Implementation Committee, based on expert advice from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, introduced temporary measures to reduce the number of close contacts that Albertans have with others who test positive for COVID-19. *Given the continual rise in cases of COVID-19, on November 24, 2020, Premier Kenney announced more restrictive mandatory [public health measures](#), and the key changes that are most applicable to schools are:*

- No indoor social gatherings in any setting (other than regular classes)
- Outdoor gatherings- max of 10 (other than regular classes)
- No festivals or events (only virtual Christmas celebrations)
- Grades 7-12 are engaged in online, at home learning Nov 30-Dec. 18 *(to stop the spread of the virus which has disrupted learning in especially secondary schools)*
 - Christmas Break Dec. 19-Jan. 3
 - Return to online learning Jan. 4-8 *(to continue to stop the spread of the virus)*
 - Return to face-to-face learning on January 11
- Grades Pre-K- Grade 6 continue at school learning Nov. 30- Dec. 18.
 - Christmas Break Dec. 19-Jan. 3
 - Start back-to-school in at home, online learning Jan. 4-8 *(to extend the length of time that students are not interacting beyond their families)*
 - Return to face-to-face learning on Jan. 11
- Mandatory masks for indoor workplaces *(not new)*
- Diploma exams are optional for the rest of the school year. Students and families can choose to write an exam or receive an exemption for the January, April, June and August 2021 exams *(continuation of what was started in November)*

To continue to refine health measures, in many cases, *principals* reworked their schedules to further reduce the numbers of teacher and student contacts. We will continue to encourage current health measures (wearing masks, washing hands, sanitizing hands, cleaning high touch surfaces, staying 2m or more apart). We will *further* limit physical activities and options as outlined in this guidebook.

We will continue to offer face-to-face and online programming. We appreciate your support to continue to do the daily prescribed [Alberta's Daily Checklist](#) prior to coming to schools. We also thank you, parents/legal guardians, for doing this daily checklist with your 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.

We will continue to follow the [Chief Medical Officer's updates](#) and to learn from our experiences with the virus. We share some of those lessons in our safety section.

If you have further questions or suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact your child(ren)'s school principal directly or the Division Office at: schoolreentry@gsacrd.ab.ca.

Scenarios for School Re-Entry

Our School Re-entry Plan is designed to prepare students, parents/legal guardians, and staff for school re-entry based on one of three provincial government 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/canceled)

The [School Re-entry Guidelines](#) from the province state 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 an updated (Oct. 8, 2020) [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. **On November 24, 2020, Premier Kenney chose to temporarily limit Grades 7-12 students to at-home, online learning until January 11, 2020. ECS-Grade 6 will remain in Scenario One.**

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 students and 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.

Also, in the newly revised (updated Aug. 27, 2020) Government of Alberta [School Re-entry Plan 2020-2021](#), the province will continue to monitor and share information about COVID-19 cases in Alberta. The government has developed a [COVID-19 Status Map](#) that shows the level of risk in regions and information about local health measures. It also shows the rate of COVID-19 cases and the number of active cases. Confirmed cases will be monitored in real-time to inform proactive responses in localized areas of the province. Municipalities, counties, and municipal districts with active cases over 50 per 100,000 population may have additional measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Alberta Health Services has just published a very helpful [web tool](#) for parents/legal guardians (members need to isolate and when children can return to school). The tool provides resources to address commonly asked questions. Additionally, Alberta Health revised numerous documents for enhanced clarity without substantive changes and links to those documents have been updated in this *Guidebook*.

This resource will help inform school re-entry and subsequent school operations.

On Aug. 26, 2020, Prime Minister Trudeau [announced](#) \$2B in federal funding to be provided to provinces to fund pandemic-related direct expenses such as online education, cleaning, and personal protective equipment. At the public board meeting on October 26, 2020, the community received a report on how these funds have been allocated and/or committed its \$1.98 million in the following areas:

- additional supports (staff) for online learning that is provided in addition to face-to-face setting and substitute costs related to COVID – \$1,568,400 (79%) (Note 1)
- personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, gowns, thermometers, and face shields); cleaning and hand sanitizing supplies and facility alterations (filters, floor markings, plexi-glass screens, hand sanitizing dispensing units) – \$135,000 (7%);
- increased custodial time in schools – \$140,000 (7%);
- increased transportation (cleaning and routing) – 80,000 (4%); and
- online learning and teacher training (PD/Equipment) – \$56,900 (3%)

Note 1: There are presently 16.5 certificated staff FTEs assigned to Online Learning Pathway. Schools have contributed approximately 4 teacher FTEs with remaining 12.5 FTEs to be covered by this federal funding. Approximately \$247K is assigned to substitute costs.

On Sept. 2, 2020, Alberta's Minister of Education, announced how this federal funding would be distributed; our Division will receive \$1,980,300 to address our increased costs related to school re-entry. Additionally, on Aug. 31, 2020, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health mandated [CMOH-order 33-2020](#), which articulated mask use guidelines for schools. Details are included in this section. Further to this health order, on Sept. 3, 2020, the Chief Medical Officer of Health published a [letter](#) that was sent to all school jurisdictions on Sept. 8, 2020, and, that was then, through our superintendent, circulated to all of our families.

On November 5, 2020, Dr. Deena Hinshaw announced the potential of having to enact more stringent health measures to control the continued surge in confirmed cases of COVID-19. Our jurisdiction committed to further restrictions on numbers of staff and students in contact by scheduling changes this past week to be put in place after the Fall break. On November 12, 2020, [temporary restrictions](#) were announced and have been addressed in this *Guidebook*.

During the week (November 16-20), we welcomed public health inspections in our schools to support our jurisdiction to learn and to continue to refine our health and safety measures. We were successful in meeting all Alberta Health guidelines, and we share some of the lessons learned throughout this section. The main lesson was that schools can go beyond the minimum health measures, especially if they have had an outbreak (2+ positive COVID-19 cases).

Cleaning

Our Division worked throughout 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 airflow.

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 concerning 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 will be trained to wipe them down effectively throughout the day.

During our public health inspections, schools will further limit cloth on tables or displays that can be easily touched will be removed as cloth is not easily cleaned, disinfected, and sanitized.

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: What Happens at School

On Sept. 3, 2020, Alberta Health Services released a [summary guideline](#) for when students become ill at school. On October 8, 2020, a [simplified guide](#) for what to do when your child shows symptoms has also been prepared for schools and parents/legal guardians.

If your child becomes ill during the day, he/she will be brought to a designated area in or near the office for both the child's and others' safety.

Your child will be informed about the process to minimize any psychological impact:

- When a child becomes ill at school, a staff member will help him/her and wear the necessary personal protective equipment (mask and any other required safety items [face shield, gloves, gown], if necessary).
- The child will have a temperature check with a contactless thermometer and parents/legal guardians will be informed as to whether he/she has a fever.
- The child will review which symptom or symptoms he/she is having based on the guidance for school re-entry [screening questionnaire](#).
- If a child is sick, parents or legal guardians will be contacted to pick up the child immediately. You need to provide the school with your current contact information and updated emergency contacts to help us to keep your child safe.

When students become ill in school, the protocol is for the school principal to be in contact with Division Office staff, when necessary, to support seeking advice from our Alberta Health Services' contacts. Parents/legal guardians in the broader community will only be notified when the risk warrants notification. This determination is made with Alberta Health Services' consultation.

AHS' [website](#) is updated regularly. Currently, guidelines have been updated at this [link](#) and are summarized here for what to do next:

- AHS advises that you should get tested if you have any COVID-19 symptoms. Go online to [book an appointment](#) for a COVID-19 test.
- Please follow the guidelines in the [October 29, 2020 Checklist by Alberta Health Services](#). The symptoms for COVID-19 have been detailed and are subject to

change in the AHS website.

CORE SYMPTOMS : If you have any of these core symptoms, you need to isolate for at least 10 days from the start of your symptoms or until they are gone, whichever is longer, or until you test negative for COVID-19.

Adults over 18

- cough
- fever
- shortness of breath
- runny nose
- sore throat

Children under 18

- cough
- fever
- shortness of breath
- loss of sense of taste or smell
- Other symptoms

OTHER SYMPTOMS

Adults over 18

Any symptom: Stay home and limit contact with others until symptoms are gone. Testing is recommended.

- Stuffy nose
- Painful swallowing
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell or fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye

Children under 18

- **1 symptom:** Stay home for 24 hours, get tested if symptoms don't improve.
- **2+ symptoms:** Get tested and stay home until well or test is negative.
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Painful swallowing
- Chills
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches

- *Feeling unwell or fatigue*
- *Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite*
- *Conjunctivitis, also known as pink eye*
- *Monitor your health and call Health Link 811 or your health care provider if you have questions or concerns. Call 911 immediately if experiencing severe symptoms of COVID-19, including difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, feelings of confusion or loss of consciousness.*
- *Please check [isolation guidelines](#) as they have been updated:*

COVID-19 can take up to 14 days to cause symptoms. Some people who get it only have minor symptoms or don't have any symptoms at all but could still be infectious.

- *By staying home, it lowers the chance of symptoms developing while you're in a public place, which lowers the chance of spreading the virus to others.*
- ***When to isolate:***
 - *Isolate to avoid spreading illness.*
 - *You tested positive for COVID-19.*
 - *You are sick with fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat* or runny nose* and have not been tested.*

**Children under 18 are exempt from mandatory isolation for runny nose or sore throat, but should stay home until well.*
- ***When to quarantine:***
 - *Quarantine and watch for symptoms to prevent exposing others before symptoms appear.*
 - *You had close contact with a person who has COVID-19.*
 - *You returned from travel outside of Canada.*
- **Students with pre-existing health conditions** that cause symptoms of illness should be tested for COVID-19 at least once. 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. During our public health inspections, our public health officer (PHO) emphasized that it is necessary to encourage parents to get their child(ren) who have had pre-existing conditions to get a COVID-19 test to rule out COVID-19. She emphasized that this is part of establishing a baseline.
- **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 AHS.

Illness at School: Parents' Next Steps

Alberta Health Services' [website](#) provides information on the following steps:

1. Go online to take the [COVID-19 Self-assessment](#).
2. Book a COVID-19 test: AHS advises that you should get tested if you have any COVID-19 symptoms. [Book an appointment online](#).
3. Parents should follow AHS' isolation guidelines.
4. Monitor your health, and call Health Link 811 if you have questions or concerns. Call 911 immediately if you are experiencing severe symptoms of COVID-19, including difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, feelings of confusion, or loss of consciousness.

Isolation and Close Contact Protocols

If your child is ill or has been in contact with someone who has symptoms of or has tested positive for COVID-19, then you should follow the [isolation guidelines](#). A quick review of isolation protocols when you or your child is tested for COVID-19 is provided below:

Appendix E: Management of individuals who are tested for COVID-19

Symptoms	COVID-19 Test Result:	Management of Individual:	Management of Individual's Close Contacts*:
Symptomatic	Positive	Isolate for a minimum 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.	Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure
	Negative	Stay home until symptoms resolve. Except: if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case • Quarantine for 14 days since the last exposure (even with a negative result)	N/A
Asymptomatic	Positive	Isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the collection date of the swab.	Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure
	Negative	No isolation required. Except: if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case • Quarantine for 14 days since the last exposure (even with a negative result)	N/A

*Close contacts:

- Provide direct care for an individual with COVID-19 or who had similar close physical contact OR
- Had close prolonged contact OR
- Had direct contact with infectious body fluids of an individual with COVID-19 (i.e., was coughed or sneezed on).

NOTES:

Individuals WILL NOT receive written or email documentation of their results. Those who wish to access their results directly should sign up for [My Health Records](#).

There is not a requirement to provide evidence of negative results before returning to school.

AHS Public Health will contact all confirmed cases and their close contacts and provide them clear direction.

AHS Public Health will notify the school of a positive case.

Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms are encouraged to be tested using the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#).

Close Contacts

As we have experienced a surge in positive COVID-19 cases in the last few weeks, our schools, along with all schools in the Edmonton area, have had more confirmed cases. Therefore, we have had more students and staff who have become “close contacts” of a confirmed positive case. AHS has prepared useful information on its [website](#):

If a student is a close contact of someone confirmed to have COVID-19, they must quarantine and stay home for 14 days. This longer period of time is required because the incubation period of COVID-19 is two weeks. Visit Isolation requirements for more detailed information.

Close contacts include people who: take care of someone with COVID-19 or had contact through touch with the person with COVID-19 were close to that person for a long time, or were coughed or sneezed on by that person. AHS will confirm and contact close contacts when there is a case at school and will contact parents and staff.

Generally, the entire classroom is considered to be close contacts of the case. This is a cautious approach to identifying close contacts in order to minimize the risk of transmission. This means that if a student tests positive for COVID-19, all of their classmates must quarantine and stay home for 14 days. Additionally, all of these classmates should also be tested for COVID-19. Even if a classmate of a case is tested and the result is negative, they still must complete the 14-day quarantine.

If a student is identified to be a close contact (e.g: a classmate of a student who tests positive), family members of the close contact do not need to quarantine unless the close contact also develops symptoms. Family members or other people in the household who had contact with a student while they were infectious (had symptoms) are required to quarantine for 14 days from the last time they were exposed to the sick student.

AHS Public Health will determine who is a close contact and how long they are required to quarantine when they complete their investigation.

On November 5, 2020, Dr. Deena Hinshaw [announced](#) that due to fast-paced rises in cases, contact tracers are falling behind. For this reason, our school and division administrators have been working with AHS and calling close contacts and notifying close contacts prior to AHS sending letters. On November 12, 2020, Deputy Minister Andre Corbould stated that the Ministries of Education and Health continue to work together to explore tools for expediting close contact tracing.

On November 20, Dr. Deena Hinshaw indicated that due to AHS falling behind on contact tracing, she has asked that they work from the most recent cases backwards and that those who test positive

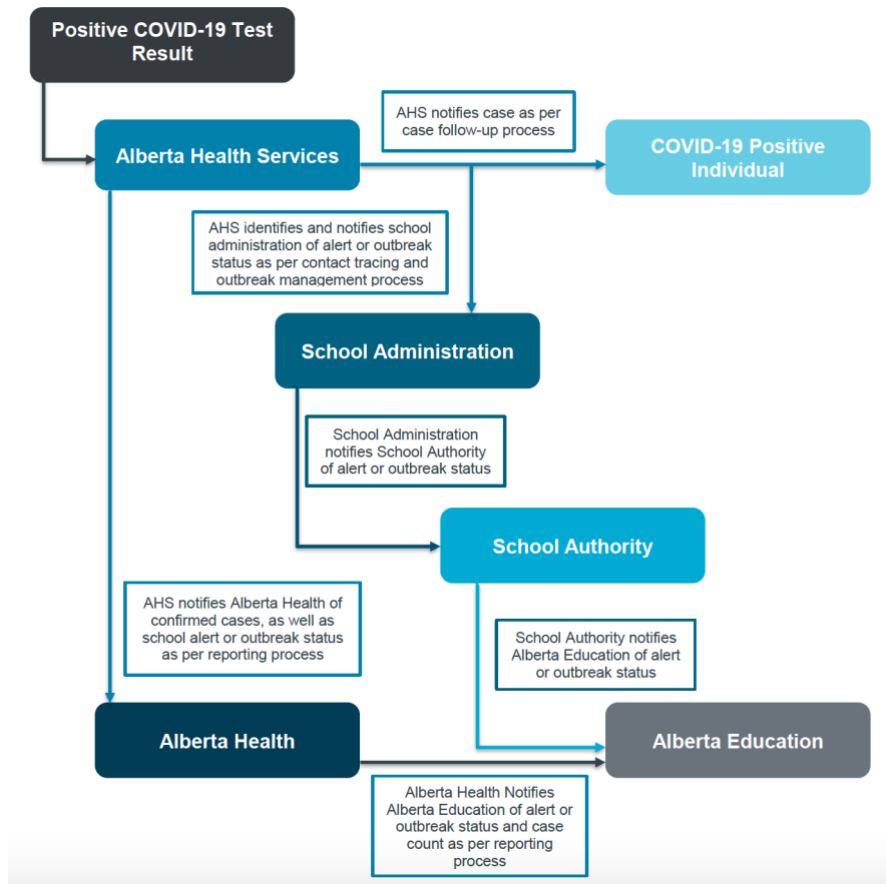
COVID-19 Protocols

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/legal guardians 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.

COVID-19 Outbreak

AHS has developed a [guide](#) to assist staff and parents/legal guardians in understanding what to expect if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in one of our schools:



FAQs – COVID-19 Outbreak

What are the school's roles and responsibilities?

- Follow recommendations from AHS Public Health, including when to resume regular instructional activities that may have been disrupted by the COVID-19 outbreak and returning to standard practices.
- Send a message to parents/legal guardians, when advised by AHS, that the outbreak is over and to remind parents/legal guardians to continue to complete routine daily screening of students/children for signs or symptoms of illness.
- Inform the school authority that the outbreak has been declared over.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your school's response:
 - discuss and note best practices and lessons learned.
 - identify any issues in your response and effective solutions.

What is Alberta Health Services' (AHS') role?

- AHS Public Health will work with the school administration to determine when the outbreak can be declared over. The standard time frame is 28 days with no new cases. The Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH)/designate declares the outbreak

over in the school.

- AHS Public Health will notify Alberta Health that the school COVID-19 outbreak is over and close the outbreak investigation.

What is Alberta Health's role?

- Alberta Health receives a report that the COVID-19 outbreak is over.
- Alberta Health will update the public website to reflect when the outbreak is declared over/closed.

Does everyone in the class need to be quarantined if there is one symptomatic child/staff/visitor/volunteer?

No, everyone in the class does not need to be quarantined. If a child/staff/visitor/volunteer has one of the core symptoms of fever, cough (new cough or worsening chronic cough), shortness of breath, difficulty breathing (new or worsening), runny nose, or sore throat, they must stay home and isolate for 10 days. If they have any other symptoms of illness, they should stay home until their symptoms resolve. Any individual with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested as soon as possible, which can be arranged through the AHS online self-assessment tool. Contacts of someone who IS NOT a case of COVID-19 are not required to isolate or quarantine.

Does the school need to send the whole class home if the teacher becomes a confirmed case of COVID-19?

If a teacher or staff member becomes a confirmed case of COVID-19, Alberta Health Services' Public Health will work with the school community to identify close contacts and ensure that they follow the appropriate quarantine restrictions. The specific details of the case will determine who is considered to be a close contact.

How many confirmed cases in a single school will result in closure of the school?

Anyone confirmed case will result in an investigation by Alberta Health Services Public Health. It is likely with a single case that exposure is limited to a single class or group. Closures of specific classes, cohorts, or schools may occur depending on the outcome of an investigation. Public health measures for outbreak management are at the discretion of the Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH); decisions on the need for alternative instructional delivery plans or school closures will be made by the Government in conjunction with local officials.

What does the school administration do if a staff member or parent/guardian of a student/child calls the school to say they/the student or child are COVID-19 positive and the school has not been previously notified by AHS?

AHS receives all of the case notifications directly from the lab. If there is a confirmed case in a school, the school will be contacted by AHS. It is not necessary to contact AHS to confirm. The appropriate individuals and schools will be notified. Parents and staff with general inquiries can call Health Link at 8-1-1 or visit the [AHS website](#).

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 parents/legal guardians 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. Cohorting should be maintained during activities outside the classroom, such as recess and lunch breaks. The cohort concept encourages individuals who cannot maintain two-metre physical distance when in group settings to interact with the same people within their own cohort group. If students from two different cohorts wish to socialize, they should remain at least two metres apart. Strategies such as staggering breaks and limiting gatherings will lessen the chances of an outbreak and ease contact tracing. While schools cannot control what happens outside of school hours, cohorts or other control measures within a school will still help lessen the risk of COVID-19 transmission as per the Alberta Government's [Implementing School Re-entry Guidelines](#).

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing is one health measure to reduce the 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 two metres, 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.

It is important to note that students are not expected to sit at their desks for the day, as learning can occur during various activities. Additional measures, such as the following, will be implemented when students are not seated in the classroom:

- considering activities that take place outdoors or in areas that allow for increased physical distancing and/or increased ventilation;
- considering how to limit the number of students moving within the classroom or throughout the school at one time to promote physical distancing; and
- wearing masks when engaging in activities where physical distancing of at least two metres cannot be maintained.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

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

On Sept. 2, 2020, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health confirmed that masks are part of our "new normal" and will require ongoing learning about multiple measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. She shared interpretations of her newly released (Aug. 31, 2020) [CMOH-order 33-2020](#), which articulated mask use guidelines for schools. In that order, Dr. Hinshaw confirmed the following guidelines:

8. *All students attending grades 4 through 12, staff members and visitors must wear a non-medical face mask that covers their mouth and nose while attending an indoor location within a school, unless the student, staff member or visitor:*
 - (a) *is unable to place, use or remove a non-medical face mask without assistance;*
 - (b) *is unable to wear a non-medical face mask due to a mental or physical concern or limitation;*
 - (c) *is consuming food or drink in a designated area;*
 - (d) *is engaging in physical exercise;*
 - (e) *is seated at a desk or table;*

- (f) *within a classroom or place where the instruction, course, or program of study is taking place, and*
- (g) *where the desks, tables, and chairs are arranged in a manner*
 - (i) *to prevent persons who are seated from facing each other and*
 - (ii) *to allow the greatest possible distance between seated persons;*
 - (iii) *is providing or receiving care or assistance where a non-medical face mask would hinder that caregiving or assistance; or*
 - (iv) *is separated from every other person by a physical barrier.*

Originally, in this *Guidebook*, we shared that masks are an important way to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19, particularly when people are indoors and physical distancing of two metres or more is not possible. Alberta's Minister of Education and Chief Medical Officer of Health 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 all 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 parents/legal guardians to send their children to school with a mask and to practice [proper mask protocols](#) before 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 two 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 results, principals have contacted 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 child(ren)'s school principal. Once your child is enrolled, you will have a teacher assigned who will then share information required for school start-up. The deadline to register for online classes was Fri., Aug. 28, 2020.

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 parents/legal guardians would need supervision of their children in their daytime environment (home, caregiver) but 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 as long as there is sufficient room and resources to accommodate the request. 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.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – Online Education

What will programming look like?

The programming will be very similar to what is being offered in face-to-face classes. Your child will take core courses: English/French Language Arts, Math, Social, Science, Religion, Physical Education, and Health). Once the online core courses begin, teachers will review what is possible for option courses. Both face-to-face and online education teachers will use common course outlines and key learner outcomes so that what is studied is the same whether your child is face-to-face or online. The topics will be paced to enable a student to shift from one mode to another, if necessary. Online education is available to all students, including students who are registered in our academies, IB, or AP courses.

What do I do if my child starts in online programming and then would like to switch back to face-to-face programming?

Your child will start in his/her pathway of choice in our school. Because you are one of our families, you will have opportunities throughout the year to indicate whether or not you choose to stay in online education. Each reporting period, you will receive an email on certain dates, as outlined in the 'Reporting and Notification' section of this Guidebook (see pages 16 and 17). You may also [contact](#) the acting school principal at 780-459-6616.

Will my child have a teacher for his/her grade level?

- **Online English Programming**

We currently have sufficient enrollment to provide you with K-12 English programming. Unfortunately, we do not have sufficient enrollment to offer Pre-Kindergarten online programming.

- **Online French Programming**

We currently have sufficient enrollment to provide you with Kindergarten-Grade 3 French programming. Initially, we did not have sufficient enrollment to offer a full roster of French Immersion courses for Grades 4-9. After monitoring enrollment for the last three weeks, we have decided to add French programming (Gr. 4-5, Gr. 6, Gr. 7-8, Gr. 9), offering core subjects.

Will my child have more than one teacher?

We have started staffing and will provide your child who is in Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, or Grade 6 one homeroom teacher to each grade or a combination of neighbouring grades (e.g., K-1) of the online class of students. If your child is in grades 7-9, we will assign Humanities (English/Social) and Math/Sciences teachers to each grade level. So, if your child is in Grade 7, for example, he/she would most likely have two teachers. Additionally, these two teachers would each teach either Physical Education/Health and/or Religion. In high school, your child will have subject-specific teachers.

How do I register my child and get my child's timetable/class schedule?

If you haven't already done so, you will complete a registration form for our school. Your school principal will notify you about whether or not your registration is accepted. Then, he/she will register you in classes through the school office (i.e. we will contact you and ensure that your child and you both know which courses your child will be registered in).

When did classes start?

We experienced a successful staggered re-entry for K-9 face-to-face programming. There was a delayed start for K-9 online students, who began school on Sept. 8, 2020.

Will the staggered entry also apply to those students engaged in online learning?

No. After review of the requirements to prepare for K-9 online learning, online teachers will prepare for programming during the first week of school and K-9 online students will start school on Sept. 8, 2020. High school online students start school on Sept. 1, 2020.

Are parents able to accompany younger children to school on staggered entry days to help carry supplies?

No. We are working diligently to ensure that visitors to buildings are limited to increase safety for students and staff. That being said, some schools are arranging for parents to bring in supplies in advance (on the operational days next week before school commencing) and are using their interview scheduling mechanism to ensure that appointments are made (time slots) to control the flow of people in and out of the building. This will be fine. We anticipate that assistance with supplies is only necessary for younger students.

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 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 international students will need to follow quarantine requirements and any relevant public health orders.

Reporting and Notification Periods

Once your child has started the year in either face-to-face or online education, you will receive report cards based on the school's reporting periods. You will have more than one opportunity to consider whether you choose to continue with face-to-face or online programming or vice versa. We aim to keep students moving forward in one programming mode during a reporting period, whenever possible. This ensures academic success for all students. If our online school program that you requested is full, options will be explored for how to continue with your designated school's programming.

On November 5, 2020, principals communicated with parents who wished to switch their children from face-to-face to online programming or vice-versa. It was also communicated that while there will be another opportunity to make this choice later in the school year, we may not be in the position to honor switches from face-to-face to online programming due to having insufficient rooms and resources. Each request will be considered and every effort will be made to accommodate parents' choices.

Please see the notification periods for your child's school in the chart on page 23.

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

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 are based on common outcomes and course outlines.



Routines in School

Communication from the Division

You will continue to receive weekly updates through the Superintendent about school start-up in August and early September. These weekly updates are 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

Throughout 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. If there is a positive case of COVID-19 in your child's school, your school principal will work directly with AHS and with Division Office staff using the most current [COVID-19 in school settings](#) to communicate with "close contacts." In a school setting, **close contacts** are individuals that:

- a) provide direct care for an individual with COVID-19 or who had similar close physical contact, OR
- b) had close prolonged contact (i.e., for more than 15 minutes cumulative and within two metres) with a case, OR
- c) had direct contact with infectious body fluids of an individual with COVID-19 (i.e., was coughed or sneezed on).

The school principals will also provide notification to all staff and parents/legal guardians to inform the community about what is happening and next steps as soon as permitted by AHS.

Staggered Entry and Delayed Start

We have experienced a very successful school re-entry with staggered re-entry for K-9. Face-to-Face students began classes on Aug. 31, 2020 (for students who had last names beginning (A-K) and on Sept. 1, 2020 (for students who had the last names beginning L-Z). Regular classes began on Sept. 2, 2020 for K-9 face-to-face students.

Delayed Start for K-9 Online Students:

- **Sept. 8, 2020:** Online education classes for K-9 students began, which was a delayed start for these students.
- **Aug. 28- Sept. 4, 2020:**
 - Online registrations have been confirmed with school principals.

- Mr. Evan Holstein, acting school principal of GSACRD Online Pathway will be available for questions about K-9 online education.
- Online teachers will contact parents to share details about school start-up (schedules, routines, where and how to access materials).
- Online students do not start school until Sept. 8, unless they are in high school.
- **Pre-Kindergarten programs**
 - **Aug. 31 – Sept. 4, 2020:** Pre-Kindergarten Family Orientation Meetings – The teacher will contact the family to set up a time.
 - **Sept. 8 – 9, 2020:** Staggered entry
 - **Sept. 10, 2020:** All children attend school

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 K–12 who are physically, psychologically, or developmentally able to wear a mask will be required to do so.
- Students will practice physical distancing while at the bus stop and will line up two-metres apart.
- 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, with no person seated 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/foot markers) 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

In the earlier versions of these guidelines, we recommended limiting students' access to lockers and coat hooks due to distancing protocols and gathering restrictions. Newly revised guidelines from the Alberta Government envisage the potential of using coat hooks and lockers only when measures are in place to minimize crowding:

- spacing lockers/coat hooks out when possible and
- assigning lockers/coat hooks based on cohort/grade/class.

Because as we start school, it is difficult to ensure that crowding is easily minimized, school principals have worked with staff to have students bring what they need for the day and keep school supplies and textbooks in their backpacks or in storage solutions proposed by classroom teachers to minimize locker visits or the need to go to cubbies and coat hooks.

We continue to support teachers to direct the best way to store items, and, in consultation with the school principals, **this guideline may change as health guidelines evolve or as protocols are developed to ensure that health measures can be met by accessing lockers and coat hooks.**

Students' personal supplies will be 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

Schools will not assign staff to supervise playground equipment before and after school. To support safety, this equipment will be off-limits to students. Parents/legal guardians 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. School principals will review the guidance for playground use and decide whether to permit playground access during school hours. **During our Public Health Inspections, we were reminded that for those schools that have playgrounds open to the public, they are encouraged.**

Pre-kindergarten 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, Pre-K and K classes focus on creating **cohorts** (a group of children and staff members assigned to them who stay together throughout the day). Multiple safety measures for young children will be in place, such as hand hygiene, cohorting and sub-cohorting, and physical distancing, as well as PPE, will be available to school personnel, such as a therapist, who is not part of the cohort.

Also, 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 by following Alberta Health [guidelines](#).

On November 24, 2020, with continued temporary enhanced restrictions on how we offer music, singing, dancing, and performing arts, we will adhere to such guidelines in our selection of options. Given gathering restrictions, we will not be having concerts that are face-to-face, but we will look for virtual alternatives. We will modify programming to ensure that we continue to limit equipment sharing to cohorts, and to have fewer teachers offering courses, which will limit options and/or flexibility to take options of choice.

Grades 10, 11, and 12 Classes

In high schools, we will implement 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. On October 13, 2020, The Hon. Adrianna LaGrange, Minister of Education, announced that she had made the decision to allow students and parents to choose whether or not to write diploma exams for November. Through Colin Aitchinson, the Minister's press secretary, the reason provided was: *"We know these are challenging times, and that's why we want to ensure students and their parents have the flexibility to make the best decision for their own situation this exam season."*

Our Division supports this decision and is working with students and parents/legal guardians to assist in individual student choices about whether or not to write diploma exams for particular courses. If you have questions about whether your child should write diploma exams, please contact your child's teachers and/or school principal for guidance.

Diploma exams are optional for the rest of the school year. Students and families can choose to write an exam or receive an exemption for the January, April, June and August 2021 exams.

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

To support children and students in attaining the goals as stated in the Ministerial Order on Student Learning, school authorities must ensure that all children and students (Kindergarten to Grade 12), regardless of race, religious belief, colour, gender, gender identity, gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, family status, sexual orientation, or any other factor(s), have access to meaningful and relevant learning experiences that include appropriate instructional supports.

Our RISE program students learn together in an inclusive context in which they 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 access resources virtually (e.g., Google Classroom) to ensure that they have the necessary medical care, when needed, and targeted and individualized support to meet their personalized educational goals. Staff who work with RISE students closer than 2 metres will be provided with masks, face shields, gloves, and gowns, to be used according to provincial 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.

Students' academic, social, emotional, behavioral specialized supports and services were assessed when making decisions about supporting all students in face-to-face and online programming. Phone calls were made to families who may have selected online programming and who needed access to specialized services and supports. If you have questions about inclusive programming and supports and services, please contact your school principal and/or the Division's Director of Early Education and Learning Support Services at 780-459-7711. 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 Education Centre

At the regular Board Meeting on Aug. 31, 2020, our board resolved to rename St. Gabriel Catholic High School to St. Gabriel Education Centre, which coordinates our newly established K-9 online learning pathway. At this centre, high school students who may need greater flexibility than a quarterly schedule provides will choose to take their courses in quarters, semesters, or as a full-year program, based on conversations with teachers and the acting school principal. Students will have access to diploma exams every quarter.

Physical Education, Extracurricular Activities, and Athletics

Schools will continue to provide physical education instruction, and we will provide guidance as far as privileging outdoor activities and individual activities indoors as recently emphasized in the Targeted Public Health Measures released on November 12, 2020. Earlier, AHS had

reviewed our approach to keeping students in subgroups within our classes and using equipment with attention to all cleaning, disinfecting, and sanitizing protocols.

Schools will limit extracurricular activities at this time. Extracurricular activities and athletics will **comply** with all guidance from AHS and the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA), as applicable.

On October 28, 2020, our school division collaboratively posted the following media release about athletics:

Announcement: School Athletics Postponed

To protect the health and safety of our students and staff, Conseil scolaire Centre-Nord, Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools, St. Albert Public Schools and Sturgeon Public Schools have made the joint decision to postpone all school-based extracurricular junior and senior high athletics in St. Albert and area until after Christmas.

This decision was not made lightly and is a result of the significant increase in COVID-19 cases in our communities. We know how important athletics are to many of our students, and we hope to be able to provide our student-athletes with the opportunity to participate and compete later this school year. We will monitor the situation in the upcoming months to determine if it is safe to resume athletics, with COVID-19 safety measures in place, in the new year.

On November 12, 2020, with an increase in cases of COVID-19 in the Edmonton area, a temporary stop to all group fitness, team sports, group performance activities in the community has resulted in limited use of facilities such as rinks and arenas as of Nov.13-Nov. 17. Our local facilities have communicated:

In response to the November 12 update from the Province, the following activities in City recreation facilities will be cancelled from November 13 – 27 inclusive:

- All arena and fieldhouse and gymnasium activities.
- Bookings for group/team cohort physical activities including dryland training.
- Registered or drop-in recreation, fitness and aquatics programs, including personal training.
- These restrictions do not apply to outdoor recreation. We encourage you to look to outdoor activities to remain active during this time.

Even though the restrictions do not apply to schools, we respect that with uncertainty about recreation facility use, we will take a step back this week to assess, as school and division administrators, how to continue to offer physical activity and academy programming on site.

Sports Academy

On November 24, 2020, Premier Kenney mandated enhanced public health measures to have all grades 7-12 students engage in at-home, online learning from November 30 until January 11 while continuing with a Christmas Break (Dec. 21- Jan. 1). Given these current restrictions in the community, Grades 7-9 sports academy programming will be temporarily suspended and fees will not be charged for December. At this time, our students will continue to engage with academy staff in online physical education programming.

Elementary academy students will continue programming at their home school.

If your child is registered in Sports Academy (Hockey, Soccer, Gym/Cheer/Dance, or Recreation), he/she will participate in these programs with modified programming, as described above, that meets safety measures of the guidelines of Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Health **at the respective school sites**. With extensive review by Alberta Health Services of modified academy programming, as of Oct. 1, 2020, our jurisdiction is offering a modified sports and recreation academy based on approved venues and activities.

Highly specific guidelines have been created, and the best person to discuss these activities and guidelines with our Sports Academy Consultant. If your child is in a High School Academy, or if you have an interest in registering for Sports/Recreation Academy, please [contact Mr. Geoff Giacobbo](#).

Music

At the present time, with the [November 12th health restrictions](#), we will continue to meet AHS measures and [guidelines](#) for offering music, singing, dancing, and performance arts in our schools.

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.

Please help by discussing these measures with your child(ren) 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 physically 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. Public Health Inspections reinforced that when books are taken out, they must be left for 72 hours before being loaned again.

Supporting Mental Health and Well-being

In our Division, we provide all students with access to school counselors. Please contact your school principal if your child experiences signs of mental duress or requires proactive support to have a successful schooling experience. **If you or your child are experiencing signs of mental duress or require support, please reach out. [This simple resource](#) provides succinct information on where you can turn for help.**

Also, parents/legal guardians who are concerned for their child(ren)'s well-being can reach out to these community resources:

- **[Kids Help Phone](#)**
 - 1.800.668.6868
 - kidshelpphone.ca
 - Text CONNECT to 6868
- **Alberta Health Services**
 - [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.
 - [Help in Tough Times](#)
 - [Healthy Together](#)
- **[Health Link](#)**
 - 8-1-1
- **Alberta Education Help-line and email service**
 - 780.422.6548 (toll-free: 310.0000, followed by the nine-digit phone number)
 - [Send an email](#) to studentsupport@gov.ab.ca.
 - This service provides support to parents/legal guardians of students, particularly those requiring specialized supports, during COVID-19 and at-home learning.
 - 8:15 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.
- **Hope for Wellness Help Line**
 - 1.855.242.3310
 - [online chat](#) (in [English](#) and [French](#))
 - available 24 hours a day, seven days a week
 - offers immediate help to all Indigenous peoples across Canada.