



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: August 31, 2021 (St. Albert, Morinville, Legal)

CATHOLIC SCHOOL YEAR START UP REQUIRES MASKS IN ALL GRADES

All schools in the Division will require students, staff, and visitors to wear masks in common areas beginning today as we re-open the doors to another school year.

This is a change to the [Return to School Plan](#) released earlier which included a strong recommendation for masks. The decision to put stricter measures in place was prompted by the need to ensure the safety of our students and staff and to support an in-person learning environment which is so desirable after the past school year.

COVID-19 cases are on the rise and have significantly increased over the past days in the region and is being recognized as a "4th wave." The most recent data has demonstrated a [doubling of daily infections approximately every 11 days](#). On August 26, 2021, Alberta reported 1112 new COVID-19 cases, [with over 9000 active cases in the province](#). For comparison, last summer prior to the return to school, on August 26, 2020 Alberta reported that there were 127 new cases from the previous day with 1176 active cases in the province. According to Alberta Health Services, wearing a homemade or non-medical mask in public is a tool to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools will be requiring all students and staff to wear a mask in all common areas, hallways, foyers, lunchrooms, libraries and in areas where social distancing is not possible. Masks may be removed in classrooms when students are seated. This will provide an improved learning experience and support the wellbeing of all students in the classroom.

The Division will continue to respond to public health changes and make adjustments to the Return to School Plan that support a safe and caring learning environment for students and staff. We recognize there have been diverse perspectives on the Return to School Plan and will continue to support families for a successful school start up and look forward to lifting health restrictions when it is safe to do so. It continues to be our goal that students enjoy a robust school experience in-person for the entire school year.

Media Contact:

Dr. Clint Moroziuk, Superintendent
780-459-7711 | cmoroziuk@gsacrd.ab.ca

- 30 -

Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools serves 6,000 students in the communities of Legal, Morinville, St. Albert and areas of Sturgeon County. A range of programming is available including: Full and half-day kindergarten, French Immersion (K-12), International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, Sports Academy, and integrated learning for students with diverse needs.

