

# Board of Trustees

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Greater St. Albert  
Catholic Schools



Sent via email

October 1, 2021

Honourable Adriana LaGrange  
Minister of Education  
228 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Honourable Jason Copping  
Minister of Health  
423 Legislature Building  
10800 - 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B6

Dear Minister LaGrange and Minister Copping,

## **Reinstatement of contact tracing and close contact quarantine requirements**

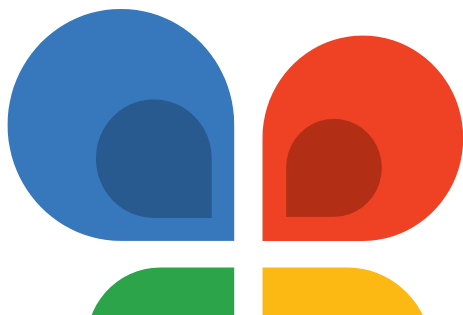
As the global pandemic continues, we are acutely aware of the challenges faced by elected officials; however, we continue to see a sharp increase in cases within our schools. At present, most of our cases have been reported in children under the age of 12 who cannot be vaccinated.

When the Government of Alberta announced details of its provincial back-to-school plan in August, schools were given the direction to establish their local measures. Unfortunately, this created additional confusion and placed increased pressure on school divisions and staff. We have received numerous concerns from parents seeking guidance on what measures move a class to an online learning environment and other concerns related to isolation, contact tracing, and quarantine requirements.

Both the Trustees and staff from Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools continue to respond to worried parents that our schools do not have the resources or information to act as contact tracers or the authority to implement quarantining when known cases have been reported within the classrooms. Unfortunately, without guidance on specific processes, we find ourselves in the position of having to create our own protocols.

We notify families when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a classroom because we believe it is our responsibility and one measure we can use to keep our students and staff safe. We will inevitably continue to see more and more cases in our schools without support from our government. More cases mean more classes move to an online learning environment, and the strain on our schools and teachers intensifies, not to mention the spread of illness.

Families are encouraged to self-report a positive case of COVID-19; however, we know that we are missing many cases. Further, the time and resources involved in managing our measures take away from teaching and learning.



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As we've heard many of the same challenges faced within other school divisions, the Board of Trustees of Greater St. Albert Catholic Schools request that the provincial government **immediately reinstate contact tracing, close contact notification, and mandatory quarantining for close contacts in schools**. Our schools need your support now.

Supporting the health and overall well-being of students and staff is of great importance and a priority and responsibility we both share. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Noreen Radford  
Board Chair

cc: Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health  
Honourable Dale Nally, Minister of Electricity and Natural Gas, MLA Morinville-St. Albert  
Lorrie Jess, President, Alberta School Boards Association