

Palliser School Division COVID-19 School Guidance Re-Entry Plan



Re-entry Guideline Document for Palliser School Division – August 5, 2020

Document Overview

This document is intended to provide schools with guidance for school re-entry for the 2020-21 school year. It will provide an overview of key practices and strategies that will be used as we transition back to in-person classes. Alberta Education, Alberta Health Services and Palliser may update, amend or alter the information contained in this document as necessary. This document is not intended to address every potential COVID-19 related situation that may occur, rather it is designed to provide a synopsis of key information as schools transition back to in-person learning.

Alberta Education Overview

On June 10, 2020, Alberta Education in conjunction with Alberta Health Services released a tentative re-entry plan for schools in Alberta with three possible scenarios for the 2020-21 school year. **On July 22, 2020 it was announced that scenario # 1 will be enacted which means a return to in-person classes for students.** If you have not already done so, please review the relevant documents from Alberta Education by using the links below:

[Alberta Education 2020-2021 School Re-Entry Plan](#)

[Alberta Education COVID-19 Information Guidance School Re-Entry Scenario 1](#)

Please note, the re-entry plan is flexible and subject to change based on direction from Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services.

The plan outlines the following foundational principles:

- The safety of children, students and staff comes first.
- Children and student learning will continue.
- Provincial funding is still flowing to schools.
- School authorities have flexibility to do what is best for their community.

Although we will start the 2020-21 school year in scenario #1, it is possible that the entire province or, parts of the province, or even individual schools will move between three different methods of delivering education during the course of the school year. As a reminder, Alberta Education defined the three potential learning scenarios as follows:

- Scenario #1: In-school classes resume with health measures
- Scenario #2: Partial return to in-school classes with additional health measures and a likely decrease in the number of students physically present
- Scenario # 3: In-school classes are cancelled with education delivered remotely

The decision to move between scenarios will be determined by Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services. As such, school divisions, schools and all employees must be prepared for all three scenarios. For further information on scenario 2, please follow the link below:

[Alberta Education COVID-19 Information Guidance School Re-Entry Plan Scenario 2](#)

Risk Related to COVID-19

Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services have indicated that “The return to in-class learning is not without risk of infection transmission. By bringing many people together in a closed setting, such as a school, we expect that cases and even outbreaks of COVID-19 will occur in some locations.” (July 21, 2020 – 2020-21 School Re-Entry Plan document from Alberta Education). The following information is designed to help everyone in Palliser School Division minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19. We will never be able to guarantee that our schools and division will be COVID-19 free. However, we believe that if the division, schools, individual employees, individual students, parents and school communities work together we can minimize the possibility of exposure and continue to ensure our schools and facilities are safe for everyone. We all have a part to play and we all must take responsibility for reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

COVID-19 Signs and Symptoms

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Painful swallowing
- Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion
- Feeling unwell / Fatigued
- Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea
- Unexplained loss of appetite
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Muscle/ Joint aches
- Headache
- Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)

Higher Risk for COVID-19

- Travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days
- Had close unprotected* contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) with someone who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days and who is ill**
- Had close unprotected* contact (face-to-face contact within 2 meters/6 feet) in the last 14 days with someone who is ill**
- You or anyone in your household has been in close unprotected contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19

*** “unprotected” means close contact without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).**

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Palliser School Division Three Key Strategies

Palliser School Division will emphasize three key strategies to minimize the risk of transmitting COVID-19 within our school communities and division. The three key strategies are:

- **Follow Expert Advice** – It is an expectation that we all become knowledgeable about the protocols, guidelines and directives for school re-entry from Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services
- **Keep The Virus Out** – The first and most important action we can take is to prevent anyone that is ill, has COVID-19 symptoms or is at a higher risk for getting the virus (e.g. close contact of someone with COVID-19, international travel etc). from entering schools, division owned facilities or getting on our division busses.
- **Prevent The Spread** – In addition we must take steps to reduce the possibility of transmission if someone who is ill, has COVID-19 symptoms or is asymptomatic but able to spread the virus is in a school, division owned facility or on a division bus.

If we can follow these three basic strategies and apply sound professional judgement we will greatly decrease the likelihood of transmitting the virus within our schools and throughout the division. ***These basic strategies apply to all three potential scenarios Alberta Education has provided, however they may be modified depending on the scenario.***

Follow Expert Advice

The first step in minimizing the transmission of COVID-19 is to become knowledgeable about, and follow directives and guidance from Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services. Please note, the items listed below are not comprehensive and may change from time to time based on guidance from the government or the school division. Schools leaders and employees must use sound professional judgement when applying these protocols to their unique context. Ultimately, we must act reasonably and prudently to ensure the safety of all stakeholders in the division.

It is the expectation that all division employees will review and follow guidelines and directives provided by Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services.

Links to Government Documents

[Alberta Education 2020-2021 School Re-Entry Plan](#)

[Alberta Health Services COVID-19 Information](#)

Personal Protective Equipment

Alberta Education guidance for K-12 school setting is that personal protective equipment, such as medical grade masks, face shields, etc. are not required, beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work. Where PPE has been identified for tasks prior to COVID-19 pandemic, continue to use this PPE when performing these tasks.

For additional safety, Palliser has provided the following to each school site (more or less may be requested based on need) 30 face shields, 100 non-medical masks for emergency use and 3 portable plastic desk shields. Other equipment or supplies may be provided by the school as necessary.

Any use of personal protective equipment that impacts the employee's work must be reviewed with a supervisor.

Masks

On August 4, 2020 Alberta Health Services and Alberta Education announced that masks will be mandatory for students from grades 4 to 12 and for all staff. The Government will provide 2 reusable masks for each student and each staff member. Students and staff are welcome to bring their own masks. Below is additional information regarding the mask mandate:

- Grade 4 to 12 students and staff must wear masks where physical distancing cannot be maintained, including shared common areas (e.g. hallways) and on school buses.
- Exemptions will be made for students and staff who are unable to wear a mask due to medical or other needs.
- Mask use for kindergarten to grade 3 students is optional.
- School staff will get one reusable face shield to use in schools at their discretion. A mask must still be worn while wearing a face shield.
- Masks are not mandated in classrooms for students unless physical distancing is not possible. Teachers are expected to use their professional judgement and consult with school administration when determining when masks will be used in classrooms based on the configuration of the classroom, the learning activity and other relevant variables.

Below is a link to Alberta Health Services information regarding the use of masks

[Wearing of masks](#)

Positive COVID-19 Diagnosis

In the case of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, school administration or the site supervisor will inform, as soon as possible, the Superintendent, The Associate Superintendent Learning Services and the Associate Superintendent of Human Resource Services in writing via email. The Superintendent or designate will then contact the Medical Officer for the zone for further guidance. Alberta Health Services

will direct the school division regarding how to respond, including guidance on deep cleaning protocols.

Public health officials will be monitoring the situation closely and be ready with a plan that enables a rapid response to cases of COVID-19 in a school. This response plan will include rapid identification of cases through easily accessible and expedient testing, rapid close contact identification, isolation (and testing where applicable). Zone Medical Officers of Health (MOH)/designate will collaborate with school authority/school administration to identify risks and mitigation strategies which may include temporarily suspending in-person class for a group of children/students.

If there are cases of COVID-19 identified within school settings, the Zone Medical Officer of Health/designate will work directly with the school authority/school administration to collect relevant information required for contact tracing and to provide follow-up recommendations and messaging for staff, parents/guardians, children and students. It is important for the school to ensure that they collaborate with the Zone Medical Officer of Health/designate to mitigate the risk of additional COVID-19 spread.

Children and students will be supported by their school authority to learn at home if they are required to isolate due to illness or because they are a close contact of a case of COVID-19.

Mandatory Isolation Requirements

The following are Alberta Health Services requirements for self isolation. These requirements may be updated from time to time. Please click the following link for the most up to date requirements: <https://www.alberta.ca/isolation.aspx#isolate>

Albertans with symptoms

- You are legally required to [isolate](#) for a minimum of **10 days** if you have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition.
- The mandatory isolation period is 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer.

Tested positive for COVID-19

- You are legally required to [isolate](#) for a minimum of **10 days** if you have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Isolation period is for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer.

Have symptoms but tested negative for COVID-19

- If you tested negative and have known exposure to COVID-19, you are legally required to [isolate](#) for **14 days**.

- If you tested negative and have no known exposure to the virus, you are not legally required to isolate. However, it is important to stay home until your symptoms resolve so that you do not infect others.

Close contacts of confirmed cases

- You are legally required to [isolate](#) for **14 days** and monitor for symptoms if you are a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 (provides care, lives with or has close physical contact without appropriate use of personal protective equipment, or comes into direct contact with infectious body fluids)
- If you become sick with cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat during this time, you must isolate for an additional **10 days** from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.

Travellers

- You are legally required to [isolate](#) for **14 days** if you return to or enter Alberta from outside Canada.
- If you become sick with cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat during this time, you must isolate for an additional **10 days** from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.

Keep The Virus Out

The next step (and likely the most important) is preventing the virus from getting into our schools, division facilities or on a division operated bus. Therefore, anyone that is ill, has COVID-19 symptoms or fits into higher risk for COVID-19 categories (see page ii for a list of symptoms and higher risk categories) will not be permitted to enter schools, division owned facilities or get on a division operated bus.

Please note, the items listed below are not comprehensive and may change from time to time based on guidance from the government or the school division. Schools leaders and employees must use sound professional judgement when applying these protocols to their unique context. Ultimately, we must act reasonably and prudently to ensure the safety of all stakeholders in the division.

Screening protocols

Before leaving home, staff, children/students, visitors, and volunteers who will access the school for work or education, must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the Alberta Daily Self-Screening Tool (provided in [Appendix A](#) of this document)

PLEASE DO NOT COME TO SCHOOL/WORK IF YOU ARE SICK

- Parents and children/students must be provided a copy of the [Alberta Daily Self-Screening Tool](#) upon school registration with the expectation that it needs to be completed on a daily basis.
- Schools must keep records of children's/student known pre-existing conditions. If a child/student develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the child/student should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to school.
- Anyone that reports symptoms should be directed to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner, or 911 for emergency response), and fill out the [Alberta Health COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if they should be tested.
- Students, staff members, parents, visitors and anyone else with COVID-19 symptoms or anyone that falls into the higher risk for COVID-19 (e.g. close contact of someone with COVID-19, international travel in the previous 14 days) will not be permitted into schools without clearance from a medical professional.

Student Transportation

Monitoring for Symptoms

- All students and drivers who experience symptoms, must self-isolate and stay home.
- Parents and students must not be in the pick-up area or enter the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- A student who develops symptoms while at school must not be permitted to return home on a school bus and should be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- If a student develops symptoms while on the school bus, the driver should attempt to isolate the student, provide a mask (if the child is able to wear one) and inform the school upon arrival.

Hand Hygiene

- Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water is still the single most effective way to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Bus drivers must wash their hands often, including before and after completing trips.
- Students should be reminded by parents and/or teachers to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer before they leave home to take the bus, when they arrive at school, when they are leaving school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home.
- Each bus will have hand sanitizer available for drivers and students. Students will be offered a squirt of hand sanitizer when they board the buses and we encourage that they use it unless they have sensitivities to the sanitizer. Parents should let the driver know if there are any concerns with respect to their children using the sanitizer.

Cleaning of School Busses

- A vehicle cleaning log will be kept.
- High touch surfaces will be cleaned at least twice per day at the end of morning and afternoon runs
- Buses will be electrostatically cleaned on a regular basis
- Additional deep cleaning of buses will be undertaken as required

While Travelling on a School Bus

- Students will be assigned seats and a record of this seating plan will be kept in order to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student being a case of COVID-19.
- Students will not be permitted to eat while on the school bus in an effort to limit food sharing and sustain appropriate levels of hygiene.
- Where possible, the seat directly behind the driver will be kept empty.

Personal Protective Equipment & Masks

- Drivers must wear masks while on the bus with other people present
- Students from grades 4-12 must wear a mask while on the bus. 2 reusable masks will be provided by the Alberta Government. Students may also bring their own masks.
- Masks are optional for students from Kindergarten to grade 3
- Exceptions will be made for those who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons.
- Drivers will be provided with face shields they can use during the loading and unloading process. Masks still must be worn with a face shield.

After Travelling on a School Bus

- Repeat a thorough cleaning of high-touch surfaces with appropriate disinfectants as described above.
- Bus drivers who start to experience symptoms after completing a trip must stay home, self-isolate, and advise their supervisor so that additional steps can be taken to protect other drivers using the school bus.

Student Arrival

Schools will develop procedures for drop-off/pick-up that support physical distancing where possible between all persons (except household members).

- Consider strategies to support physical distancing such as staggering drop-off and pick-up times and locations, or put in place other protocols to limit contact between staff, parents, guardians, children, students as much as possible.
- Note that it is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure the fire code is adhered to.

Visitors and Access to Schools

- The number of visitors to schools will be limited. Non-essential visitors should not be allowed to enter the school.
- Schools will put in place protocols to ensure that any visitors are approved by school administration (e.g. visitors must phone the office to make an appointment prior to visiting)
- Approved visitors must complete the Alberta Daily Self-Screening Tool.
- Approved visitors must wear a mask when in the school unless they are given permission from school administration not to wear a mask in exceptional circumstances
- Visitors who have travelled outside Canada or had any symptoms in the past 14 days or have been a close contact of someone with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days cannot enter the school.
- A record of all visitors must be kept, including contact information
- Parents/caregivers will typically not be permitted to attend classrooms, or walk throughout the school without approval from school administration.
- Office waiting area must be configured to ensure proper physical distancing.

Entering and Exiting Schools

- Schools will develop protocols to reduce contact and increase physical distancing when students, staff or others enter and exit the school
- Schools will ensure signage is present on designated entrances and exits detailing distancing instructions and public health information.
- Hand washing/sanitizer stations will be provided at designated points of entry for use on arrival.
- Division staff, including maintenance, and Board Office Staff, must access schools through designated entry points identified at each site and follow school sign in procedures
- Schools will put in place protocols to limit access times and days for staff or students to be in the building (e.g. Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm access only).

Staff or Students Who Become Symptomatic at School

Any time there is a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19, school administration must inform the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent of Learning Services and Associate Superintendent of Human Resource Services in writing via email as soon as possible.

Staff who Become Symptomatic While at Work

Any staff member who develops the symptoms of influenza or COVID-19 during the workday while at school will immediately:

- distance themselves from others
- put on a mask

- report the concern to their supervisor
- if in a teaching or other supervisory role, ensure the child or children they are responsible for are properly supervised before removing themselves
- remove themselves from the facility as soon as possible
- seek medical advice as soon as possible

Staff members with COVID-19 symptoms should seek medical attention through a health care professional and access COVID-19 testing by calling 811 or accessing the [AHS Online Testing tool](#).

All staff must have a plan that ensures continuity of service in case they must leave the workplace suddenly due to the onset of symptoms. As well, they must ensure that before they leave proper supervision for students is in place. For example:

- Teachers must have a full day's worth of emergency lesson plans for all the classes they teach in case they have to leave suddenly
- EA's must ensure any student(s) they are responsible for are properly supervised before removing themselves.

Students who Become Symptomatic While at School

Schools will develop protocols that include at minimum the following steps to work with students that become ill at school:

- The student must be isolated from others as soon as possible. If a separate room is not available they must be kept at least 2 meters away from others.
- The student will be provided with a non-medical mask (if they are able to wear one)
- Parents and guardians should be notified to pick up the student immediately
- If parents or guardians are not available, the emergency contact for the student should be notified and asked to pick up the student immediately

Close Contact with Symptomatic Student

If child/student with symptoms requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the child/student until the parent is able to pick up the child/student. At minimum the following protocols should be followed (schools may put in additional safety protocols based on the circumstances)

- The student and staff member should wear masks
- If very close contact is required, the staff member should also use a face shield
- Staff and students must wash their hands prior to donning a mask
- Staff must wash their hands after touching any items used by the student
- All items the student touched/used while isolated must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the child/student has been picked up. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 10 days.

Students with COVID-19 symptoms are encouraged to access COVID-19 testing by calling 811 or accessing the [AHS Online Testing tool](#).

Staff or Students Returning to School after being ill or a positive COVID-19 Diagnosis

Staff return to work after being ill or a positive COVID-19 diagnosis

As part of the requirement to manage potential outbreaks and ensure the ability to contract trace, all employees must inform their supervisor if they develop COVID-19 symptoms. If a staff member receives a positive diagnosis for COVID-19 they must inform their supervisor immediately.

The Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 05-2020 legally obligates individuals who have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat (that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition) to be in isolation for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. Employees must follow Alberta Health Services guidelines and may have to self-isolate even if they do not have symptoms (e.g. they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19). Alberta Health Services will ultimately make these decisions. In cases where there is uncertainty, the employee may be asked to self-isolate until Alberta Health Services or a medical professional has made a decision regarding their ability to return to work. For the most up to date information on isolation requirements use the following link:

<https://www.alberta.ca/isolation.aspx#:~:text=Albertans%20with%20symptoms,existing%20illness%20or%20health%20condition.>

Staff Returning to work: Employees with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis are expected to follow all Alberta Health Services guidelines. Typically, employees are able to return to work after 10 days from the start of symptoms or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. However, given that each case is unique before returning to work, the division would expect that employees are cleared to return by Alberta Health Services or a medical professional and have tested negative for COVID-19.

Any staff member testing positive for COVID-19 should expect to be treated with respect, have their privacy honoured and should not be stigmatized due to a COVID-19 diagnosis. School personnel are not to disclose positive cases of COVID-19, any communication about positive cases will be directed by Alberta Health Services.

Students returning to school after being ill or a positive COVID-19 diagnosis:

As part of the requirement to manage potential outbreaks and ensure the ability to contract trace, all students will be required to report to their school administration if they test positive for COVID-19.

Prior to a student returning to school after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, school administration will consult with the Superintendent or designate and confirm that a medical professional or Alberta Health Services has approved the student returning to school and they have tested negative for COVID-19

The Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 05-2020 legally obligates individuals who have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat (that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition) to be in isolation for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. Students must follow Alberta Health Services guidelines and may have to self-isolate even if they do not have symptoms (e.g. they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19). Alberta Health Services will ultimately make these decisions. In cases where there is uncertainty, the student may be asked to self-isolate until Alberta Health Services or a medical professional has made a decision regarding their ability to return to school. For the most up to date information on isolation requirements use the following link:

<https://www.alberta.ca/isolation.aspx#:~:text=Albertans%20with%20symptoms,existing%20illness%20or%20health%20condition.>

Any student testing positive for COVID-19 should expect to be treated with respect, have their privacy honoured and should not be stigmatized due to a COVID-19 diagnosis. School personnel are not to disclose positive cases of COVID-19, any communication about positive cases will be directed by Alberta Health Services.

Students and staff with pre-existing conditions

- Schools must keep records of a student's known pre-existing conditions. If a student develops symptoms in or outside of the program that could be caused by COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g. allergies), the student should be tested for COVID-19 at least once to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to the school.
- Students or staff with pre-existing conditions are strongly encouraged to consult with a medical professional prior to returning to school.
 - Staff requiring accommodations – staff requiring medically mandated accommodations based on documented medical guidance will first meet with their immediate supervisor regarding the potential accommodations. If appropriate accommodations cannot be made at the site or school level, the Human Resource Services department may assist with determining appropriate accommodations, altering teaching assignments, or providing medical or personal leave. Each of these situations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. For more information on these situations staff are encouraged to review the Frequently Asked Questions – HR document
 - Students requiring accommodations - Students requiring medically mandated accommodations based on documented medical guidance will consult with school administration to determine the best course of action. Each of these situations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate students with pre-existing medical conditions. If necessary students with pre-existing medical conditions will be supported by their school to learn at home.

Prevent the Spread

In addition to the previously mentioned protocols, we will also take steps to reduce the possibility of transmission if someone who is ill, has COVID 19 symptoms or is asymptomatic but able to spread the virus is in a school, division owned facility or on division bus.

Please note, the items listed below are not comprehensive and may change from time to time based on guidance from the government or the school division. Schools leaders and employees must use sound professional judgement when applying these protocols to their unique context. Ultimately, we must act reasonably and prudently to ensure the safety of all stakeholders in the division.

Cleaning of Schools

Regular cleaning and disinfection is essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Schools will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with Alberta Health Services' COVID Public Health.

General Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidelines

- Clean and disinfect shared high-touch surfaces regularly:
 - Door handles and door edges;
 - Front desk counter;
 - Shared spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms should also be cleaned more often.
- Clean or disinfect areas where students and staff are/were present.
- Clean or disinfect high-touch electronic devices (e.g. keyboards, tablets, smartboards).
- Use damp cleaning methods such as damp clean cloths and/or a wet mop for dusting and sweeping. Do not dry dust or sweep, as this can distribute virus droplets into the air.
- Cleaning to remove debris/soil (e.g. floor care and dusting will be done as time permits).

Cleaning Disinfecting Supplies/Equipment

- Disinfectants used must have a Drug Information Number (DIN) with a virucidal claim. Solutions containing the following types of disinfectants are currently approved for use in Palliser School Division.
 - Accelerated hydrogen peroxide (0.5%). These are the preferred type of cleaner disinfectants by the division due to the broad kill spectrum and they are tolerated by most persons.
 - As a last resort, diluted household bleach may be used. Add 9 ml of bleach to 1 litre of water. Please note that bleach is not generally recommended in school environments due to its instability and corrosive nature.

- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfecting products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well ventilated areas, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).
- Reusable cleaning and disinfecting items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60- 90 degrees Celsius).

Cleaning and Disinfecting of Tools/Equipment and Desks/Workstations

- Staff will follow the directions provided by the division and/or manufacturer to clean or disinfect.
- Staff are responsible for disinfecting their tools/equipment and desk/workstation throughout the workday. This will ensure limiting the risk of infection from staff to staff
- If any tools/equipment cannot be cleaned or disinfected, please contact your supervisor for further direction.
- Limit sharing of any tools/equipment with other staff while on shift.
- If tools/equipment must be shared, it must be cleaned or disinfected prior to sharing

Cleaning and Disinfecting of High Touch Surfaces

- Regular, enhanced, and as needed cleaning will be performed by caretaking staff:
 - Daytime caretakers will clean and disinfect contact surfaces and high contact areas.
 - Caretakers will ensure ongoing inspection and filling of hand washing supplies, including alcohol-based sanitizer dispensers.
 - Caretakers will monitor supplies to ensure all necessary supplies are available.
 - Evening caretaking staff will thoroughly clean all areas.
 - The Facility Services Supervisor will provide cleaning kits with approved disinfectants, PPE and materials.
 - Caretakers will monitor people who have been in the building. All areas in the school that have been accessed must be cleaned.
- Other staff may also be required to disinfect areas as needed in order to maintain a safe environment:
 - Division approved disinfecting supplies are provided;
 - Do not bring cleaners or disinfectants from home;
 - Do not take school materials home to clean or disinfect.
- If cleaning is required, staff should notify the principal or school office. The principal or school office will request cleaning, per their protocol with caretaking staff.

- Employees using division vehicles must disinfect the vehicles after use. When cleaning or disinfecting a vehicle, make sure to clean or disinfect outside in a well-ventilated area with the vehicle windows down.

Hand washing

Students and staff are required to perform hand hygiene when entering and exiting the school. Handwashing remains the most effective way to stop the spread of illness. If handwashing is not possible, hand sanitizer is an appropriate replacement.

Schools are responsible for developing strategies to regularly promote, remind and encourage frequent handwashing in classrooms and during the school day.

Hand hygiene and cleaning requirements for schools will address:

- The placement of hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content (or a non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada) in entrances, exits, and other areas deemed appropriate by school personnel.
- Hand washing after touching high contact surfaces such as;
 - Washrooms;
 - Shared equipment;
 - Auxiliary spaces and common rooms; and
 - Other areas that may apply.

Respiratory Etiquette

Respiratory hygiene is the recommended method for preventing transmission of respiratory illness.

Schools are responsible for developing strategies to regularly promote, remind and encourage appropriate respiratory etiquette.

Quite simply it is the right way to cover your cough!

3 Key Elements

1. Covering cough/sneeze with a sleeve or tissue
2. Disposing of used tissues in garbage
3. Washing hands after coughing or sneezing

Physical Distancing

It is important that we do what we can to try to assist children/students and staff to understand the importance of minimizing the frequency of close physical contact with one another and try to maintain a distance of, at least two meters from others, as much as possible. It is understood that physical distancing will not always be possible in a K-12 educational setting, particularly with younger children. Having said that, our expectation is that we will all take steps to ensure physical distancing as much as possible.

Physical distancing will require us to change everyday routines, in order to minimize contact with others. These changes include, but are not limited to:

Physical Distancing - classrooms

- Adapt classroom configurations to maintain distance between children (e.g. separating desks) or different locations in the school (e.g. gym, library, outside).
 - Increasing the space between persons decreases the risk of transmission. Where two metres is not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended.
 - If two metres cannot be arranged between desks/tables, students should be arranged so they are not facing each other (e.g. arranged in rows rather than in small groups of 4 or a semi-circle). This way, if a student coughs or sneezes, they are not likely to cough or sneeze directly on the face of another student.
- Increase the space between children and staff during activities such as snack/lunch (e.g. move or separate tables, move chairs farther apart).
- Keeping a distance of at least two meters from others, whenever possible.
- Limit any contacts closer than two meters to the shortest time possible.
- Reduce activities that require close proximity or contact with people.
- Avoiding close greetings like hugs or handshakes; remind children to keep hands to themselves.

Movement of students

- Schools must develop plans to minimize the number of students in the hallway or gathering areas especially at high volume times (arrival, class changes, breaks, lunch, end of day, etc).
- Grade 4-12 students and all staff must wear masks in hallways, common areas and other locations where physical distancing is not possible. Exceptions will be made for students or staff not able to wear a mask
- Schools must develop plans to manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways.
 - Consider the use of one way systems. The use of markers for floors and/or walls may also be used. Schools may also consider staggering bell times to limit congestion in hallways

Other suggested actions

- Help younger children learn about physical distancing by creating games.
- Take children outside more often, perhaps breaking children into smaller groups.
- Organize learning activities outside including snack time, play-based learning and play time.
- Staggering snack/lunch time to accommodate smaller groups/more space.
- No food or drink sharing of any kind on the premises.
- Use educational videos/online programs/social stories as a part of learning.
- Encourage independent learning and distancing from each other.

- Limiting contact with people at higher risk (e.g. older adults and those in poor health).
- Stagger pick up and drop off times.

In situations where physical distancing is not possible, masks must be worn for grade 4-12 students, extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, not participating when sick and cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis is necessary.

Cohorting

Cohorting students will decrease the potential for spread if a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 and assist public health officials in their efforts to trace contacts and contain an outbreak. Where possible, schools are encouraged to keep students in cohorts and/or limit the total number of contacts students have with other students.

Lunch

For classroom meals and snacks:

- No self-serve or family-style meal service. Instead, switch to pre-packaged meals or meals served by designated staff.
- Food provided by the family should be stored with the student's belongings.
- Close the food preparation areas off that could be accessed by students/children, non-designated staff, or visitors.
- Ensure that food-handling staff practice meticulous hand hygiene and are excluded from work if they are symptomatic.
- Students/children should practice physical distancing while eating.
- There should be no common food items (e.g., salt and pepper shakers, ketchup).
- Utensils should be used to serve food items (not fingers).
- If a school is using a common lunchroom and staggering lunch times, ensure that cleaned and disinfected after each use all surfaces of the tables and chairs (including the underneath edge of the chair seat) are cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Food Service Programs (Cafeteria)

Food service establishments should follow the Alberta Health restaurant guidance posted [here](#).

- School Cafeterias should use alternate processes to reduce the numbers of people dining together at one time.
- Remove/rearrange dining tables to maintain physical distancing.
- Place tape or other markings on floors to maintain a physical distancing of two metres.
- Stagger meal service times to reduce the numbers of people present at any one time.
- Adapt other areas to serve as additional dining space to increase spacing among persons in the same room.

- Do not use buffets. Instead, switch to pre-packaged meals or meals served by staff.
- Dispense cutlery, napkins and other items to students/children, rather than allowing them to pickup their own items.

Food sharing

- No activities that involve the sharing of food between students or staff should occur.
- Classes that teach food preparation may occur as long as students do not share the food they prepare with other students or staff.

Classrooms

- Masks are not mandated in classrooms for students unless physical distancing is not possible. Teachers are expected to use their professional judgement and consult with school administration when determining when masks will be used in classrooms based on the configuration of the classroom, the learning activity and other relevant variables.
- Area rugs and furnishings with porous fabric must be removed.
- Classrooms must be decluttered to minimize the number of surface contacts and items that will need to be cleaned and disinfected.
- Attempts should be made to minimize the number of shared learning resources made available to students. This includes toys and manipulatives.
- Unnecessary or unused items should be removed from the classroom.
- Desktops and counter surfaces must be kept clear to facilitate ongoing cleaning and disinfection.
- Teaching staff will direct students to take home any unnecessary personal items
- Staff will clearly identify toys, manipulatives and resources that were used and need to be disinfected. These items will be placed in plastic bins or agreed upon containers to clearly identify the need for cleaning.
- No soft toys, furniture or items not easily cleaned should remain in the classroom (e.g. teddy bears, bean bag chairs).

Office, staff room, shared space

- Signs must be posted reminding persons not to enter the school office if they have COVID-19 symptoms
- Schools must put in place protocols to maintain physical distancing. This may include signage, or limiting access to the office.
- Masks are mandated for all staff when physical distancing is not possible
- Physical distancing must be adhered to in the staff room. Schools will need to consider protocols for staffing eating lunch while maintaining physical distancing.
- Schools will need to consider protocols for disinfecting high touch items in the staff room. All staff will need to wash their hands before leaving the staff room.

- Schools will need to consider protocols for accessing photocopiers. Staff are asked to limit printing. Staff must disinfect items touched (copier buttons, hole punch, stapler, etc.) before leaving.
- Handouts for educational purposes are allowed but should be limited where possible
- Paper handling should be minimized where possible, electronic communications are encouraged.

Staff Meetings, Assemblies and Large Gatherings

No in-person school assemblies or large gatherings will occur.

- In person staff meetings may occur so long as physical distancing requirements are adhered to.
- Google Meet or other electronic means should be used when possible

Reinforcing COVID-19 Safety Protocols

Schools will be expected to continuously teach, reinforce and monitor student compliance regarding age appropriate COVID-19 safety protocols. This includes, but is not limited to:

- The symptoms of COVID-19
- The importance of not attending school when sick
- The importance of frequently washing and/or sanitizing hands
- The importance of good respiratory etiquette
- The importance of maintaining physical distance
- The proper use of masks

Learning Activities

For activity planning, staff should ask themselves the following questions to determine the risk of the activities and whether they are allowed to proceed:

- Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands?
- Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing?
- What is the frequency/possibility to clean high touch surfaces (e.g., electronic devices, instruments, equipment, toys)?

Water fountains

Water Fountains can remain open, mouthpieces of drinking fountains are not a major source of virus transmission and require regular cleaning according to manufacturer recommendations. Consideration can be given to having students fill water bottles rather than having them drink directly from the mouthpiece of a fountain.

Playgrounds

Playgrounds can continue to be used. Schools will need to develop a plan for recess and lunch and other times to ensure that no more than 100 people including staff and students are using the playground at one time. [COVID-19 Information: Guidance for Playgrounds.](#)

Extracurricular Activities

All indoor extra-curricular activities are cancelled until *Guidelines for resuming indoor sport are developed*. Alberta Education is working with Alberta Health and education partners, including the Alberta School Athletics Association, to explore possibilities for athletic activities and events within the context of current health measures. For more guidance on outdoor sports and recreation, refer to the [Guidance for Outdoor Recreation.](#)

Field Trips

Field trips and activities requiring group transportation should not be scheduled, they remain cancelled at this time. International and out of province trips are also cancelled and should not be planned.

Gymnasiums

Gymnasiums can be used to deliver physical education programming.

- When possible physical education should be done outside instead of inside as the risk of transmission is more likely to occur indoors rather than outdoors. Follow the [Guidance for Outdoor Activity](#) as relaunch progresses.
- Administrators and teachers should choose activities or sports that support physical distancing (e.g. badminton over wrestling).
- Consider using auxiliary space such as gyms and learning commons to deliver education programs to aid in physical distancing.
- Use of shared items or sports equipment is discouraged. Equipment that is shared must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use and users must perform hand hygiene before and after each use.
- School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) must be avoided and virtual options should continue to be offered instead of in person gatherings.
- Schools must follow the advice of the [Alberta guidance for sport. Physical activity, and recreation.](#)
- Locker Rooms and Change Rooms:
 - The use of locker rooms and change rooms is discouraged whenever possible,
 - Schools should encourage participants to come dressed for their activity,
 - Set capacity limits on how many people can use locker rooms at the same time and adjust lockers to enable physical distancing.
- For more information, please refer to the Learning Services FAQ document

Music, Dance, and Theatre Programs

Practice, rehearsals, and instruction of dance, music, and theatre may proceed so long as the [guidance for music, dance, and theatre](#) is followed.

Learning experiences involving unprotected (without a mask or physical barrier) in-person singing, cheering, shouting, or playing wind instruments must be postponed at this time. Consider alternatives such as:

- Recording or live-streaming individual performers in separate locations
- Including more lessons focused on music appreciation or music theory
- Choose to play instruments that are lower risk (e.g., percussion or string instruments over wind instruments)

For more information, please refer to the Learning Services FAQ document

CTF and CTS Programs

For CTF and CTS programs, staff should ask themselves how they will accomplish cleaning of shared surfaces and equipment. If that is not possible, all participants should ensure they are practicing hand hygiene before and after each use. Learning opportunities should be modified where possible, to ensure appropriate physical distancing can be maintained.

For more information, please refer to the Learning Services FAQ document

The information in this handbook is not intended to be comprehensive and is subject to change. The documents provided by Alberta Education are more extensive and we expect that all our staff will review them. Most importantly, each of us will need to make sure we are taking steps within our areas of responsibility to do the following:

- Follow Expert Advice
- Keep The Virus Out
- Prevent the Spread

We all play a part in making sure we provide a safe environment for our students, staff and stakeholders. As always, we are grateful for the work you do and appreciate your commitment to safety.

Other Information

Human Resources FAQ – coming soon

[Learning Services FAQ](#)

Appendix A: [Self-Assessment Tool](#)