



## Parkland School Division Mask Protocol

As part of a number of new school safety measures to combat COVID-19, mask use for all Alberta Grade 4 to 12 students, and all school staff, will be mandatory across Alberta when school returns for the 2020-21 year.

COVID-19 can be spread by infected individuals who have not yet, or who may never develop symptoms. Masks, including homemade cloth masks or non-medical face masks, are another way to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and are recommended in areas where physical distancing may be challenging or not possible.

### **Mandatory Mask Use: Staff and Students (Grades 4 through 12) and optional for students in Kindergarten through Grade 3.**

**Masks will also be required for all staff and visitors while they are in school common areas such as hallways, the school office, cafeterias, etc.**

- Mask use will be required (Grades 4 through 12) whenever and wherever students are instructed to wear a mask.
- Acknowledging that maintaining 2 metres of distancing between individuals will be challenging in many situations, PSD is recommending that mask be worn at all times.
- Typically, masks will not be required while students are seated in the classroom during instruction if additional measures are in place. (i.e.; if students are all facing in the same direction and working alone at their desks, adequate physical distancing is available.)
- There may be situations within classrooms where masks may be needed based on the activity – as instructed by the teacher. (i.e.; group work, labs, close collaboration on projects)
- Additional requirements mask use may be instituted by the Superintendent of Schools in certain situations including, but not limited to:
  - A school is under Outbreak or Watch status, as defined by AHS
  - Enhanced provincial health measures have been enacted
  - Room or desk configuration prevents adequate physical distancing between students and/or staff
- Masks are required:
  - in the classroom when close contact between students, or students and staff, is occurring. Masks should be used for the duration of this activity;
  - on the bus at all times and when in bus transfer sites outside;
  - in school areas, whether inside or outside, where students or staff may be moving or crossing paths with other students or staff;
  - in hallways (including while at lockers) and entry points;
  - in washrooms;
  - in common gathering areas; and
  - in any areas that clearly indicate (by a sign) that masks are required.
- Masks may be removed for outside activities that involve considerable social distancing.
  - Some outdoor areas may require masks due to increased traffic and the inability to maintain physical distancing
- The Principal of the school may determine other programming or activities that apply sufficient additional physical distancing measures to allow students to remove their masks for the duration of the activity.
- The Principal of the school may determine other programming or activities where masks are mandatory. (i.e.; drama productions, musical programming such as choir, foods options, etc.)

## Additional Mask Protocols

- Alberta is providing each student and staff member with two reusable masks. Delivery of these masks to students is expected on their first day of school. Families are also welcome to supply their own masks, if preferred, providing that the mask is appropriate:
  - For reference, see also - Alberta Government: [Types of Masks and Eye Protection](#); and
  - For reference, see also - Health Canada: [Sew and No-Sew Instructions](#).
- The mask needs to fully cover your face from the nose (above the nostrils) to the chin and be worn without gaps between the mask and face.
  - See also: Alberta Government: [Guidance for Wearing Non-Medical Masks](#)
- Masks that are visibly dirty, ripped, torn or damaged in any way shall be replaced with a temporary mask by the school during the day, and by the family for the next day;
  - Schools are supplied with disposable (temporary) masks to distribute to students.
- Before putting on a mask, hands should be washed with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol;
- It is recommended students carry a plastic, sealable bag (i.e.; Ziploc bag) to store once finished using the mask. Place the cloth mask directly into the washing machine or a bag that can be emptied into the washing machine. Throw out the bag after you have used it to store used masks.
- When non-medical face masks are used, hands should be cleaned before and after putting it on and taking it off. Avoid touching the mask once it is on. Masks should be changed after they become wet or soiled.
- After removing a reusable non-medical face mask that will be re-worn prior to washing, it should be placed into a clean, breathable bag or container (allows for evaporation) for storage. Consider using a bag that can be washed. All masks should have two distinct sides, one side that touches the face and one that faces outwards.
- Do not reuse masks that are wet or soiled prior to laundering. A wet or soiled mask that requires laundering should be placed into a sealed bag or container where it is stored until it can be taken home and washed.
- Disposable masks that are damaged or dirty should be discarded into a garbage bin that is lined with a plastic bag.
- A very small number of individuals may not be able to wear masks due to sensory or health issues. Face shields are not considered to be equivalent to non-medical face masks. It is important to comply with other personal preventative practices such as frequent hand hygiene and physical distancing as much as possible.
- Exemptions to mask requirement for all teachers and staff in all school settings and students in grades 4-12 include:
  - Persons who are unable to place, use or remove a non-medical face mask without assistance;
  - Persons unable to wear a non-medical face mask due to a mental or physical concern or limitation;
  - Persons consuming food or drink in designated areas;
  - Persons engaged in physical exercise;
  - Persons providing care or assistance to a person with a disability where a non-medical face mask would hinder that caregiving or assistance;
  - Persons engaging in services that require the temporary removal of the non-medical face mask, and
  - Spaces where physical barriers have been installed between persons.
- Appropriate documentation will be required for a student that is declaring an exemption described above.

Parents can support their children by practicing mask wearing at home and by reinforcing that masks help us all stay safe and healthy. We truly appreciate our families, staff, students and community efforts to keep everyone in good health.