



Muir Lake School

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To: Muir Lake Parents and Guardians
Fr: Murray Marran and Heather Brownlee
Date: August 13, 2020

Re: Pandemic Procedures for Muir Lake Students and Other Re-entry Information

Good Morning, Muir Lake Families:

It is hard to believe that the summer is drawing to a close and that we are looking at the start of a new school year. Naturally, these are different times and school will look differently in the fall. I am sending this document to go over new and enhanced protocols that Muir Lake School and Parkland School Division will be implementing during the 2020/2021 school year in order to safely welcome back your child(ren) to the classroom. I will apologize in advance for the length of this document, however I want to touch on all the elements of what the school and school division are implementing in order to have a safe and happy return to school.

1. Prior to Re-entry:

1. I would please request that if your child(ren) has a pre-existing medical condition, you must inform the school of this underlying issue. This information is critical for us to ensure vigilance in safety protocols and in creating the safest possible environment for your child.
2. There must be two (2) emergency contacts listed in powerschool in case your child has to be picked up due to illness. Please ensure that emergency contact information is updated in [PowerSchool](https://powerschool.psd70.ab.ca/public/home.html) at <https://powerschool.psd70.ab.ca/public/home.html> and that between you and your chosen contacts, there is someone who will be able to pick your child in a timely manner.
3. As there will be no sharing of items in the classroom (pencils, crayons, etc) please ensure that you have the items on the [school supply list](#) that was sent home in June. In addition to the supply list which can be found on our school website at <https://muirlake.psd70.ab.ca/Supplies%20Fees.php>, I strongly encourage you to provide your child with hand sanitizer that they can use at school, on the playground, etc. Please note that we will have sanitizer in our classrooms, however individual sanitizer will ensure fast access to sanitizing materials.



4. At Muir Lake School, we are strongly encouraging students to bring their own water bottles for personal use. This minimizes the use of water fountains, decreases foot traffic in the hallway and reduces the risk of spreading germs.
5. Please consider sending your child with their own chromebook/laptop, if possible. We have enhanced cleaning protocols for equipment and devices and we will be vigilant in our efforts. That being said, a personal device that is NOT shared by anyone is the best option in minimizing the risk of spreading germs. [Recommendations](#) for devices can be found on our school website at <https://muirlake.psd70.ab.ca/Supplies%20Fees.php>

2. School Start-up - Staggered Entry:

On June 29th, Muir Lake School sent an email explaining that we will have a staggered entry for our students. This was done to ensure that we would have smaller groups in order for teachers and administration to go over new procedures and protocols due to COVID-19. The following is the schedule for entry:

Grades 1 to 9:

Monday, August 31st - Families with the surname A to L will start on this day. Families with surnames M to Z will remain at home that day.

Tuesday, September 1st - Families with the surname M to Z will start on this day. Families with surnames A to L will remain at home that day.

Kindergarten:

Monday, August 31st- Monday/Wednesday Kindergarten class will start with the family surnames starting with A to L. Students in the Monday/Wednesday class with surnames M to Z will remain at home.

Tuesday, September 1st - Tuesday/Thursday Kindergarten class will start for family surnames starting with M to Z. Students in the Tuesday/Thursday class with surnames A to L will remain at home.

Wednesday, September 2nd - Monday/Wednesday Kindergarten class will start with the family surnames starting with M to Z. Students in the Monday/Wednesday class with surnames A to L will remain at home.

Thursday, September 3rd - Tuesday/Thursday Kindergarten class will start for family surnames starting with A to L. Students in the Tuesday/Thursday class with surnames M to Z will remain at home.

Friday, September 4th - Regular schedule. All students in the Monday/Wednesday class attend school. Tuesday/Thursday class are off. Please see the [kindergarten calendar that is linked HERE](#) as staggered entry will be finished and regular rotation is in effect.



Nature Kindergarten:

Monday, August 31st - Monday/Wednesday Nature Kindergarten class starts.

Tuesday/Thursday class will remain at home.

Tuesday, September 1st - Tuesday/Thursday Nature Kindergarten class starts.

Monday/Wednesday class will remain at home.

Wednesday, September 2nd - Regular schedule. Monday/Wednesday Nature Kindergarten class attends.

Thursday, September 3rd - Regular schedule. Tuesday/Thursday Nature Kindergarten class attends.

Friday, September 4th - Regular schedule. Tuesday/Thursday Nature Kindergarten class attends.

3. Mask Protocol and Hygiene:

The Minister of Education has mandated that all students in grades 4 to 12 wear masks outside the classroom in common areas (hallways, buses, etc.). Therefore, we will be asking these students to be vigilant about wearing their masks outside of the classroom. Please remind your child of proper mask usage:

1. wash/sanitize hands **before** donning mask
2. wash/sanitize hands **after** taking mask off

Also, the school has purchased handwashing videos and each class will be viewing these videos on a continual basis. Further, cohort teachers will be providing time during the day for handwashing and/or sanitizing.

4. Building Entry/Exit:

Muir Lake School is limiting the number of visitors in the school in order to minimize exposure risk for students and staff. The following protocols have been put in place in order to mitigate potential exposure:

1. In order to reduce large numbers of people entering the building at once, there are few changes to our morning procedures and dismissal procedures. Most notably, **students will be able to enter the building at 7:45 a.m.** and go to their classroom. Students will no longer be required to wait outside at an entrance until 8:01 a.m.
2. Once students enter the building, they are to go directly to their classroom and are to avoid hanging out in the hallways, library, etc.



3. All cohorts (homeroom classes) are assigned a specific entry/exit door to the school. The school has numbered each door and the cohorts that are supposed to use that door are visibly posted on each door. Please note the following:

Door 1 - Mr. Opatril (Gr. 2), Mrs. Pugh (Gr. 2),
Mrs. Montgomery (Gr. 3), Ms. LeDressay (K)

Door 2 - Staff Entrance Only

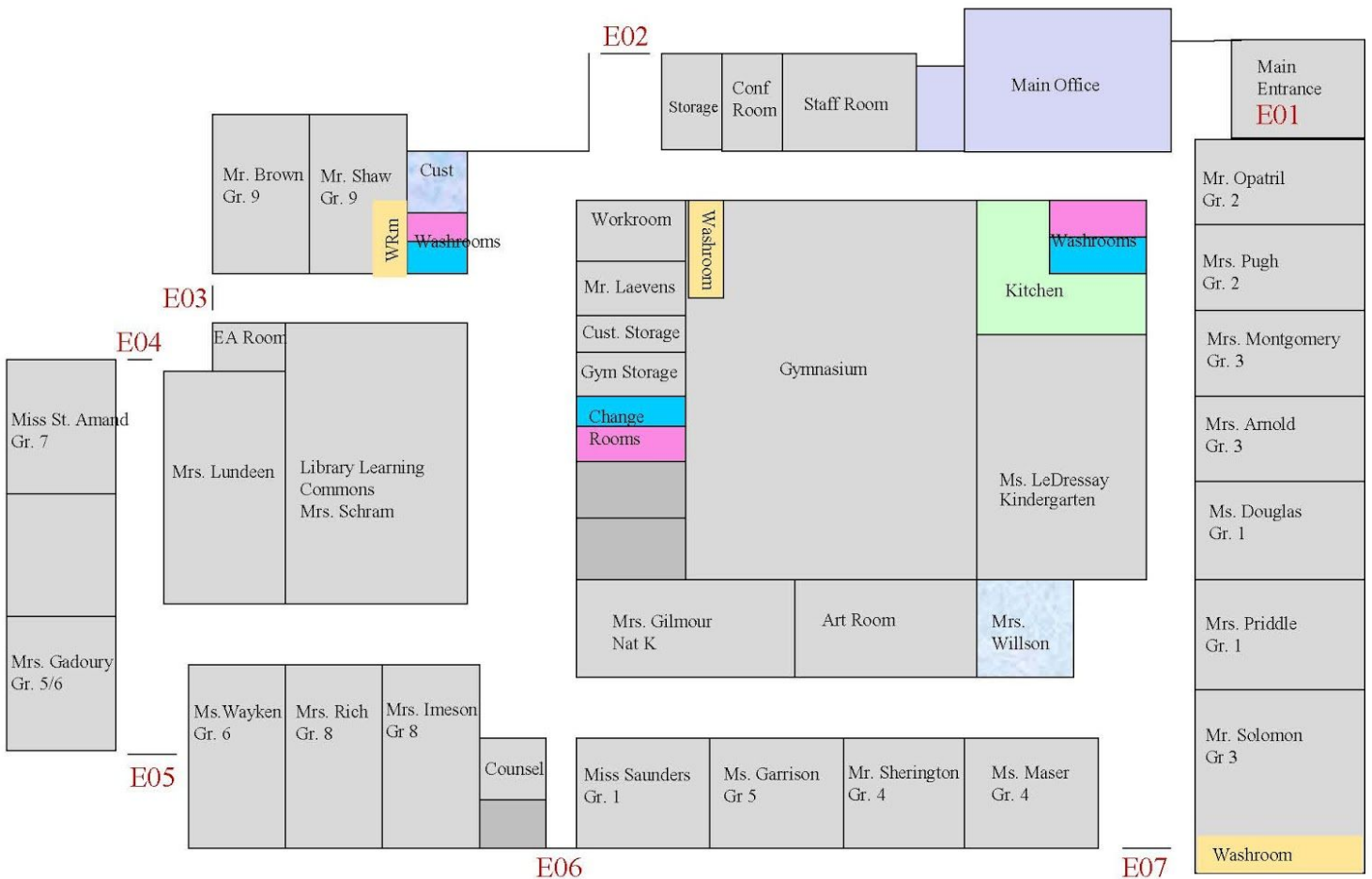
Door 3 - Mr. Brown (Gr. 9), Mr. Shaw (Gr. 9).

Door 4 - Miss. St. Amand (Gr. 7), Mrs. Gadoury (Gr. 5/6)

Door 5 - Mrs. Wayken (Gr. 6), Mrs. Rich (Gr. 8), Mrs. Imeson (Gr. 8)

Door 6 - Miss Saunders (Gr. 1), Mrs. Garrison (Gr. 5),
Mr. Sherington (Gr. 4), Mrs. Maser (Gr. 4), Mrs. Gilmour (Nature K)

Door 7 - Mr. Solomon (Gr. 3), Mrs. Priddle (Gr. 1), Ms. Douglas (Gr. 1)



Please speak to your child about their assigned door and that they must adhere to only using their assigned door. Once the bell rings and classes start, all doors will be locked. All visitors (parents) and deliveries will be directed through Door #1. Please note, that EVERYONE (including parents) who enters the building will be screened for COVID-19 (questionnaire).

Students will be dismissed at the end of the day by their bus number. This allows students to board buses in their bus cohort. Bus arrival and departure times to and from the school remain the same as last year.

We are kindly asking that if you need to pick up your child early, please call the school office and we will escort your child (if required) to the parking area and ensure your child is safely passed to your custody. A Parent Muster point will be established with socially distanced markings so parents can wait outside safely. Please look for signage on the **BLUE IRON fence** at the front of the school between the school and the community hall. Please note that parents should line up on the **INSIDE** of the fence.

If your child is coming into school late (after the 8:01 start of day bell), they will need to check in at the office, so we are asking that parents ring the doorbell, wait for a staff member to meet them, and enter through the front door.

At this time, we are asking parents who are wanting to volunteer in the school to please wait as we will be asking teachers not to have volunteers for the time being for further direction from the school and the school division

5. Cohorting:

Students' classes are "cohorted". This means that when a student is in a class, they are spending as much time as possible with that group and academic/social time with other groups is minimized or eliminated. This is done for **CONTACT TRACING**, and as a means of reducing potential covid exposure. This is done in accordance with Alberta Health Services guidelines.

In addition to cohorts, students will remain in their assigned classrooms for the majority of the day. Teachers will travel from class to class as opposed to students. This minimizes foot traffic in hallways and also makes it easier for contact tracing if such a need was necessary. Students will still have recess and physical education classes, however we will be doing as much as possible to provide these opportunities outside in the fresh air.

Minimizing Physical Distance in the Classroom:

In order to be able to physically distance as much as possible and do contact tracing as accurately as possible, the following procedures will be implemented in each cohort class:

1. Seating plans will be established and not changed. Please explain this to your child.
2. All students will face one direction (facing the board). Table groupings/small groups will no longer be viable in the classroom.
3. Group work/group projects will not be happening.



Minimizing Physical Distance in Common Hallways and Washrooms:

In our hallways, we will be placing directional arrows indicating one-way traffic flow. Also, there will be yellow dots that indicate what appropriate physical distance is required when in the hallway. We kindly ask that you reinforce to your child(ren) the need to respect these markers and to use these visual cues in order to maintain safe physical distancing.

Washrooms have a maximum number of occupants posted on the wall by the entry door. We kindly ask students to respect these guidelines. Further, Muir Lake School was designed with some classrooms having a washroom. Mrs. Arnold, Ms. Douglas, Mrs. Priddle and Mr. Solomon will have a washroom exclusive to their cohort. This will greatly reduce the number of students who are using the regular washrooms.

Recess/Lunch Breaks:

Recess breaks will be determined by students and teachers. This provides students and teachers with flexibility to have recess during times when we can have less students on the playground at one time. That said, there is a maximum of 7 classes on the playground at once, and students will be required to remain in their designated zones. Zones will be rotated so there is equitable access to playground equipment, basketball courts, etc. during the week.

Lunch recess breaks will be determined by the students and the classroom teacher as well. Students will eat in their classrooms and lunch recess/break time will be 30 mins outside. Students will have their lunch recess either at 11:30 a.m., 12:00 p.m. or 12:30 p.m. These break times will be on a first come, first served basis. Therefore, it may mean your child's break might be at different times, depending on what class signs up for what time slot. This allows for increased supervision and flexibility for teachers on how the day is structured.

Please note, all **microwaves have been removed from classrooms and common areas**. This has been done because we cannot ensure proper sanitization after each use. Therefore, we ask that your children's lunches not be required to be heated.

Further, the hot lunch program and the fundraising lunches have been suspended for the time being. Once our fundraising society and school council have had a chance to meet and review our new guidelines, we will determine whether or not we can continue this program. As soon as these decisions are made, I will communicate the outcome with you.

6. Music/Physical Education/Option Programs:

Music will continue to be offered at Muir Lake School for the upcoming year. However, the program is limited in what we can offer. Mrs. Gottenbos will be offering a program from grades 1 to 6, and will focus mostly on theory, percussion and other elements. The use of instruments will not be offered due to sanitization concerns, and singing will not be part of the program. Mrs. Gottenbos has assured me that she can offer a relevant, engaging program even with these limitations in place. Unfortunately, at this time, choral music and musical theatre are put on hold



as well. Perhaps we can offer this in semester 2, depending on what guidelines are put forth by Alberta Health Services. I will communicate any changes as soon as I receive them.

The school will continue to offer Physical Education classes. For obvious reasons, Phys Ed will look different than before. Physical distancing will be implemented as much as possible (within the gymnasium) and students will have classes outdoors as much as possible (weather permitting, of course). Masks during P.E. class are **NOT** required.

In response to COVID-19, Muir Lake School has had to rethink the option classes that we offer. We will not be offering foods class next year, as the risk of contamination greatly increases in a food studies class. Teachers will survey students at the beginning of the term to see what options they would like to take, knowing that the option class must be offered in the classroom. Previously, students could choose from a list of options and go to that class. Due to cohorts, this is no longer possible. Students will have 4 options offered to them over the course of the year, and these options will be taken as a cohort.

Our regular Art program is modified as the art room is being used for additional instructional space. All art classes will be offered in the cohort classroom and there will be **NO** shared materials or shared equipment.

7. Shared Equipment/Items:

If equipment is being shared (a basketball, for example), that equipment will have to be sanitized before and after use. Also, students will be asked to wash/sanitize their hands prior to and after the use of that equipment.

Additionally, we strongly encourage students to keep personal items (Pokeman cards, small toys, etc) at home so the risk of exposure to other individuals is kept to a minimum. If you have questions regarding bringing personal items to school, please contact the school directly.

Lockers will **NOT** be available for student use. Muir Lake School has procured a storage bin for each student that will be in their classroom. Students' personal items will be stored in these bins and students will be sanitizing their own bins upon the cohort teacher's direction. Outdoor shoes will be placed on boot racks upon entry.

8. Procedure For Students Self-Reporting Illness:

If a student discloses that they are ill (presenting symptoms), they will be escorted to the office and we will ask the student to please wear a mask (if appropriate). We will then ask the student to rest in the infirmary until a parent or guardian can pick up the student in a **TIMELY** manner. Please ensure that if you are unable to pick your child in a timely manner, your emergency contact will be able to do so. Again, please verify your emergency contact information in [PowerSchool](#) and update accordingly.



9. Enhanced Cleaning Protocols:

Parkland School Division has enhanced cleaning protocols in all schools. Currently, I am sitting with our Head Custodian and we are drawing up a schedule for cleaning and sanitizing high touch surfaces such as door knobs, sinks, and washrooms. Once our plan is finalized, we will be posting it to our website where it can be viewed in greater detail.

10. Return to School Choices

As per the survey that was sent out by Parkland School Division, parents have the following choices for their child(ren)'s education. We ask that you communicate with our office as to which scenario you will be selecting for the 2020 2021 school year (if you have not done so already). Our office has already been in contact with many of you, but should you change your mind, then please let us know by either calling 780-963-3535 or my emailing us at MuirLake@psd70.ab.ca.

1. Return To In-Person Classes With Enhanced Safety Protocols
2. Teacher Supported At-home-learning with return to Muir Lake on one of the designated return dates listed below. This scenario will look very different from what we experienced in the Spring.
 - a. October 6, 2020
 - b. November 16, 2020
 - c. January 4, 2021
 - d. February 16, 2021
 - e. April 6, 2021
3. Register with Connections For Learning for Online Learning for the entire 2020 2021 School year
4. Register with a Recognized Alberta Home School program for the entire 2020 2021 School year. Please note that home schooling must be coordinated through an Alberta School Board and that there are requirements for assessment and home visits from a licensed Alberta teacher.

We encourage you to refer to the [Parkland School Division Website](#) for more information regarding your options for return to school by clicking on [THIS LINK](#).

As always, should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at 780-963-3535 or by email at MuirLake@psd70.ab.ca

