



COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Note: This is a working document and will be updated frequently as pandemic conditions or public health orders change.

What will be different with this year's COVID-19 measures compared to 2020-2021?

Many COVID-19 measures will remain the same and can be found in PSD's Guidance for School Re-Entry Principal's Handbook. The biggest differences would be masking and the handling of close contacts. Masks are strongly recommended (age appropriate) for K - 12 students as well as mandatory for all students riding buses. If your child is deemed a close contact of a positive COVID-19 case, they will not be required to isolate unless their own symptoms presented.

With masks not mandated, can my child still wear a mask at school?

Yes. All students and staff will be supported regardless of their choice to wear a mask or not. In fact, it is highly recommended that all students wear a mask while in school in situations where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

How else are schools protecting children?

Proper ventilation and airflow is one of many ways we are maintaining safe learning spaces for staff and students. All of our Division schools meet or exceed recommendations from the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) in relation to COVID-19.

We will continue to adapt to any changes to the ASHRAE guidelines throughout the year. In our schools, this means:

- using the highest grade filters possible
- more frequent filter changes scheduled throughout the year
- maximizing airflow and fresh air intake
- extending running time for mechanical systems by four hours during school days
- mechanical systems are inspected on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Our school has mechanical systems that allow for fresh air intake.
- When weather allows, we encourage classes to open classroom windows and use the many outdoor learning spaces located on and around our school grounds.

We are also continuing to focus on enhanced cleaning, hand sanitizing and maintaining the most amount of physical distancing possible.

Can my child transition back and forth between in-person and online learning?

Possibly. Those families who wish to receive online instruction will register for the 2021-2022 school year at Connections for Learning in the Virtual Learning program. Should a family request a transfer back to their designated school, the request would be handled like any other School-of-choice request and registration may only be possible IF sufficient space and resources are available. Specific details related to procedures followed when trying to register for a School-of-choice can be found in [Administrative Procedure 304: Attendance Areas](#).

Will I be told if there's a positive COVID-19 case in my child's classroom?

At this time, Alberta Health Services (AHS) will not be notifying school authorities of positive COVID-19 cases in schools and will not be identifying or following up with individual close contacts. Quarantining for close contacts is no longer legally mandatory. However, AHS will continue to work with school authorities to manage outbreaks of respiratory illnesses in schools. Schools will let AHS know if 10 percent of students, or more, are home because they are or might be sick. AHS will investigate and may declare an outbreak of a respiratory illness at school which may include recommending additional health measures such as:

- Daily health checks
- More cleaning and disinfection
- Staying with a cohort (small group), such as a classroom
- Masking
- Limiting large gatherings and/or extracurricular activities

Can I find out if my child's teacher has been vaccinated for COVID-19?

No. As per the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act, that personal, confidential information is private and will not be shared.

Will French Immersion be offered online?

No, not at this time. There are not enough students that would choose this option in order to re-allocate staff to offer a multi-grade online format for French Immersion students.

What if my child has symptoms related to allergies or a pre-existing condition?

The student should be tested at least once before returning to school and have a negative COVID-19 test result. These symptoms would be their baseline health status. As long as the cough or runny nose is always the same and does not get worse, the student can attend school. You will need to inform the school of your child's pre-existing condition.

Will my child have to wear a mask on the bus?

Yes, in accordance with the Alberta Health Services and Alberta Transportation guidelines, all passengers on forms of public transit in congregated settings must wear a mask. This decision by the Government of Alberta will be reviewed by Sept 27, 2021.

Who decides on the cohorts and how big can a cohort be?

As indicated in Alberta Education's Guidance for School Re-entry, the size of a cohort will depend on the physical space of the classroom or learning setting. Cohorting will decrease the number of close contacts a case of COVID-19 would have in a school and assist public health officials in their efforts to trace contacts and contain an outbreak. School administrators will work with their instructional staff to determine cohorts. For 2021-2022, staff will plan for students to work in a limited number of cohorts. Staggered breaks, lunch time, transition between classes, recess, etc. will be encouraged where practical.

Will children be vaccinated at school?

Students under 18 WILL NOT be vaccinated in schools WITHOUT parent or guardian consent. Immunizations will be available through temporary clinics in schools for students in Grades 7 to 12 as well as teachers and staff, starting on September 7. The clinics are operated by Alberta Health Services.

Will school sports resume in 2021-2022?

Yes. Sports practices and outdoor activities may proceed with appropriate risk mitigation strategies (i.e. no shaking hands at the end of the game)

Will school-wide assemblies be permitted?

Yes. School staff may request students wear their mask for instances like this but mask wearing will not be required.

What about volunteering at school?

There should be no non-essential visitors allowed into the school. Parents/guardians can attend the school if they are required as part of the educational programming needs of the school and a record of all visitors will be kept to facilitate contact tracing if necessary. Visitors will be asked to complete PSD's screening questionnaire and will be required to wear a mask if they go beyond the school's office/front entrance. Once visitors are in a location where they can maintain appropriate physical distancing, they may remove their mask.

What if a student or staff member either presents symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19?

If a student or staff member has any of the following core COVID-19 symptoms (new, or worsening and not related to other known causes), they are required to isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms, or until they receive a negative COVID-19 test result, as per provincial guidelines:

- o Fever
- o Cough
- o Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- o Loss of sense of smell or taste
- o Sore throat (adults only)
- o Runny nose (adults only)

What if my child has a pre-existing condition that may present like COVID-19?

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.

Could the guidance change and strong measures be introduced if there is an increase in COVID-19?

Yes. Alberta will be watching for increases in hospitalizations and severe outcomes. Alberta also has programs to monitor wastewater for COVID-19. Alberta will review new evidence and research across Canada and around the world. If severe illness from COVID-19 is putting pressure on the health care system, public health measures may be needed again.