

SEPTEMBER 10, 2020



EDMONTON
CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

SCHOOL RE-ENTRY HANDBOOK 2020-21

GUIDANCE FOR ADMINISTRATORS & SCHOOL STAFF

GOD CALLS US EACH BY NAME

Message from Chief Superintendent Martin and Board Chair Palazzo

Our experience from the past many months has reminded us of the resiliency, flexibility, and perseverance needed to navigate the uncertainty of this pandemic. As a Catholic community, we continue to set our minds on Christ; for it is in Christ that we find our peace, our comfort, and our joy in times of trouble. We thank all of our students, families, staff, and stakeholders for walking together in Christ during these uncertain times.

In preparing for the upcoming school year, we know that we remain faced with the dynamic and complex challenges of Covid-19. Together, we will do our utmost to mitigate risks, and offer the best quality Catholic education possible. In scripture we read, “for surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope (Jeremiah 29:11). Our school division has invested considerable time researching, consulting, and planning for the return to classes this fall.

The intention of this re-entry handbook is to provide our stakeholders with the information, protocols, and recommendations pursuant to the province’s K-12 School Re-Entry Plan. Following the guidance from the Ministry of Education and Alberta Health Services, our planning provides direction on the three re-entry scenarios in such areas as risk mitigation, teaching and learning, and divisional supports for our schools. It will present the reader with an understanding of what must and should be considered throughout the school re-entry process. It remains important to understand that this handbook is a “living document” and will remain responsive to necessary changes and adjustments needed to address challenges that may arise. Stakeholders will be apprised of changes and actions as we move forward, together.

The mission of Edmonton Catholic Schools is to provide a Catholic education that inspires students to learn and that prepares them to live fully and to serve God in one another. Our theme for 2020-21, *God calls us each by name*, reminds us of the importance to love and serve God in one another. With this in mind, we are thankful for the many students, parents, and staff who added their voices to our re-entry planning conversations. Those conversations and feedback have informed this handbook.

May Christ fill us with hope as we enter this new school year.

Robert Martin
Chief Superintendent

Sandra Palazzo
Board Chair

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1. Introduction

“People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided” (Bandura, 1977, p.11). This statement speaks to the heart of collective efficacy and resiliency. Our Re-entry Plan reflects the dedicated work of our collective community. Our faith informs us that: *“Just as our bodies have many parts and each part has a special function, so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other”* (Romans 12:4-5). We are each called by name to love and serve God in one another. With this in mind, we are thankful for the many students, parents, and staff who added their voices to our re-entry planning conversations. Those conversations and feedback have informed this plan.

2. Background

The COVID-19 pandemic remains a significant challenge in our world, impacting schools in conducting normal operations. Planning for re-entry to school for the 2020-21 school year is the fundamental focus of this handbook, with the education of our students in an environment that seeks to mitigate the risks to students, staff and parents as our priority in Edmonton Catholic Schools.

This handbook provides the reader with an understanding of what must and should be considered throughout the school re-entry process. The handbook presents both required practice and guiding principles as schools re-open. Required practices are derived from recommendations and guidance from health authorities in addition to a review of practices throughout the world. Guiding principles are presented to provide school administrators, school staff, parents, and students with a filter for decision-making that ensures the safety of our staff, parents, and students.

Local contingency plans are only effective through a collaborative effort by all community stakeholders, as school communities move forward together to embrace the “new normal” of conducting school operations during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. These guidelines are not designed to be prescriptive but seek to provide school leaders with parameters and options as they comply with provincial health and education directives. Collective efficacy and resiliency will be the hallmark of our actions, moving forward. Ultimately, the standard of care will be predicated on the basis of what a reasonable parent would decide for their child’s well-being.

We recognize the need for uniform parameters and considerations that are specific enough to be actionable, but broad enough to be adaptable. **This guide will be revised and updated regularly as more data and resources become available.**

Direction regarding school opening will be taken from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Education. There are 3 possible scenarios, depending upon the status of the spread of COVID-19 within the province, and more specifically, within Edmonton:

1. Near-normal school operations
2. Combination of in-person and remote learning, with enhanced safety protocols
3. Continued at-home learning (Authentic Online Learning)

Regardless of the scenario, this handbook has been developed to provide administrators, school staff, parents and students with information to guide the re-entry to schools and mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 to students, staff, and parents.

What this handbook is...

What it is...	What it is Not...
A guidance document	Legal advice
Based on evidence and expertise	Based upon opinion or ideology
Comprised of the essential actions designed to spur thinking, planning and prioritization	An exhaustive list of every action that a division or school leader will need to return to school
Part of a continuum of school decision making	A distance learning playbook or school closure guidance
A fluid document that will change and evolve based on current information, directives and needs	The final word on how the Division or individual schools will manage the next phases of COVID-19

The content in this handbook was developed using a variety of sources, which include: Guidance documents from Alberta Education and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, OHS legislation, ECSD Administrative Procedures, response data from stakeholder surveys (*20,000 respondents from among parents, students and staff), and the collective expertise of our site and Division leaders. The compilation, review and production of these sources was the responsibility of a re-entry planning team, assembled at the direction of the Chief Superintendent.

3. Guiding Resources

- 3.1 Background information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19, good hygiene practices, and links to Alberta Health Services information can be found in [COVID-19 information](#).
- 3.2 The Alberta Provincial Re-Launch strategy informs what aspects of Alberta society will reopen following COVID-19, and upon what criteria. To learn more, visit: [Provincial Re-Launch strategy](#).
- 3.3 Based on the Alberta Provincial Re-Launch Strategy and the joint direction of the Minister of Education and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the broad guidelines for school Re-entry can be found by visiting: [School Re-entry Plan \(Government of Alberta\)](#). In addition, schools should reference the [Implementing School Re-Entry Guidance](#) document.
- 3.4 Government of Alberta [School Re-entry Toolkit](#).
- 3.5 Informed by the above guidance, the Edmonton Catholic School Division has developed the following framework for school to resume in September 2020 based on the three

scenarios for re-entry as put forward by the Minister of Education: [Framework for Re-entry](#).

3.6 Alberta Government resources:

- [Parents' Guide 2020-21 School Year](#)
- [Get the Facts: Back to Class for 2020-21](#)
- [Covid 19 In School Settings](#)
- [Guidance for Playgrounds](#)
- [Guidance for Outdoor Fitness](#)
- [Guidance for Sport, Physical Fitness, and Recreation – Stage 2](#)
- [Guidance for Libraries](#)

4. Risk Mitigation

Risk mitigation refers to the processes undertaken to reduce, minimize, or limit the potential for risk over which we have some measure of control. In the case of COVID-19, it refers to strategies, rather than guarantees, whereby all reasonable efforts are made to reduce the potential for transmission of the virus.

As directed by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, schools should seek to employ risk mitigation protocols when appropriate physical distancing cannot be achieved, or the sharing of manipulatives/resources is necessary for instruction. These protocols and strategies may include the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), heightened cleaning, physical barriers, or other strategies as deemed appropriate.

Risk mitigation strategies are most typically identified within the scope of OHS and Facility Services mandates, and which are implemented by all staff in varying ways. These aspects of school and site operations transcend all considerations for re-entry, touching on every aspect of operations, and as such, will be infused throughout this handbook.

In an effort to reduce potential exposure, there will be no non-essential personnel admitted to school sites. This includes volunteers, friends, or other visitors who do not require entrance to the school site for educational programming purposes.

5. Learning in ECSD

In Edmonton Catholic Schools, we will remain adaptable and flexible in our learning environments to ensure adherence to guidance from Alberta Education and the Chief Medical Officer of Health, while maintaining the integrity of programming as much as is practicable. The focus continues to be on students' holistic development: academic, spiritual, physical, and social. The [Guide for Teaching & Activities](#) outlines the practical elements teachers will need to consider when approaching their planning of learning & extra-curricular activities.

5.1 Regular Instruction

For activity planning, staff must assess the risk to determine the activity's appropriateness:

- Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands?
- Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing?
- Can high touch surfaces be cleaned between use? (ex. Electronic devices, instruments, equipment, toys)

Refer to the following for information regarding:

- Scenario 1 & 2
- Scenario 2 Specific information
- Scenario 3

5.2 Early Learning

Early Learning programs offer opportunities for play-based experiential learning. As such, reasonable and prudent measures will be taken to mitigate risks to students while maintaining the integrity of programming.

- A hand wash station will be in every early learning classroom. Many of our preK/K classrooms already have a sink in their classroom and this can naturally become the hand wash station. For those classrooms that do not have a sink in the room, a portable hand wash station will be provided in the classroom.
- When children enter the classroom, they will be required to use hand sanitizer.
- Children will be required to wash or sanitize their hands before and after use at each classroom centre.
- Any soft items that can not be wiped down will be removed from the classroom.
- Rugs will be removed from the classroom.
- Children will each have their own case for pencils, crayons, felts, scissors.
- Custodial at each site will clean rooms and wipe down high used areas in between programs mid-day and after school.
- Please refer to the [Early Learning sharepoint link](#) for program information

5.3 Inclusive Supports

- In accordance with our Division foundation statement, all resident students and their parents/caregivers are welcomed into our schools. The Learning Team is committed to collaborating, identifying, applying, and monitoring practices enabling all students to reach their potential spiritually, socially, emotionally, physically, and academically within the program of studies alongside their peers.
- Needs are assessed on a case by case basis to determine levels of support required to safely bring students into the school environment and any specialized supports will be noted in the IPP.

- Contact your Inclusive Programming Consultant for support in developing and implementing programming to meet the inclusive needs of students
- In circumstances in which students who require specialized supports and services are not able to follow guidelines and require support and adaptation to public health measures, plans must be developed within and documented on the student's IPP.
- Transition meetings to support the successful re-entry of students requiring specialized supports and programming to meet their complex and diverse needs should be scheduled as needed.
- Please refer to the [Inclusive Education](#) site for details regarding inclusive programming.
- While fitness center use for instruction and student use is presently not allowed, for those students with Behavioural, Occupational or Physical Therapy needs, as identified by their IPP, supervised access will be allowed within the guidelines for safe use, and in accordance with their specific needs.
- While the use of microwaves by the general student population is presently not allowed, due to risk mitigation strategies, for those students for whom it is necessary that their Educational Assistant or other MDT staff require a microwave in support of their student's nutritional needs, this will be supported, following all pre- and post-use cleaning guidelines.
- Class groupings are frequently identified as a cohort for whom cohort integrity is the goal to minimize broad interaction and reduce heightened risk of transmission. It is understood that students with exceptional needs may be required to move fluidly in and out of established cohorts in the best interests of their unique programming requirements. These transitions will be identified by the inclusive learning team at the school and communicated accordingly.

5.4 Alternative Education

- Alternatives to traditional high school programming exist through Revelation Online, Cardinal Collins High School Academic Centres, Fresh Start Academic Centres, Summer School and Part-Time Alternative Self-Paced School (PASS).
- Students who require an alternate mode of delivery may explore these options, being offered in semestered and quarterly models.
- For more information regarding these programs, please see the [Student Support Services site](#).
- For information specific to [Summer School 2020](#), Summer Diploma Examinations, and the protocols in place to ensure safety for students, staff and parents please visit the link above.

5.5 Graduations

- At this time, the Division has not made a decision about traditional graduation ceremonies for the class of 2021. Schools may begin to plan celebrations for the class of 2021, however these plans MUST include a COVID-19 contingency plan.
- Graduation celebrations for the class of 2020 carried over from the spring are not confirmed to be approved at this time. Schools should contact the Deputy Superintendent for direction on these planned activities once school resumes.

5.6 Online options

- In consideration of those families for whom a near-normal return to school presents a significant impediment to success, the Division is offering a choice to engage in learning in an online format, from K-12. This choice is fluid in that it facilitates the opportunity to

shift between the in-person and online learning stances at four distinct transition points in the year, aligned with the transition dates for the High School quarter model.

- The online content for K-9 will focus on numeracy and literacy, while grades 1-9 will focus on the 4 core subjects in addition to Religion and Health. In high school, the full complement of course offerings is the objective, with enrollment and staffing considerations the potential limiting factors.

6. Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

The Department of Occupational Health and Safety oversees the compliance with OHS regulations and practices across the Division for the safety of all staff and students. In alignment with the directives of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the OHS team will articulate the implementation of safety guidelines in the operations of schools and sites. With respect to re-entry during this period of COVID-19, there are many heightened or enhanced measures which need to be implemented. OHS works closely with Facility Services in this regard.

For a comprehensive and detailed understanding of OHS guidelines, practices and considerations, please see [OHS Information](#).

6.1 A Safe Work Environment

The safety and well-being of all Division staff remains a top priority as we navigate the many uncertainties facing us as a result of the current pandemic. All employees are required to review the COVID-19 Hazard Assessment which includes the hazards of COVID-19 in our workplaces. The purpose of the COVID-19 Hazard Assessment is to inform all employees of the potential risks associated with their jobs and the steps taken to mitigate those risks.

Precautions are being taken to maintain a clean and safe environment. More frequent sanitization and cleaning protocols have been implemented. All ECSD employees are required to do their part by practicing good hygiene, such as regular hand washing, covering their mouth when they cough, and not touching their face.

Unsafe work must be reported immediately to supervisors and through [My Safety Portal](#). The [ECSD OHS](#) team will receive the report and supervisors will need to complete a timely investigation of the concern(s). Supervisors may request assistance from the Health and Safety Committee members. The [ECSD OHS](#) team will also become involved in the investigation. The resolution and any additional controls will be communicated to all stakeholders.

If an employee refuses work due to a potential unsafe work condition which cannot be resolved in a timely manner, they may be re-assigned duties first within their current location or in another location as determined by Human Resources/ OHS, or placed on leave if deemed necessary by Human Resources while the investigation is taking place. If a replacement employee is placed in the role, they must be informed of the work refusal and the controls put in place to mitigate the risk. This process is documented in the incident investigation report.

6.2 Hierarchy of Controls

[Hierarchy of Controls](#)

Throughout this guide, you will see controls based on the following hierarchy:

1. Elimination (physically remove the hazard)
2. Engineering Controls (isolate people from the hazard)
3. Administrative Controls (change the way people work)
4. Personal Protective Equipment (protect the worker with PPE)

Personal protective equipment is considered to be the “last line of defense” and is used in conjunction with the above controls (elimination, engineering, and administrative).

6.3 Assessing the risks

6.3.1 Site Hazard Assessment

- Each site must identify where there may be risks to employees and students. This could mean areas where proximity occurs, and contaminated surfaces exist.
- Principals and Managers are expected to complete the [accountability checklist](#) to assess their sites and update it, should conditions change.

6.3.2 Individual Hazard Assessment

- All ECSD staff are required to be familiar with hazards they may be exposed to and will, therefore, complete a [COVID-19 Hazard Assessment](#) prior to commencing work.

6.3.3 Site Safety Plan

- Each site is required to have a site safety plan where risk mitigation is documented for due diligence.
- This plan is to be posted on the safety bulletin board
- Site inspections are conducted quarterly with the site safety committee.

6.3.4 Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees and Representatives play an important role in identifying potential or existing hazards and making recommendations for improvement to occupational health and safety.

As such, we encourage Health and Safety Committees to:

- have a representative from each employee group
- encourage, address and relay any health and safety concern brought forward to the committee.
- designate a person who is responsible to liaise with ESCD OHS
- review workplace policies and programs to ensure they contain up-to-date information
- conduct an initial site assessment to ensure ECSD re-entry guidelines are implemented
- conduct quarterly school/site safety inspections
- hold quarterly safety committee meetings

6.4 Health and Wellness

Wellness and the well-being of students, staff, and school communities remains a priority. This includes a Division-wide and local responsibility to foster resiliency, build relationships, and stay connected. Schools, staff, and the school community are collectively responsible for fostering safe, caring, and welcoming environments that provide a continuum of supports and services for their students' and staff physical, social, and mental well-being.

6.4.1 Mental Health

Mental health is related to functioning in all aspects of life. Children and adults who are mentally healthy:

- Have a sense of contentment
- Can deal with stress and bounce back from difficulty
- Have a sense of purpose and meaning
- Can build and maintain healthy relationships
- Are flexible and can adapt to change
- Balance work and play, rest and activity
- Have self-confidence and self-esteem

There are many strategies to support mental health. We can choose healthy lifestyles, discover our strengths, connect with others, manage challenges, help others and enjoy life.

6.4.2 Student Mental Health

Edmonton Catholic Schools supports student mental health through a Comprehensive School Health Framework. This framework is an internationally recognized approach to supporting improvements in students' educational outcomes while addressing school health in a planned, integrated, and holistic way. This whole-school model builds capacity to incorporate well-being as an essential aspect of student achievement. Actions address four distinct, but inter-related components that comprise a comprehensive school health approach:

- Social and physical environment
- Teaching and learning
- Healthy school policy
- Partnerships and Services

When actions in all four components are harmonized, students are supported to realize their full potential as learners – and as healthy, productive members of society.

For all staff, evidence-based approaches in ensuring a holistic approach to mental health and wellness are essential. The following resources may be of support for teachers in this regard:

- [Inclusive Education - Mental Health SharePoint](#)
- Alberta Education: [Positive Behaviour Supports](#)
- Alberta Education: [Trauma Informed Practices](#)
- [Metis Nation of Alberta COVID-19 Mental Health Information](#)
- [Go To Educator Booster Sessions](#)

For students, it is essential that we first consider their mental health and their safe and caring reintegration to the school context before learning can be maximized. For students presenting with mental health concerns, it is essential to involve the school Student Services team, MDT staff, administration, and other Division staff with a student-wellness focus. It is also valuable to make available the following Mental Health/Psychosocial supports for students and staff:

- [ECSD.net - Mental Health Resources](#)
- Mental Health Helpline: Phone: 1-877-303-2642
 - This Toll-free helpline provides confidential and anonymous services, crisis intervention, information about mental health services and referrals to other agencies.
- French Mental Health Help Line: Phone: 1-800-567-9699
 - Same services as above
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
 - www.Kidshelphone.ca
 - Text CONNECT to 686868
- French Kids Help line:
 - www.jeunessejecoute.ca
- Health Link: Phone: 811
- Alberta Health Services
 - [Help in Tough Times](#)
 - [Healthy Together](#)
- The federal First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line at 1-855-242-3310
 - 24 hour availability, 7 days a week, or chat online at [Hope For Wellness](#)
- Alberta Education: [Social-Emotional Learning](#)
- [Working Together to Support Mental Health in Alberta Schools](#)
 - [Travailler ensemble pour soutenir la santementale dans les ecoles de l'Alberta](#)
- [Heart of Recovery](#)
 - [Le Coeur du retablissement](#)
- Alberta Health Services – [Information for Teachers](#)
- Alberta Community and Social Services – [Children's Mental Health](#)
- [MORE](#) (Mental Health Online Resources for Educators)

Other resources that may be helpful include:

- [Alberta Family Wellness](#) (Brain Story Certification)
- [Kids Have Stress Too](#)
- [The Incredible Years](#)
- [Mental Health Literacy](#) (for kids)
- [Cognitive Behavioural Intervention for Trauma in Schools](#)

6.4.3 Staff Mental Health

While everyone is responsible for their own wellness, we also recognize the important role our workplace plays in supporting each employee in their wellness journey. We want our employees to have access to wellness resources.

The Staff Wellness Committee is dedicated to bringing information that is relevant and supportive to staff well-being, including:

- the monthly newsletter from the Staff Wellness Committee called **CorWellness**
- SharePoint site: ecsd.net/wellness (blog posts, podcasts, book reviews, articles, recipes and inspirational stories)
- posters and brochures in high-traffic areas such as the staff safety bulletin board
- monthly themes and events held throughout the year

Staff may also access the [Employee and Family Assistance Program](#).

6.5 Student and Staff Health

6.5.1 Isolation Requirements (Elimination of Risk)

- You are legally required to self-quarantine for 14 days after international travel
- 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.
- You are legally required to isolate for a minimum of **10 days** if you have tested positive for COVID-19.
- The mandatory isolation period is 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer.

6.5.2 Stay at home when sick (Elimination of Risk)

- All students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 OR travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days OR were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate.
- Students and employees must stay home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases and their symptoms have resolved.
- Children and students must be supported by their school to learn at home if they are required to isolate due to illness or because they are in close contact of a case of COVID-19.
- Those unsure if they, or a student, should self-isolate must be directed to use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool for Albertans](#).
 - If still concerned, they can be advised to contact 8-1-1 HealthLink or the local public health unit to seek further input.
 - It is inappropriate to screen students or staff for symptoms or test for COVID-19. Such activities are reserved for health care professionals.
 - If a student or staff develops symptoms in or outside of the school that could be caused by COVID-19, the individual should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to the school.

6.5.3 Health Screening (Elimination of Risk)

- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school.
- School administrators will clearly communicate with parents and caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school. Information will be provided to school administrators prior to September.
- Staff must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school.
- School Division along with School Administrators/Site Supervisors will ensure staff are aware of their responsibility to use the [ECSD Daily Health Screening Questionnaire](#) to assess themselves daily prior to entering the school/site.
- Signs must be posted reminding persons not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.

6.5.4 Illness while onsite (Elimination Controls)

- Staff who become ill must notify their supervisor and immediately self-isolate.
- Staff with acute respiratory illness symptoms (eg. Cough, shortness of breath) upon arrival to the workplace or who develop symptoms during the workday must immediately self-isolate.
 - Symptomatic employees should follow hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and maintain at least 2 metres away from students, other employees, visitors and volunteers while leaving the workplace.
 - Employees who are ill with symptoms of COVID-19 or have been confirmed positive must remain at home while recovering and will receive direction from AHS regarding next steps, inclusive of the length of self-isolation as recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- Students exhibiting signs of illness must be moved to a designated quarantine area within the school/site.
- Parent/caregivers must be notified and advised to pick up their child immediately.
- Upon re-entry, student emergency contact information must be confirmed.
- Should a student become ill, a parent/caregiver or emergency contact must pick up the student as soon as is practicable.
- Contactless thermometers are available for staff to take the temperature of students who present with symptoms during the school day, however, are not required to verify temperatures on a daily basis for any student or staff.
- Staff supervising symptomatic students must:
 - Keep all other staff out of the designated quarantine area;
 - Provide the student with a face mask;
 - Wear recommended PPE
 - Use strict hand-washing techniques; and
 - Maintain physical distancing.
- Students with pre-existing respiratory concerns should not be made to wear a face mask if it inhibits their ability to properly breathe.
- The quarantine space must be thoroughly cleaned each day, and after each instance of occupancy by a symptomatic individual, using approved disinfecting protocols.
- Individuals entering this room must use proper hand hygiene prior to entering and upon leaving, as well as prior to the donning of a face mask

- After the student/staff exits the building, the quarantine space must be cleaned. All items the ill student/staff member touched must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible.
- If a quarantine room is not available, the student/staff presenting with symptoms must remain at least 2 metres physically distant from others.
- The staff/student should be encouraged to access COVID-19 testing by accessing the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool for Albertans](#)

6.5.5 Students 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.

6.5.6 Confirmed case of COVID-19

- The AHS guidance for confirmed cases of COVID-19, including school outbreaks, can be found [here](#).
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school or site, the administrator must notify both SOS contacts AND OHS.
- If there are cases of COVID-19 identified within school settings, the Zone Medical Officer of Health will work directly with the school division and school administration to provide follow-up recommendations and messaging for staff, parents/guardians, and students. Schools and sites must collaborate with Employee Health Services, OHS, School Operations and the Zone Medical Officer of Health during potential and confirmed cases.
- Alberta Health Services may request the school close in-person classes to allow a public health investigation to take place. The decision to send a cohort/class home or to close a school will be made by the local Medical Officer of Health. If this were to occur, the school will support students and staff to learn or work at home if they are required to self-isolate.

6.5.7 Student handwashing requirements (Administrative Control)

- Soap and water for 20 seconds are the preferred method for cleaning hands.
 - Before leaving home, on arrival at school, and before leaving school
 - After using the washroom
 - Before and after any transitions within the school setting (ex. To another classroom, indoor-outdoor transitions, etc.)
 - After sneezing or coughing
 - Before and after breaks and sporting activities
 - Before and after eating any food, including snacks
 - Before touching face (nose, hands, or mouth)
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty

- Regularly throughout the day
- If a sink is not available, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer

6.5.8 Staff handwashing requirements (Administrative Control)

- Each site must have adequate hand washing supplies and ensure they are available at all times (i.e. soap, clean towels, paper towels and hand sanitizer)
- Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the school entrance and other locations as appropriate
- Consideration must be given to the maximum number of staff and students required to wash their hands at peak times
- Hand-washing posters are to be posted in every washroom and near all sinks
- Soap and water for 20 seconds are the preferred method for cleaning hands.
 - Before leaving home, on arrival at school, and before leaving work
 - After using the toilet
 - Before and after any transitions within the school setting (ex. To another classroom, indoor-outdoor transitions, etc)
 - After sneezing or coughing
 - Before and after breaks and sporting activities
 - Before and after eating any food, including snacks
 - Before touching face (nose, hands, or mouth)
 - Before and after administering medications
 - Before and after food preparation, handling, or serving
 - Before and after assisting student with eating
 - After contact with body fluids (i.e. runny noses, saliva, vomit, blood)
 - Before and after cleaning tasks
 - When donning and doffing gloves
 - After handling garbage
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
 - Regularly throughout the day

6.6 Physical Distancing (Engineering Control)

6.6.1 Students

- Parents and caregivers must remain outside of the school to drop off their children.
- Avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes and remind students to keep their hands to themselves when possible.
- Consider teaching classes outside when practicable.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff. For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items. For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Organize students into smaller groups that stay together throughout the day as much as possible.
- Minimize the movement of students by moving staff as much as possible.

- Strive to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day.
- Consider different classroom configurations to maintain distance between students or different locations in the school (e.g., different classrooms, gym or library, outside).
- Discourage any food or drink sharing.
- Eliminate group food preparation activities.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch, and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.

6.6.2 Staff

- Establish and post occupancy limits for shared spaces such as lunchrooms and break rooms.
- Consider removing chairs or tables to ensure occupancy limits are not exceeded. If possible, provide additional areas for workers to have their breaks, including outside areas if available.
- Stagger start and end of shift times as well as break times for workers to prevent crowding when entering and leaving the workplace.
- Maintain 2 metre physical distancing whenever possible between workers and students.
- Consider the use of virtual meetings or other means to reduce the number of staff gathered while onsite.
- Modify work processes and practices to encourage physical distancing between staff and student, and other workers.
- Provide instructions to workers on methods for maintaining physical distance such as not greeting others by hugging or shaking hands.
- If workers need to meet in person, ensure there is a 2 metre space between each worker.
- Manage the flow of people in public spaces such as hallways and on stairs, consider the use of one-way systems.
- Assemblies and other school-wide events should not be held; find alternatives to gathering many people in one space.
- If staff need to travel between worksites, maintain physical distance in vehicles wherever possible.
- Consider separate vehicles if possible. Larger vehicles may be able to accommodate physical distancing by using a seat configuration that maximizes distance between people.

6.7 Barriers (Engineering Controls)

- Each school will receive free-standing plexiglass barriers for use in areas of the school where physical distancing is not possible. For example, the reception area, library, business manager counter. Partitions provide the following functions:
 1. Preventing the transmission of respiratory droplets
 2. Re-enforcing physical distancing requirements
 3. Reducing the reliance on masks
- It is essential that the partition has been designed, installed, and maintained such that it effectively prevents the co-mingling of droplets (and aerosols) produced by people on both sides of the partition. Because partitions are intercepting respiratory droplets, they must be treated as contaminated surfaces and should be cleaned regularly according to a set protocol. Partitions that

are not touched should be cleaned daily, whereas portions of the partition that are touched (e.g., hands passing through and contacting a soft plastic flap) should be cleaned twice daily, or more frequently if visibly soiled, as with other high-touch surfaces.

- Health Canada has created a list of disinfectants for use against COVID-19. However, many common disinfectants are known to damage acrylic or polycarbonate surfaces, causing them to crack or become cloudy. Proprietary cleaning solutions may not contain detergents or other ingredients sufficient to destroy SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. When in doubt, the surface should be cleaned with mild soap and water. If microfiber or other reusable cloths are used to wash or dry the partition, these should be considered contaminated and should be laundered before re-use. <https://ncceh.ca/content/blog/physical-barriers-covid-19-infection-prevention-and-control-commercial-settings>

6.8 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

6.8.1 AHS School Guideline recommendations for PPE

Within the context of K-12 education, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is primarily focused on non-medical masks. Practices such as physical distancing, hand washing, staying home when sick, and increased environmental cleaning continue to be priority public health measures. The guidance from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Minister of Education mandates the use of re-usable face masks for all staff and students, from grades 4-12. It remains our strong recommendation that students younger than grade 4 also wear face masks, where possible.

1. Staff will be required to wear additional PPE in certain situations. These will include:
 - If a student becomes unwell with symptoms of COVID-19 while at school and needs direct personal care until they can return home.
 - A fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained.
 - If contact with the child or young person is necessary, then disposable gloves, a disposable apron and a fluid-resistant surgical face mask should be worn by the supervising adult.
 - Option to wear a face shield if a risk assessment of the situation determines that there is a risk of splashing to the eyes, for example from coughing, spitting, or vomiting, then a face shield should also be worn.
2. Any employee who supports an unmasked student within the physical distancing limit for feeding, toileting, supporting etc. is to wear a 3-ply mask and a face shield.

6.8.2 Masks and face shields

Staff

- As a minimum standard, staff will be provided with four cloth re-usable face masks, the usage of which is mandated by the Chief Medical Officer. A protective face shield will also be supplied to all staff.
- All staff are expected to wear a mask where physical distancing of 2m is not consistently possible. Exceptions may be considered when working with individuals with a hearing impairment or when working in a context that supports 2m physical distancing or other protective measures are in place. As per Alberta Health Services (AHS) guidelines, a face shield does not replace a face mask, but may be used as an additional measure in conjunction with a face mask.
- A mask that is dirty, damaged in any way, has gaps or doesn't fit well must not be used.
- If additional PPE such as gloves, aprons, safety glasses, goggles is required, it will be provided by the Division.

Students

- All students K-12 will be provided two reusable masks.
- All students K-12 will be required to wear a face mask while on ETS or yellow bus.
- Students in grades 4-12 will be required to wear masks in all common areas, hallways, and in classroom contexts in which physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Students in grades 100 Voices to 3 are strongly encouraged to wear a face mask, if they are physically, developmentally and psychologically able to.
- Should a student forget their mask, a disposable one will be provided to them.
- Schools will have masks available for students to use if they become ill during the day and are awaiting pick-up, or on the occasion that they forget or damage theirs.

6.9 Safety

6.9.1 Training

- The Division will utilize its health and safety training platform to provide training to all staff prior to commencing work.
- The [COVID-19 SharePoint site](#) will be a source of information relating to COVID-19.
- All ECSD staff are required to complete COVID-19 training. This training will examine health and safety issues related to COVID-19. Topics will include the following:
 - how to protect yourself
 - how to protect others
 - training on proper handwashing
 - symptoms of COVID-19
 - reporting absences.
- Staff will receive training on how to care for PPE, how to wear and remove PPE, as well as how to properly dispose of used PPE.

6.10 Work Refusal

6.10.1 Understanding the right to refuse unsafe work

Please review the three basic rights afforded to all employees in Alberta. This includes the right to refuse work. Please pay specific attention to the information, procedures and criteria that surround

this right.

Three rights afforded to all workers in Alberta include:

- **The Right to Know**
 - Being provided knowledge about the hazards that you might be exposed to in your workplace is your right. Refer to your Position Hazard Assessment.
- **The Right to Participate**
 - Participation into all aspects of your workplace, relative to Health and Safety, is key. All workers have a voice through the Joint Worksite Health and Safety Committee.
- **The Right to Refuse**
 - The right to refuse work is a right that all workers have if they believe on reasonable grounds, that there is an unsafe condition at the work site or that the work itself compromises their health and safety or to the health and safety of another worker or another person. Once an employee has refused to perform work that they perceive as unsafe, they are required to notify their supervisor immediately in hopes of having the situation rectified without delay. Should a reasonable resolution not be achievable or mutually agreed upon, the employee is required to continue to refuse the work and formally report a Work Refusal immediately via My Safety Portal - Refusing Unsafe Work.

6.10.2 What to do if an employee refuses to work

1. Listen to the employee's concern about unsafe work
2. Remind the employee of the measures that the Division and you as a leader are putting in place to mitigate the risk of exposure:
 - a. Enhanced and more frequent cleaning of surfaces
 - b. Disinfection of surfaces if ECSD becomes aware of higher risk of exposure
 - c. Promotion and support of physical distancing
 - d. Limiting the number of people congregating at the school or worksite
 - e. Ensuring that individuals/groups are kept separate from each other
3. If the employee still has concerns, contact OHS for further support

7. Facility Services

Facility Services oversees many aspects of Division operations, working in close alignment with OHS to ensure the safety of our schools and sites. In addition, a key aspect of the work of Facility Services in relation to COVID-19 protocols is custodial in nature. As a fundamental risk mitigation strategy, enhanced cleaning protocols will be necessary to help keep students and staff as safe as is practicably possible while at schools/sites.

7.1 Cleaning protocols

We are developing a COVID-19 cleaning standard for all schools and sites in alignment with provincial directives around cleaning and disinfecting. These increased measures include:

- Purchasing provincially recommended COVID-19 cleaning supplies
- Additional training for custodial staff
- Removing any soft furnishings and area rugs from classrooms and common areas that cannot be cleaned to provincial standards
- Frequently cleaning high-touch surfaces such as water fountains or door handles
- More frequent cleaning and disinfecting throughout the school, with specific attention to washrooms, high traffic areas and classrooms.
- Our Division is procuring all COVID-19 cleaning and safety items on behalf of our schools and sites. This will help ensure that all schools use products that adhere to health standards and meet requirements to mitigate the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19. It also ensures that all schools have equitable access to these supplies.

7.1.1 Custodial

- The school will be cleaned thoroughly every evening after the school is closed.
- High touch points will be cleaned multiple times during the day.
- Supplies (paper towels, soap, and spray bottles) will be checked daily when the area is unoccupied.
- If supplies are low, contact the custodian or school administration.
- Custodial Staff must be made aware if the quarantine area has been occupied. Cleaning is required prior to next use.

7.1.2 Learning spaces

- Classroom Supervision
 - Teachers must develop routines for students to clean their desk and chair surfaces as much as possible.
- Inclusive Programming
 - Staff working with inclusive students must be prepared to clean high-touch areas through the day as needed.
 - Cleaning materials such as disinfectant sprays and paper towels/microfibre cloths will be provided.
- Toys and Sports Equipment
 - Selected items must be easily cleaned. No stuffed toys.
 - No toys from home will be allowed.

7.1.3 Work spaces

- Keyboards – Electronic Devices – Interactive Displays
 - Phones, chromebooks, computers, and other frequently touched electronics like tablets, remotes, keyboards, mice, earbuds, and other devices must be cleaned and disinfected regularly. When cleaning devices, please consider the following:
 - First, remove visible dirt, grease, etc.

- Check the manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning and disinfecting requirements.
 - Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.
 - Consider using plastic covers or screen protectors to make cleaning and disinfection easier.
 - Turn off any electronics and unplug all connections before cleaning (remove batteries from anything with a removable battery).
 - For screens, use a soft cloth and do not press hard.
 - Do not use alcohol-based sanitizers or disinfectants on keyboards, phones, monitors, or touch screens.
 - Use a wetted paper towel with a small amount of soap to clean a touch screen.
 - Do not clean inside any ports or openings.
- Shared Printers
 - When possible, send all print jobs or copying jobs from the computer to minimize copier contact.
 - Every user must perform hand-washing prior to using the machine or apply ample hand sanitizer.

8. School and Site Environment

This section of the re-entry handbook relates to the protocols within schools and sites that deal with day to day operations outside of teaching and learning. These include access to schools and sites by parents/guests, cohorting, arrival protocols, food and nutrition services, paper handling, playgrounds, fire drills and lockdowns, and quarantine areas. As part of risk mitigation, reducing the number of non-essential people entering the building throughout the day helps maintain cohort integrity, thereby limiting unnecessary potential exposure to COVID-19. These processes require clear communication to all stakeholders, and consistent application. Schools and sites will be required to communicate these expectations through a variety of means, including school newsletters, websites, and highly visible signage within the buildings. Specific guidelines should be referenced in the [Guide to School and Site Environment](#).

9. Human Resource Services

Human Resource Services (HR) addresses a wide range of considerations related to the staff of ECSD, representative of four main employee groups: ATA, AUPE, OOS and UNIFOR. The work of HR is guided by the Collective Agreements or Terms and Conditions of Employment with each employee group, and any questions related to matters of employment should be directed to the appropriate HR representative. This includes such questions as benefits, job-protected leaves, work refusals, employee health, recall from temporary layoff, and other questions that re-entry amidst COVID-19 raises among our staff. For specifics on HR matters, please visit [Human Resource Services](#)

Re-entry and the approach directed by Alberta Education will involve staffing implications for support staff and out-of-scope staff, particularly for those who have been affected by laid off. These implications will be considered and addressed by HR depending on the method of re-entry.

If any form of telework or telecommuting is required, employees and supervisors must review and follow the current [Telecommuting Guidelines](#).

Employee Health Services in collaboration with Occupational Health and Safety and Employee Relations will support staff needing to access isolation leave or sick leave or any accommodation associated with COVID-19. Please review the [COVID-19 EHS Isolation and Illness Guidelines](#) for additional information.

Please be sure to visit our OHS and HR COVID-19 website regularly, for updated information.

9.1 Specific Staff-Related questions

Please reference this section for general questions related to staff expectations related to COVID-19 staffing matters. If the particular instance in which a staff member finds themselves is not identified below, please contact HR for further clarification.

9.1.1 Daily Health-Screening

All staff are expected to assess themselves each day using the [ECSD Daily Health Screening Questionnaire](#) for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease before arriving to work.

9.1.2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Other Protection

At each ECSD site, masks, gloves, sanitizer, face shields, wipes, and cleaning products will be available for staff. Plexi-glass shields will also be provided for reception areas. Each site will also receive floor decals and posters to build awareness and encourage prevention of COVID-19 illness.

If anyone feels they need different personal protective equipment, they are encouraged to discuss their needs with their supervisor.

9.1.3 Illness while onsite

Staff who become ill must immediately begin isolation at home. Symptomatic employees should follow hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and maintain at least 2 metres away from other employees, volunteers and visitors while leaving our workplace. All items touched/used by the staff member must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the staff member has left. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed from the classroom or other workspace and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 10 days.

9.1.4 Staff with Pre-Existing Conditions

Staff who have pre-existing health issues (e.g. allergies or asthma) should closely monitor their symptoms. If symptoms change or increase, the staff member should go home and use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool for Albertans](#). ECSD [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) should be contacted before returning to work. Another consideration for those with pre-existing health issues and who are exhibiting COVID-like symptoms is to be tested at least once in order to establish a baseline.

9.2 Employee Absences Related to COVID-19

Employees legally required to isolate as per [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#) due to COVID-19, will be able to access job protected leave. Employees may be required to provide medical documentation to ECSD [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - ehs@ecsd.net](#).

9.2.1 Employees tested positive for COVID-19 or have COVID-19 Symptoms

Employees who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate and are required to follow [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). Employees must contact their supervisor to inform them of their absence and enter their absence in [Absence Management](#). You may contact [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) for additional supports or they, in turn, may need to contact you before you can return to work.

Employees who have or develop symptoms of COVID-19 unrelated to a pre-existing health condition must isolate and may not enter the workplace. Should symptoms develop throughout the day at the workplace, employees must isolate and leave the workplace as soon as practicable. *Refer to the above [Illness while onsite](#) section.*

9.2.2 Employees Returning from International Travel

All employees who choose to travel internationally while travel restrictions are in place need to carefully observe and consider Canadian and Albertan travel advisories. If they still proceed to travel in the face of any advisories, they will need to disclose and isolate following travel for the Alberta Health Services (AHS)-mandated number of days and as outlined in the Canadian [Quarantine Act](#). **It is important to note that the required isolation period will not be with pay.** Employees will need to use additional vacation or leave without pay to cover the time needed in isolation in order to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19 to others as this is a matter of public health. [Travel advisories](#) can be found here.

9.2.3 Employees in Close Contact* with an Individual with COVID-19, COVID-19 Symptoms, or Returning from International Travel

Employees who are in close contact* with an individual or family member who tests positive for COVID-19 are required to isolate as per [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). Employees must contact their supervisor to inform them of their absence and enter their absence in [Absence Management](#). You may contact [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) for additional supports or they, in turn, may need to contact you before you can return to work.

Employees in close contact* with a person with COVID-19 symptoms who has not tested positive may enter the workplace if this meets [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). If the individual or family member

subsequently tests positive for COVID-19, the employee would then be required to isolate as per [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). Employees must contact their supervisor to inform them of their absence and enter their absence in [Absence Management](#). You may contact [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) for additional supports or they, in turn, may need to contact you before you can return to work.

Employees in close contact* with an individual or family member who has recently returned from travel outside Canada may enter the workplace if this meets [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). If the individual or family member subsequently tests positive for COVID-19, the employee would then be required to isolate as per [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). Employees must contact their supervisor to inform them of their absence and enter their absence in [Absence Management](#). You may contact [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) for additional supports or they, in turn, may need to contact you before you can return to work.

**Close Contact is defined as provides care, lives with or has close physical contact without appropriate use of PPE, or comes into direct contact with infectious body fluids*

9.2.4 Employees Entering or Returning to the Workplace Following an Absence Related to COVID-19

Employees who have fully recovered from COVID-19, who wish to re-enter the workplace may be requested to provide medical documentation to [Employee Health Services \(EHS\)](#), [\(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) indicating they are fit to return and in compliance with [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). Staff cannot return to the workplace without prior approval by [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#)

Employees who have tested negative for COVID-19, have had no known exposure to COVID-19, whose symptoms have resolved and who have completed the mandatory isolation period may re-enter the workplace.

Employees who have tested negative for COVID-19, have had no known exposure to COVID-19, who wish to re-enter the workplace before symptoms resolve may be requested to provide medical documentation to [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) indicating they are fit to return and in compliance with current [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). The employee may not enter the workplace without prior approval by [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#)

Employees who have tested negative for COVID-19, have had no known exposure to COVID-19, whose symptoms have resolved, and who wish to re-enter the workplace within the recommended (but not legally required) isolation period may be requested to provide medical documentation to [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) indicating they are fit to return and in compliance with current [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). The employee may NOT enter the workplace without prior approval by [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#).

Employees with a pre-existing health condition which exhibits similar symptoms to COVID-19 (e.g. cough, fever sore throat), and wish to be at work may be requested to provide medical documentation to [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) indicating their symptoms are unrelated to COVID-19 and are in compliance with current [Alberta Isolation Requirements](#). The employee may not enter the workplace without prior approval by The employee may NOT enter the workplace without prior approval by [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#).

9.3 Employee with Family Care or Personal Responsibilities Related to COVID-19

Temporary job protected leave for employees with very specific circumstances can be considered. Employees with significant family care or personal responsibilities related to COVID-19, and not covered in one of the scenarios, who are unable to enter the workplace due to conflicting responsibilities, need to discuss their circumstances with their supervisor. The Employee may be asked questions or asked for proof of their circumstances in order to determine what leave, if any, can be accessed. If a leave of absence is approved, it would be considered a job-protected leave for a defined period of time, limited to their existing employment contract end date. Collective Agreements or Terms of Conditions of Employment will be considered in addition to the options covered under Alberta Employment standards:

Job-protected leave for Albertans impacted by COVID-19

- [COVID-19 leave](#) allows employees to take 14 days of job-protected leave if they are required to self-isolate.
- Extended [personal and family responsibility leave](#) allows employees who are caring for a child affected by school or daycare closures or a family member who is required to self-isolate to take job-protected leave.
- Employees who are impacted by COVID-19 may qualify for other available [job-protected leaves](#).

9.4 Employees Unable to Work due to Disabilities Related to COVID-19

To help support those at risk due to underlying medical conditions or those with a compromised immune system, the Division will work with employees to come up with a plan to best support them. [Employee Health Services \(EHS\) - \(ehs@ecsd.net\)](#) will need to be involved and sufficient medical information will be required. [Employee Health Services \(EHS\)](#) will review the medical information and collaborate with the employee's physician and/or specialist to determine the plan.

If no reasonable accommodation plan can be determined in consideration of valid medical restrictions and work responsibilities, employees may proceed on to a medical leave with sufficient medical information. They will then need to apply for [Extended Disability Benefits \(EDB\)](#) with our insurance provider, [ASEBP](#).

9.5 Replacement Staff

ECSD values and appreciates our teacher and support replacement staff very much. As we return to work during this time, replacement staff are valued and needed more than ever. They will continue to be assigned as needed unless Alberta Health Services advises otherwise.

In order to ensure all schools have access to a sufficient number of replacement staff, HR reserves the right to best determine how replacement staff will be assigned. Substitutes are required to review the COVID-19 Re-Entry Handbook and sign off the COVID-19 Hazard Assessment for the position in which they will work.

Records must be kept for replacement staff and the location, assignment, dates and times that they are working. ECSD's Frontline (AESOP) Absence Management System provides options for reports that can assist schools in this. Schools must continue to have substitutes sign in at the beginning of their day and indicate their assignment, including who they are replacing. Schools will need to ensure, in all cases, that they clearly document the classes the substitute has been in for this absence entry.

Substitutes are required to perform daily screening before entering an ECSD worksite. If they exhibit symptoms, they are to mark themselves unavailable on Absence Management until they are cleared to return to work by Employee Health (use link from above).

Please note: Substitutes will be provided with their own PPE and may choose to wear their own personal masks if they wish.

9.6 Responding to Positive COVID-19 cases

ECSD will take direction from Alberta Health Services (AHS) and will follow any recommendations AHS makes with respect to contact tracing, communication with employees, and disinfecting the site following a positive COVID-19 case. When an employee tests positive for COVID-19, AHS will reach out to all persons identified as "close contacts". This identification process is done through assessment with the employee, getting an understanding of the nature of the work environment and any close contact interactions. This assessment by AHS will determine if any specific co-workers are considered to be a close contact. If self-isolation and/or testing for any employees is needed, AHS will contact and direct them accordingly. If the employee was present at an ECSD site while they were presenting symptoms, AHS will send a notification letter to the site recommending next steps and reminding employees to monitor themselves for any symptoms.

A COVID-19 case will not automatically lead to school closure. It could be that only the group of students and staff who came in close contact will be required to stay home for 14 days. If it is determined necessary by AHS that a worksite must be closed on a temporary basis, ECSD will take on a series of steps. Based on current information about disinfecting, site closure during active disinfection is not necessary; however, specific spaces within a site may require temporary short-term closure for disinfecting procedures to be conducted.

9.7 Resources When Feeling Anxious

The coronavirus (COVID-19) has significantly impacted the way we work and live. Here are some resources that will support you during this time.

- Homewood Health is ready to support ECSD employees and their dependents in these complex times and can be reached at 1-800-663-1142 (English) or 1-866-398-9505 (French) and at [HOMEWEB.CA](https://www.homeweb.ca)
- Visit the [ASEBP](https://www.asebp.ca) website for more links to Homewood Health's COVID-19 information.
- AHS has launched a new text-based service to give Albertans encouragement and ease feelings of stress or anxiety as they respond to recent challenges. Albertans can text **COVID19Hope to 393939**. In response, they will receive daily text messages on how to focus on healthy thinking or actions to help them manage their mood.
- You can also find helpful resources in our [ECSD Staff Wellness website](#).

9.8 Changing Learning Environments

ECSD will monitor the number of students who regularly attend school. If a significant number of students do not attend school in person, ECSD will try to support those students in an online environment. HR will work closely with schools and other Departments to mitigate impacts on the student learning when moving staff from in-person learning to an online learning environment. It will not be the expectation that staff in Scenario 1 will be expected to deliver instruction in dual platforms to students choosing to remain in a remote learning stance.

9.9 Employees Reporting to Multiple Sites

Some ECSD employees, including Emotional Behaviour Specialists, Family School Liaison Workers, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Psychologists, Licensed Practical Nurses, , Technology, Therapeutic Assistants, Custodians and Trades/Maintenance staff, work in multiple sites throughout the course of their day or week. Staff who work in proximity with students and are unable to maintain physical distancing will be provided with necessary PPE including a face shield. All other mobile employees are encouraged to wear masks when they enter a school and follow the school protocols.

10. Student Transportation

The transportation of students presents significant challenges when endeavoring to comply with physical distancing expectations. These include sufficient vehicles, drivers, appropriate cleaning and physical distancing practices, among others. Our transportation department is working closely with our contracted service providers in conjunction with OHS to establish the best possible context within which our students may be safely transported to and from schools. For more specific information and guidance please see [Transportation Services](#).

10.1 Bussing in Scenario 1

- Parents and children/students should not be in the pick-up area or enter the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Masks are mandatory for all students (K to Grade 12) on yellow buses. This does not include pre-kindergarten/100 Voices students; however the Division does recommend the use of masks for pre-kindergarten/100 Voices students as physical distancing is not always possible on yellow buses. Exemptions also apply to students in Inclusive Education programs who are not capable of putting on and using a mask properly or students with severe sensory issues that make mask wearing not feasible. ECSD staff will collaborate with parents to determine if a student with special needs is capable of wearing a mask properly. Bus drivers will have a limited supply of masks for students who do not have a mask with them.
- The driver will be provided with a protective zone, which may include:
 - 2 metre physical distance;
 - non-medical mask

- 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 having COVID-19. Students who live in the same household should be seated together.
- Schools should develop procedures for student loading, unloading, and transfers that support physical distancing of 2 metres between all persons (except household members), when possible and may include:
 - Children/students start loading from the back seats to the front of the bus
 - Children/students start unloading from the front seats to the back of the bus
 - Where feasible, limit the number of students per bench unless from the same household
 - Students from the same household may share seats
 - Students start unloading from the front seats to the back of the bus
- If a child becomes symptomatic during the bus trip, the driver will inform school staff upon arrival at the school so that appropriate arrangements can be made to pick up the child/student.
- All contracted carriers will be implementing enhanced cleaning procedures. Cleaning of high touch surfaces will be done before and after every run. Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces includes wipe down the entry doors, wipe railing, wipe seat tops-backs-fronts-seats, and wipe wall under windows. Drivers' protocol includes wipe steering wheel, hazard and indicator arm, dash, buttons, seat belt buckles, and radio.

For students selecting the online (at-home) learning stance:

To simplify this process for families, your child's stop and name will not be cancelled or removed from the system. This means that:

- your child's stop and name will remain in place;
- it will not be necessary to re-apply for transportation should you resume in-person learning at school;
- there will not be any time delay. Students can start to use their stop immediately should your child resume in-person learning at school;
- your child's stop and name will remain in place;
- it will not be necessary to re-apply for transportation should you resume in-person learning at school;
- there will not be any time delay. Students can start to use their stop immediately should your child resume in-person learning at school;

Since cancellations will not be processed, this also allows transportation resources to focus on the new students and applications so that stops are added as quickly as possible to accommodate families who have submitted late or new applications.

The weekly Swift message will continue to be sent every Friday advising parents that their route may have changed as new families need this information. Parents should disregard these messages if they have already sent a cancellation – it is not necessary to send another email or to call Transportation Services.

Summary

The safety of the students and staff in Edmonton Catholic Schools is our first priority. This handbook provides a comprehensive consideration of the expectations for operations and the principles for decision making which will help guide school and site leaders in the re-entry process amidst COVID-19. These are informed by the guidance of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and Alberta Education, in providing a framework for Re-Entry to School for the 2020-21 school year. This is a dynamic handbook, which will be updated as guidance changes, to provide the most current reference for the Edmonton Catholic School Division's operations.



Re-Entry Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for Parents

August 10, 2020 FAQ

1. When will staff and students need to wear face masks?

All staff are expected to wear a mask where physical distancing of 2m is not consistently possible. Exceptions may be considered when working with individuals with a hearing impairment or when working in a context that supports 2m physical distancing or other protective measures are in place. As per Alberta Health Services (AHS) guidelines, a face shield does not replace a face mask, but may be used as an additional measure in conjunction with a face mask.

All students, K-12, riding on ETS or Yellow bus must wear a face mask. Students in grades 4-12 must wear face masks whenever physical distancing of 2m is not possible. This will include:

- In hallways and common areas,
- In classroom contexts in which there is a high degree of close interaction, food preparation (Home Economics) or other physical safety conditions cannot be appropriately maintained.

Students in grades 100 Voices to 3 are strongly encouraged to wear a face mask, if they are physically, developmentally and psychologically able to. Parents of students with unique sensory challenges should meet with school administration to discuss exemptions and alternative strategies to this mandate.

2. How do I select the method of educational delivery I wish for my child to have?

(in-person or at-home).

SWIFT messages have been emailed to parents outlining this process within PowerSchool. Please check there for detailed descriptions of the process to be completed for each child. For appropriate staffing and planning purposes, we ask that parents make that determination by Friday, August 14.

a. **Why can only one parent make the choice?**

- i. There are limits within PowerSchool whereby once a parent entry is made to student information, that is what remains. If there are custodial issues, those must be resolved outside of the school and a choice in the best interests of the child ultimately determined and communicated to the school.

b. **What if we change our mind before school starts? How do we make the change?**

- i. Please provide a written request (email is fine) to your principal, indicating that you wish to change your stance and that all parents/guardians agree with this change. It would be preferable if all parents/guardians were part of that communication. From there, the principal will coordinate the change with Division staff responsible for PowerSchool data entry. We are already experiencing many parents wanting to go from an online setting to the in-person school setting; please understand that there are significant staffing challenges with last minute changes.

3. **Why are lockers not being allowed? What about the cubbies in elementary classes?**

Hallway lockers are typically used at the Junior and Senior High grades, and occasionally in upper elementary as well. The use of these lockers presents a significant issue with respect to maintaining appropriate physical distance between students, in addition to presenting challenges to cohort integrity. Further, they present a significant increase in high touch surface area for custodians to clean daily, which prevents them from appropriately cleaning other areas effectively.

- In High School, the quarterly model only sees students attending a maximum of 2 classes per day, and so they can reasonably carry their minimal belongings with them.
- In Junior High, students will spend as much time as possible in their homeroom class, with teachers moving more than students, and therefore can maintain their personal belongings within the classroom. (options and PE will be the primary student movement times at this grade level).

- In Elementary, most classes have a vestibule, coat-hook or cubby area. If these exist within their classroom cohort, there is little additional risk of cross-contamination by the use of these areas, and so they will continue to be available for use for the storage of personal belongings at the discretion of the school administration.

Students will be reminded that only necessary items be brought to school.

As with all guidance, this will be monitored and potentially adjusted as the need arises, including once the colder months are upon us.

4. What are the expectations around parents dropping off or picking up their children outside the school?

Parents are welcome to bring their child to the assigned door of the school, and to meet them outside the same door at the end of the school day. The mention within our re-entry plan indicating that parents are to remain in their vehicles was only intended to prevent congregation of adults against the physical distancing requirements; however, the safety of the students is paramount, and as long as parents escort their children to the door of the school to which they are assigned, and maintain appropriate physical distancing, this is most certainly supported.

5. Is Kindergarten mandatory?

According to Alberta Education, Kindergarten is not mandatory. Therefore, should a parent choose to keep their child at home and not participate in online learning choices at this level, it will not impact their child's opportunity for grade 1 enrolment the following year.

6. Why is the Division not allowing my child to participate in extra-curricular opportunities if we choose online learning as our method of educational delivery?

The choice to provide online options was made in direct response to the concerns parents have with respect to the health and safety of their child as a result of COVID-19 or the heightened risks to vulnerable family members within the home. The primary

purpose of our Division is the education of our students. While we value what the benefits of extra-curricular involvements bring to a student's overall school experience, it is our stance that it is contradictory to select an online learning format for safety reasons, but to expect that those safety reasons are not present in extra-curricular offerings. So, to maintain our priority focus on learning, and to mitigate safety risks, ECSD has determined that participation in extra-curricular activities will only be supported for students choosing in-person learning, and at that, only insofar as the guidance from the Chief Medical Officer allows these activities to occur. At present, interscholastic athletics are on hold until further notice. Similarly, band offerings have restrictions that prevent their full complement of instrument sections, and so are also limited at this time. As a result, should interscholastic athletics and/or band be reinstated, only students enrolled for in-person schooling will be able to participate.

7. Will French Immersion and other Language programs be offered online?

French Immersion programming is planned to occur within the online school option. It may be limited in scope to focus on French Language Arts initially. Staffing of this offering will be instrumental in determining the extent to which this programming may occur. The same staffing limitations exist for our Spanish, Ukrainian, Cree and Polish bilingual programs of choice. While it is the goal of the Division to offer these important programs, the extent to which they may be offered is still undetermined at this time. Registration choices reflecting a desire for language programming in the online stance will guide this planning.

8. Will Online School in the fall look different than this past spring's online instruction?

Yes. This past spring, we engaged in emergency remote instruction. Teachers were required to deliver approximately 10-15% of the mandated curriculum, even though about 1/3 of the curriculum remained in the year. In elementary school, only Mathematics and Language Arts were required by Alberta Education. Elementary students were to have 5 hours of instruction per week.

In choosing authentic online instruction for the fall, students will be instructed in the entire program of studies in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. We will also offer Religion and Health. The school day will be structured much like a regular school day, with scheduled meeting times with teachers and scheduled breaks. The expectation is that students will engage in online learning every day. This fall's online experience will mirror the school experience, as much as is practicable.

To create common learnings with both the online experience and the school experience, a scope and sequence is being developed for all teachers across the Division that will be followed, to ensure program continuity and ease the transitions of students from online learning back to the community school classroom. The scope and sequence will include

critical learner outcomes and common timelines for key curriculum concepts in the core subjects across the Division.

9. What are the technical requirements of online learning?

Students require reliable internet service and a device. A desktop computer, laptop, or Chromebook with camera and microphone is required to access digital classrooms and word processing applications. Families making this choice are asked to acquire their own technology to support online learning.

10. Will my child be writing the Alberta Government Provincial Achievement Exams?

Yes. Whether or not your child is in the community school or the online school, our Division will be participating in the Provincial Achievement Exams at the grade 6 and 9 levels. Students taking Diploma level courses will be expected to write their Diploma Examination, worth 30% of their final grade, whether taking the course in-person or online. All Diploma exams will be available to be written at the end of each quarter.

11. My child has Special Needs. Will those be accommodated in the online school?

The Online Learning experience will mirror the Community School experience as much as is reasonable and practicable. Students with Special Needs will receive supports and services in the same process as within a Community School. When registering your child for the Online Learning Program, it will be important to discuss your child's needs and Special Education code (if applicable) with the Community School Administration. The Online Learning Admin team will review your child's IPP and plan for your child's program.

12. My child has an Individual Program Plan. What will that look like in the online school?

Your child's teacher will review your child's previous individual program plan (IPP) and begin development of the new IPP in collaboration with parents. The IPP will be developed in ECSD's new online IPP through PowerSchool. Parents will be able to login to PowerSchool and view their child's IPP throughout the school year. Supports and services required for your child's individualized program will be provided online through Microsoft TEAMS. Staff on your child's learning team will support your child individually, in small groups, or during whole group instruction through online resources and online therapy and intervention as indicated in your child's IPP. Questions regarding the supports and services should be directed to your child's teacher.

13. What will be the expectation of parents in the online school? Will I need to teach my child?

While we do not expect that parents are the primary teacher, successful online learning will depend upon a positive cooperative relationship between parents and teachers. Being able to fully participate in online activities and complete work will depend upon your child's level of independence. Parents may assist their child in setting a regular routine, supervising work, and assisting their child in accessing their online classroom and assignments. Authentic assessment will also rely on parents supporting their child's independent work. Online teaching and learning will take place within the normal confines of a regular school day, with the expectation that the student engage during the times posted.

14. What if we need to make a switch between at-home and in-person learning?

To minimize disruptions in classrooms, there will be four points in the year during which you can choose at-home or in-person learning: September, November, January, and April. Three weeks before the next quarter, you will indicate your intention to switch on PowerSchool. These dates can be found on the parent re-entry plan which is posted on our Division website.

With a scope and sequence developed by the Division, based on Alberta Education Program of Studies, all teachers will be following the same key learnings at a similar time throughout the year. This will make the learning transitions more natural for your child's learning and support the teacher with their planning.

15. Will we see the teacher during online learning? Will my child need to be on camera?

In ECSD, we use Microsoft Teams as our digital meeting tool. It will be an expectation that both students and teachers are on camera to facilitate the best possible instruction. Meeting times will be clearly communicated to families so a regular schedule can be maintained.

16. Will online school be the same hours as in-person school?

As courses will be limited to core subjects (Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts), Religion, and Health, online school will be approximately 2/3 of a regular school day. There will be time scheduled online with the teacher and time for independent work. During independent work, your child's teacher may not be immediately available for questions. A specific schedule will be communicated prior to the start of school. The availability of the teacher for instruction will typically be during the regular school operational hours.

17. What about subjects other than core subjects in online learning?

In grades K-6, subjects such as Art will be integrated within core areas. Suggestions will be provided for Physical Education. Language offerings will be dependent upon staffing.

18. My child is registered in an academy. Can they participate in academy activities in-person but do online school?

In order to participate in academies, students must attend in-person instruction at their home school.

19. Will 100 Voices be offered online?

100 Voices will only be offered in-person, due to the nature of its programming.

20. What will kindergarten look like online?

Online kindergarten will focus on experiential activities in numeracy and literacy. Other elements of the program will not be available online.

21. Grouping (cohorting) of students.

The grouping of students into homeroom or cohort groupings remains the responsibility of the school principal.

References

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