



SCHOOL RE-ENTRY PLAN 2021-2022

Fort McMurray Public School Division

Doing What's Best for Kids!

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Please Note: The Fort McMurray Public School Division will be updating this document regularly for its students, staff and faculty.

Originally compiled on August 24, 2021



Background Summary

According to the Government of Alberta, the [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#) is based on the transition to the recovery phase reflecting a corresponding shift from mandatory health measures to recommend health best practices.

The summary of measures were released on August 13, 2021, as described in the following:

With current availability and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine, Alberta is shifting from an emergency response for the COVID-19 pandemic to the public health management we use for other viruses, such as influenza, including in schools. Shifting resources used to respond to COVID-19 in Alberta will allow us to respond to other illnesses as we approach fall and winter.

Students in Alberta will return to school for fall 2021, with in-person learning for the majority of students. In order to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, schools will incorporate recommendations that support good public health practices into their normal operations for the 2021-2022 school year.

This includes supporting all staff and eligible students who choose to get vaccinated for COVID-19 and influenza, implementing environmental measures such as maintaining ventilation systems and routine cleaning standards, promoting hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and staying home when sick. Schools will not be expected to follow all the previous measures used during the 2020-2021 school year.

Source: Government of Alberta; 2021-2022 School Year Plan



Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools

Overview

Routine public health practices can minimize transmission of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, influenza and common colds. These practices include: proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, maintaining ventilation, staying home when sick and getting vaccinated.

The guidance provided in this document is based on the [Alberta Government 2021-2022 School Year Plan](#) and intended to support schools and school authority leaders in reducing the risk of transmission of these illnesses and infections among students, staff and visitors by providing options to integrate good public health practices into normal operations under the 2021-22 School Year Plan.

Schools and school authorities were strongly encouraged to use strategies from the Plan to establish its own plans to reduce transmission of COVID-19, influenza as well as other infections in the school setting. Individuals should also assess and manage their personal risk, which may include using additional precautions such as continuing to use a face mask, in order to serve their individual needs. School authorities continue to have the ability

and corresponding accountability for any local measures that are put in place, such as physical distancing, cohorting and masking requirements that may exceed provincial guidance.

Alberta Health Services (AHS) Zone Medical Officers of Health (MOHs) and their designates are available to support school authorities throughout the province. Their role is to provide guidance on communicable disease risk as well as risk management.

If you have concerns, need specific guidance, or have questions about how to apply the measures in this document, or additional measures based on local context, please contact Alberta Health Services' Environmental Public Health in our North Zone for assistance by email at northzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca.

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Five Core Preventative Measures

The official [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#) outlines 'Five Core Public Health Preventative Measures' the Fort McMurray Public Schools will follow for the upcoming year, including; Vaccines, Environmental Measures, Staying Home When Sick, Hand Hygiene, and Respiratory Etiquette.

Fort McMurray Public School Division Preventative Measures:

1. Vaccines

- a. The Fort McMurray Public School Division has participated in a long-standing partnership between Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services to provide access to public health prevention measures. This has included immunization programs, and in the past dental and vision screening.
- b. The Public Health Immunization program has previously offered vaccination including Measles, Mumps, Rubella, HPV, and Chickenpox. AHS is now indicating that the vaccination program will also make the *Pfizer-BioNTech mRNA COVID vaccination* available for eligible students and staff.
- c. Please note, this is a voluntary program.
- d. Parent/Guardian letters and consent forms will be sent home the first day of school by school messenger. *All forms are to be collected within one week.*
- e. Local public health services will coordinate immunization clinics at each eligible school with the Principal.



COVID-19 School Immunization Program Letter & Consent Form Downloads:

[Alberta Health Services COVID-19 School Immunization Program Letter](#)

[Alberta Health Services COVID-19 School Immunization Consent Form](#)

2. Staying Home When Sick

- a. Before leaving home, staff and students should self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the Alberta Daily Health Checklist.
- b. Parents/guardians, students and staff should be provided a copy of the appropriate daily health checklist. .
- c. Office locations will have screening checklists and hand sanitation stations.
- d. Anyone that reports symptoms must be directed to stay home and fill out the [AHS online self-assessment tool](#).



Click [here](#) to download the Alberta Daily Health Checklist.

3. Hand Hygiene

- a. Hand washing posters should be posted in washrooms and above sinks to encourage proper hand washing practice.
- b. We have purchased and have adequate hand sanitizer to maintain all schools up to and including December 2021. Over the fall, we will monitor our usage and make determinations for January to June as we monitor cases in the Wood Buffalo region.



Click [here](#) to download Alberta Health Services Hand Washing Posters online.

4. Respiratory Etiquette

- a. We will continue to support and provide instruction on respiratory etiquette.
- b. Masking is required for all students and staff on school buses.
- c. Masking is highly recommended and may be introduced as a temporary enhanced measure to prevent an outbreak.
- d. Schools are to support students, staff, or parents who choose to wear a mask.



5. Environmental Measures

- a. Our O&M program continues to implement required HVAC programs in accordance with manufacturer operational guidelines.
- b. We are continuing with building closure at 8:30 p.m., and Sundays to all for enhanced cleaning and sterilization of rooms. Door stickers to indicate a sterilized room will remain in use.
- c. Pink cleaning solution and cloths will be available for classrooms and common areas. It is highly recommended that high touch areas and equipment are cleaned frequently.
- d. Plexiglass dividers will remain in place.
- e. Physical distancing and cohorting are not required, however, some people may prefer to keep more space during certain circumstances. Look for ways to support while we move towards getting back to normal.
- f. Soft surfaces (i.e: class carpets, chairs, cushions) are not banned, however, careful development of clearing and disinfecting of high touch surfaces should be developed.
- g. Lockers, food services, water fountains are permitted as per Alberta Health Services guidelines.



Guidance for School Transportation

Children and students across the province travel to and from school through a combination of walking, being driven by their parents /guardians, public transportation and school bus services provided by school authorities.

School authorities determine transportation service levels, ensuring all children and students legally entitled to transportation are transported in accordance with school authority policy. School authorities should continue to

adjust routing in response to ridership demand. School authorities should discuss transportation plans early in cases of Education Services Agreements with First Nations.

Travel/transportation of children and students must follow public health measures should they be in place. Alberta Education will collaborate, should the need arise, with Alberta Transportation and Alberta Health to ensure challenges raised by school authorities are considered.



Covid Guidelines & Expectations from Alberta Health Services & Alberta Education

Individual Information

What's Happening:	Do I Need to Isolate or Quarantine?
You <u>tested positive</u> for COVID-19.	YES. You must isolate.
You <u>have symptoms</u> and are waiting for your COVID-19 test result	YES. You must isolate.
You <u>have symptoms</u> and didn't get a test.	YES. You must isolate.
You're told you're a close contact of someone who tested positive for Covid-19.	NO. However, if you develop symptoms within the 14 days after your last contact with this person, take the online COVID-19 self-assessment.

Information for Parent/Guardian & child/ren

What's Happening:	Do I Need to Isolate or Quarantine?
Your child (or person you live with) <u>has</u> symptoms but you don't. They are waiting for their COVID-19 test result.	YES. The child (or person you live with) must isolate. NO. You do not have to isolate.
You and your child (or the person you live with) <u>don't</u> have symptoms after you both had close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19.	NO. You and your <u>child</u> (or the person you live with) do not need to quarantine.
Your child (or the person you live with) <u>has</u> symptoms. You don't have symptoms. Your child (or the person you live with) tested negative for COVID-19. This means they did not have COVID-19 at the time of the test.	NO. You and your <u>child</u> (or the person you live with) do not need to quarantine.
Your child (or the person you live with) <u>has</u> symptoms. But you don't. They <u>tested positive</u> for COVID-19	YES. The child (or person you live with) must isolate. NO. You do not have to isolate.

Public Health Management of Respiratory Illness in Schools

What activities no longer have restrictions or specific guidance?

- Many routine school activities and services no longer have any restrictions or specific guidance. Schools may continue with these activities as they normally would. These include activities and services such as, but not limited to:
 - Field trips
 - Performance activities
 - Physical activities
 - Diploma exams
 - Provincial Achievement Tests
 - Visitors to the schools
 - Food services
 - Student transportation
 - Work experience
 - Ceremonies and celebratory events
 - International student programs

Why are schools returning to in-person learning for the majority of students for 2021-2022?

- Studies have shown that some responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the closure of schools to in-person learning and cancellation of extra-curricular events, led to a deterioration in children and youth mental health. It is important to consider the negative impacts of measures when looking at a population that has shown to be at lower risk of severe outcomes. Any additional restrictions for children and youth should be proportionate to their overall risk level.
- All staff and students born in 2009 or earlier are eligible for COVID-19 vaccine. The higher the immunization rate is in a school, the more protection from COVID-19 infections there will be for everyone. *More information about the COVID-18 vaccine program can be found [here](#).*
- Children under 12 years of age have much lower rates of hospitalization, severe disease and death from COVID-19. Based on Alberta's experience in the 2020-2021 school year, schools were not the primary drivers of COVID-19 transmission during that time period.
- We may not be able to entirely eliminate COVID-19, but we can develop a sustainable approach that does not have disproportionate impacts on learning and development opportunities for our children while also preventing serious outcomes, hospitalizations and death due to the disease.

Is physical distancing or maintaining spacing required?

- Physical distancing or maintaining spacing is not required for the 2021-2022 school year.
- It is reasonable that some people may prefer to keep more space between themselves and others in certain situations while we are getting back to normal, and schools should support this, whenever possible.

Are there any masking requirements or recommendations?

- Masking is required for all students and staff on school buses.
- Masking is not provincially required for any age group in a school setting.
- As part of outbreak management, AHS (MOH or designate) may recommend masking as a temporary enhanced measure to prevent widespread transmission of a respiratory illness.
- Students, staff, visitors and parents/guardians should consider their own risks and their personal situation when making decisions on wearing a mask. It is reasonable that in some settings, an individual may choose to wear a mask while we are getting back to normal.
- School authorities continue to have the ability and corresponding accountability for any local masking requirements that are put in place that may exceed provincial guidance.
- Schools should support individuals who choose to wear masks.

What if there is a case of COVID-19 in a school?

- Staff, students or parents/guardians may choose to notify school administrators of a positive COVID-19 test result.
 - Individuals are not required to share their health information with the school administrators.
- AHS Public Health will not inform school authorities or administrators of individual cases of COVID-19 within the school setting, as notification to the school is not required for the individual's case management.
- School administrators and/or school authorities are not required to contact AHS to report student or staff cases.
 - School administrators should continue to monitor their school population for additional cases and/or absenteeism due to illness, and follow the guidance for reporting and responding to high rates of absenteeism outlined in the Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools.



References & Resources

The following references have been cited throughout the document to provide further information on the Alberta Government's 2021-2022 School Year Plan. The Fort McMurray Public School Division will update this document regularly for its students, staff and faculty.

[July 2021 Guidance for Schools Scenario 1](#)

[Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools](#)

[Public Health Management of Respiratory Illness in Schools: Questions and answers for school administrators](#)

[Alberta Health Services, Public Health Services, School Immunization Program](#)

[August 5, 2021 Information for Close Contacts](#)

[August 13, 2021 Alberta Education Letter to Parents](#)