

Wednesday, August 19, 2020



Parent FAQs

When will be my child's first day of school be?

Elk Island Catholic Schools will reopen to students on September 1st, 2020. Students will return using a staggered entry the first week of school. School administration will develop these staggered entry times and will share them with their school community. This will allow schools to explain the new routine and health and safety measures to students in smaller group setting.

Do I have to screen my child for symptoms prior to sending them to school?

Yes. Parents, students and school staff must review the self-screening questionnaire **each day** before students are allowed to enter a school building. Visitors must also use this questionnaire to determine if they may enter a school.

- Self-screening questionnaire (PDF)

[English](#) | [French](#) | [Arabic](#) | [Traditional Chinese](#) | [Simplified](#)

[Chinese](#) | [Hindi](#) | [Punjabi](#) | [Spanish](#) | [Tagalog](#) | [Urdu](#) | [Vietnamese](#)

What will happen to students who develop symptoms during the school day and are awaiting pick up?

Principals are required to identify an area in their school suitable for isolating students who become symptomatic during the school day. Parents and emergency contacts will be immediately notified to come pick up their child within one hour of being called. As a parent, you will need to be available for immediate pick up, or have a designate who can immediately pick up your child.

What will be the Arrival and Pick Up Protocols for Parents/guardians entering the school?

- Parents/guardians are to remain outside of the school to drop off their children. They are not to enter the school during high traffic times unless approved by the principal.
- School leaders will determine student entry points and if the drop-off and pick-up schedule needs to be staggered based on local factors.
- Physical distancing of 2 meters should be maintained regardless of the number of parents/ guardians arriving.
- Parents / guardians of Learners with Diverse Needs, as required will communicate with staff via email prior to arrival to communicate any additional information that may be needed regarding supporting their child (how the morning went, etc.). Please consult with the CRC and administration if support is needed

What if my child has a pre-existing medical condition with COVID-19 symptoms?

Individuals who have allergies or ongoing health issues must be tested for COVID-19 at least once according to the [Alberta Health Services Guidance Document](#) to confirm that the pre-existing condition is the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to the school.

This will establish a baseline for the individual. If symptoms change (worsen, additional symptom, change in baseline), the individual must follow [Stay Home When Sick Protocol](#).

How will special learning needs be supported?

Many learners with diverse needs may be considered vulnerable students. Continuity of learning plans may require personal care and close proximity to individuals supporting them.

Teachers, Educational Assistants, Collaborative Response Coordinators, Family Wellness Workers, Speech-Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Public Nurse, School Psychologists, Inclusive Learning Consultants and Behavior Specialists will all collaboratively support the diverse learning needs of students.

Will there be access to mental health support and counselling for staff and students should a staff member, student or staff or student's family member fall seriously ill?

Family Wellness Workers, Division Psychologists and consultants, MHCB wellness coaches, School Counsellors, Collaborative Response Coordinators and school Chaplains, form the backbone of mental health support in our school communities. An array of resources for support are available. Resources for students and parents can be [found here.](#)

Are face masks for staff and students required?

The Medical Health Officer and Minister of Education announced on August 4th, that mask use is mandatory for staff and teachers in all settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.

- Masks are mandatory for all Gr. 4 – 12 students. Gr. 4 – 12 students will be required to wear masks in all shared and common areas such as hallways and on buses. Students are strongly encouraged to wear masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Mask use for kindergarten to Grade 3 students will continue to be optional but is strongly encouraged. Mask use for younger children is a challenge due to difficulties with proper fit and compliance.
- Exemptions will be made for students and staff who are unable to wear a mask due to medical or other needs.
 - Guidelines and standards on the use of non-medical face masks is accessible at the following webpage: <https://www.alberta.ca/masks.aspx>

Have schools been provided with necessary supplies and equipment?

Elk Island Catholic School has allocated \$800,000 towards providing a safe environment for students and staff. This includes the purchases of health grade cleaning systems, the necessary hand sanitizer stations, masks, face shields, thermometers, plexi glass reception stations, signage and other various supplies.

Placement of hand sanitizer will include entrances, exits, classrooms, as well as near other high traffic areas throughout the schools.

The following guidelines will be in place for students:

- hand hygiene expectations when entering and exiting the school and classrooms, before and after eating
- continual reminders of the importance of respiratory etiquette (e.g. cover coughs and sneezes, avoid touching the face and disposal of used tissues promptly, followed by hand hygiene)
- guiding foot traffic flow through entrances and hallways by using markers on the floor or pylons/barriers.

What is meant by 'cohorting' students?

A cohort is defined as a group of students and staff who remain together. As the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is reduced by limiting exposure to others, cohorts are recommended where possible. Cohorting will decrease the number of close contacts a case of COVID-19 would have in a school and assist public health officials in their efforts to trace contacts and contain an outbreak. For the purpose of contact tracing, consider limiting capacity of room to a number that allows for increased physical distancing.

It is recommended to maintain physical distancing within a cohort whenever possible to minimize the risk for disease transmission (i.e., spacing between desks).

How will physical distancing be maintained in hallways, entryways and boot rooms?

To the greatest extent possible, the safe movement of students and staff is to be considered. Signs and floor markings will be posted to allow for safe movement. Staggered entry and departure procedures may be implemented where possible at each school.

Will there be shared items in the classroom (e.g. glues sticks, scissors, art supplies, etc.)?

There will be little to no shared items. Students may not share pencils, pens, rulers, toys, crayons textbooks, food.

Books, tablets and computers will not be shared. Parents will be provided with a list of items a student may need. Students are encouraged to bring their own device from home. While shared items are not encouraged, class items can still be shared if cleaned between uses.

Will hand sanitizing stations be available?

Hand sanitizing stations are at every school entrance and in each classroom and throughout our schools. All students are encouraged to bring their own personal size hand sanitizers from home.

Will students have recess?

Yes, recess is a key time for students and is to occur. School leaders will determine when and how recess breaks may occur.

Are school playgrounds accessible to students at recess?

School playgrounds are accessible to students at recess. Students are to hand sanitize prior to playing on the playground and following recess.

Alberta Health Covid-19 Information – [Guidance for Playgrounds](#)

Can students leave the school for lunch and spares?

All schools should consider a closed campus in their local context. At minimum, it is suggested that elementary and junior high students be restricted in their ability to leave at lunch. Sr. high schools will need to assess their local situation.

What are lunchtime expectations? Will there be food services on site?

LUNCH

- Staff and students will be required to pack-in and pack-out all food and not share food each day.
- Parents / Guardians will be asked to provide their child lunch in clean containers with their own utensils. Efforts should be made to bring a lunch/snack that does not require a lot of preparation at the school. Shared use of microwaves is not to occur in student areas.
- “Skip the Dishes” style food delivery to students and staff is not permitted.
- Students should practice physical distancing while eating.
- There should be no common food items (e.g., salt and pepper shakers, ketchup).
- If a school is using a common lunchroom and staggering lunch times, ensure that all surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use.

CAFETERIA/HOT LUNCH SERVICES/SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

- Food service establishments must follow the Alberta Health [restaurant guidance posted here](#).
- School Cafeterias must implement alternate processes to reduce the numbers of people dining together at one time.
 - Remove/rearrange dining tables to maintain physical distancing.
 - Place tape or other markings on floors to maintain a physical distancing of 2 metres.
 - Stagger meal service times to reduce the numbers of people present at any one time.
 - Adapt other areas to serve as additional dining space to increase spacing among persons in the same room.
- Buffet style service is not to occur. Hot Lunch service of individual pre-packaged meals may occur providing the Alberta Health [restaurant guidance](#) is followed.
- Hot Lunch program volunteers must [pre-screen](#) and follow necessary protocols.

Dispense cutlery, napkins and other items to students rather than allowing them to pick up their own items.

Student Lockers

Student lockers will be closed to students until further notice.

- Schools should encourage participants to come dressed for their activity.

What about the Physical Education Program and Sports for Life?

Gymnasiums can be used for physical education programming.

When possible physical education should be done outside instead of inside as the risk of transmission is more likely to occur indoors rather than outdoors. Follow the [Guidance for Outdoor Activity](#) as relaunch progresses.

Locker Rooms and Change Rooms:

The use of locker rooms and change rooms is discouraged.

- Schools should encourage participants to come dressed for their activity.

Will sports and extracurricular activities continue in the fall?

As of now, extracurricular (team) sports and activities are not proceeding. Alberta School Athletics Association is working with Superintendents on any future steps.

What will happen with Music, Dance and Theatre Programming?

Practice, rehearsals and instruction of dance, music and theatre may proceed as long as the [guidance for music, dance and theatre protocol](#) is followed. Music, dance and theatrical performances are cancelled at this time.

Learning experiences involving unprotected (without a mask or physical barrier) in-person singing, cheering or shouting or playing wind instruments must be postponed at this time.

Consider alternatives such as: Choosing low-risk instruments: percussion or string over wind instruments. As well, recording or live-streaming individual performers in separate locations and including more lessons focused on music appreciation or music theory.

What will be the impact on large group gatherings and school masses and parish partnerships?

Large Group Gatherings

Avoid students spending unnecessary time at school before and after school.

Avoid unnecessary travel and gatherings. School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) are cancelled at this time. Virtual options could be offered instead of in person gatherings. Field trips, group transportation, performances or celebrations are to be cancelled until further notice.

School Mass Celebrations and Parish Partnerships

Whole school in person student masses or religious celebrations will not occur either at the school or the local parish. We recommend schools to celebrate as a class, or the use of digital means to support whole school celebrations. Outdoor celebrations are encouraged.

The relationship between the school and the local Priest is key for our Catholic Schools. Where possible, and within proper protocols, we encourage continued in-person visits from our Priests, as well as innovative and digital methods of engagement. Elk Island Catholic Schools will continue to follow the guidance and protocols of the Archdiocese of Edmonton with respect to parish interaction and the Sacramental preparation of our students.

What about parent teacher interviews?

All parent teacher interviews will be conducted in an alternative format rather than in person as decided by each school.

What about field trips and travel?

All field trips and travel are suspended until further notice. Virtual trips and online guest speakers may supplement this aspect of school programming.