



2020-2021 Re-Entry Handbook For Parents

Implementation of the division re-entry plan is subject to change based upon new information and direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Education. It is developed using the most recent available information related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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Background

On March 15, 2020, Alberta's K-12 schools were closed for in-school classes indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On April 30, 2020, the Alberta government announced the Alberta relaunch strategy.

On April 30, Premier Kenney stated that in-school classes will not resume for the 2019-2020 school year. Planning for the 2020-2021 school year commenced.

On June 10, 2020 the Alberta government shared the [2020-21 School Re-Entry Plan](#) with stakeholders.

The provincial re-entry plan for K-12 schools considers three scenarios:

1. In-school classes resume (near normal with health measures)
2. In-school classes partly resume (with additional health measures)
3. Schools remain closed for classes – at home learning continues.

The return to in-class learning is not without risk of infection transmission. By bringing many people together in a closed setting, such as a school, we expect that cases and even outbreaks of COVID-19 will occur in some locations within Alberta. Public health officials will be monitoring the situation closely and be ready with a plan that enables a rapid response to cases of COVID-19 in a school.

If any of EICS schools are connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, we will be contacted by Alberta Health Services (AHS) and may be required to close in person classes to allow the public health investigation to take place. The decision to send a cohort/class home or to close a school will be made in consultation with the local Medical Officer of Health.

Scenario 1 will include:

- routine screening for all staff and students;
- enhanced cleaning and disinfecting including;
- daily cleaning for all areas of the school, washrooms and high-touch surface cleaned several times a day;
- regularly scheduled deep cleaning when students are not present;
- enhanced cleaning protocol with healthcare grade system that kills human coronavirus;
- strict stay-at-home policy for any students or staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (even if symptoms resemble a mild cold);
- physical distancing maximization within the confines of a classroom;
- reorganization of rooms to allow for more physical space;
- cohorting of students by class where possible;
 - A cohort is defined as a group of students and staff who remain together.
 - The risk of transmission of COVID-19 is reduced by limiting exposure to others.

The Medical Health Officer and Minister of Education announced on August 4th, 2020 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>

Within a cohort, the following will be expected:

- 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);
- a no sharing policy, all students should have their own supplies.
- where sharing of equipment is required, the equipment should be cleaned between uses.
- guiding foot traffic flow through entrances and hallways by using markers on the floor or pylons/barriers.
- school assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) are prohibited.

Staff and Parents are requested to remain up to date with developments related to [COVID-19](#) as well as [workplace guidelines for businesses](#).

Parents are also reminded that social and mental health supports are available:

- EICS FWW's (counsellors) remain available to provide support.
- Support can also be found on our EICS website at [Resources: Mental Health and Wellness During the Pandemic](#).

School / Site Environment

School leaders and staff will utilize the following considerations to prepare classrooms and other EICS learning and work environments.

Seating Plans

Strict seating plans must be maintained. If a student, staff member or visitor is confirmed to have a case of COVID-19 and was at the school while they were infectious, Alberta Health Services (AHS) Public Health will notify the school of the exposure and will work with the school for contact tracing.

Contract tracing records may include:

- Full class lists, including teachers and other staff present in the classroom;
- Daily attendance records for students and staff, (including substitutes and other temporary staff);
- Records of students and staff that becomes symptomatic during the school day;
- Class seating and arrangements;
- Outlines of other school control measure in place;
- Visitor records.

Physical Distancing

The following physical distancing strategies should be implemented where possible:

- Schools must develop procedures and plans for in-person learning that supports physical distancing where possible, and to separate cohorts to the greatest extent possible.
- Consider different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
- Strive to organize students into smaller group cohorts that stay together throughout the day.
- Strive to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day (e.g. minimize the amount of mixing between student and different staff in the setting).
- Schools must develop procedures for drop-off/pick-up that support physical distancing where possible between all persons (except household members). Consider strategies such as staggering times and locations to limit contact.
- Stagger lunch/snack breaks to maintain physical distancing among children/students.
- Take students outside more often:
 - Organize learning activities outside including snack time, place-based learning and unstructured time.
 - Take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside.
 - Reassure students, parents and caregivers that playgrounds are a safe environment,

- and encourage appropriate personal hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play.
- Students are to hand sanitize prior to playing on the playground and following recess. Assigning playground use to specific cohorts should be considered. Alberta Health Covid-19 Information – [Guidance for Playgrounds](#)
 - Avoid close greetings (e.g. hugs, handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps). Regularly remind students about keeping their “hands to yourself”.
 - 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 avoid shared items.
 - For adolescent students, adapt group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
 - Consider how to best address traffic flow throughout the schools. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. Note that it is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure the fire code is adhered to.
 - Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and bathrooms.
 - Floor decals and arrows for traffic flow and direction.
 - Schools can also use pylons / barriers if available.
 - Remove and re stage seating in public areas to prevent gathering.
 - Consider limiting bathroom occupancy.
 - In situations where physical distancing is not possible (ie. buses, classrooms, and some sporting activities), extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis before and after activities is strongly recommended.
 - Assemblies and other school-wide events should be held virtually to avoid large gatherings of people in one space.

Staggered Entry Days

EICS will reopen to students on September 1st, 2020. Students will return in small groups allowing for staggered entry the first week of school (September 1 – 4, 2020). 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. Classes will begin for all students (in person and online) on Tuesday September 8th, 2020.

Cohorting

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.

While schools cannot control what happens outside of school hours, cohorting or other control measures within a school will still help lessen the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Physical distancing is a very effective control measure for COVID-19 and should still be the goal even within a cohort. If two meters of physical distancing is not possible within a cohort, additional strategies can be used (i.e., arranging desks/tables so students do not face each other).

Classrooms

- Student contact surfaces (e.g., desks and equipment) are to be cleaned between each student/user. Disinfectant, wipes will be supplied for students to wipe down desks between uses.
- Classrooms, desktops, and countertops must be decluttered of all non-essential items to allow for custodial cleaning. This will also provide a 'minimalist' type environment to accommodate space required for social distancing, limit frequently touched items and prevent sharing of spaces and items.
- Area rugs and soft furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected must be removed.
- Employees and students should not be sharing personal items (e.g. electronic devices, writing instruments, school supplies, food, food serving utensils, etc.).
- Where possible, natural ventilation should be maximized by opening the doors and windows to periodically change the air.
- Where possible workspaces and desks are to be separated from each other by a minimum of 6 feet /2 meters.
- Within the classroom, 2 metres is not possible between desks. The classroom is to be minimalized so that the greatest possible spacing of desks is achieved. Arrange desks / tables, so that students are not facing each other (e.g. arranged in rows rather than in small groups of 4 or a semi-circle). This way, if a student coughs or sneezes, they are not likely to cough or sneeze directly on the face of another student.
- Unoccupied desks can be safely stored within the school or left within the classroom.
- Students should be kept in the same group, in the same room, in the same desk, with the same staff to the largest extent possible.

Controlling School Access

- School doors will be locked doors during the school day to control public access. The front door of the school may remain open.
- Limit time volunteers/parents are in the school. For required interactions – the plexi-glass reception window in the front office is to be utilized.
- Parents are encouraged to call or email schools rather than visit in-person.
- Parents/guardians, under certain circumstances as outlined in a student medical support plan, can attend the school when required. Screening protocols are required.

- Classroom volunteers and guest speakers are to be discouraged except in exceptional circumstances.
- Visitors should not enter the school without an appointment.
- When a visitor enters the school they should be asked to use the self-screening tool ([see Appendix B](#)) before they enter the school. If a visitor answers YES to any of the questions, the individual must not be admitted into the school.
- Schools should have paper copies of the daily checklist posted and available for visitors to the school.
- A record of all school visitors must be kept.
- All schools should consider a close 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, discuss with staff, and perhaps school councils and make their decisions.

Arrival Protocol

- 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 must 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. Please see [Appendix C – Plans for Students Requiring Individual Supports](#) for additional information.

Food and Nutrition Services

- Nutrition programs will continue to run, with an emphasis on pre-packaged food and requiring staff service of food.
- No food sharing for staff or students. Staff and students will be required to pack-in and pack-out all food and not share food each day.
- “Skip the Dishes” style food delivery to students and staff is not permitted.
- 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. Communal use of microwaves is not to occur.
- Students must not be sharing utensils, dishes, and water bottles or drink containers. Students are to bring their own utensils for eating lunch.
- Food provided by the family should be stored with the student’s belongings.
- 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.
- Classes that teach food preparation may occur as long as students do not share the food they prepare with other students or staff.

Food Service Programs (Cafeteria & Hot Lunch)

- Food service establishments must follow the Alberta Health [Guidance for restaurants](#).
- 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 using the questionnaire in Appendix B and follow necessary protocols.

Water Fountains

All water fountains will be closed, however water fillable stations will remain open to fill personal water bottles. Student may bring in their own personal water bottle; filled from home or from a water filling station at the school.

Student & Staff Health

Mandatory Daily Health Checks

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 use the Division developed school protocol to clearly communicate with parents and caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school. ([See Appendix B](#)).
- Parents / guardians are required to keep students home who are showing symptoms listed on the health check form.
- 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 assess themselves daily prior to entering the

school. ([See Appendix B](#))

Stay Home When Sick

In order for school re-entry to be successful, all students, families and staff must work together to minimize the risks. Should anyone answer “Yes” to any of the daily health screening questions in [Appendix B](#), they are prohibited from entering the school

Procedure for a child returning to school if the child has been kept home or sent home because of symptoms.

- The student or staff member should get tested if they have any COVID-19 symptoms. (Outlined in question 1 of the screening tool.)
- If the student or staff member displays these symptoms they are [legally required to isolate for at least 10 days](#) from the start of their symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer.
- Close contacts are legally required to isolate for 14 days from their last exposure to a person who tested positive for COVID -19.
- Proof of a negative test result will not be necessary.
- Please review the updated document [Covid-19 Student Illness](#)

Students and employees must stay home until they can answer no to all of the questions on the screening questionnaire, and have followed the protocols listed above.

- Those unsure if they, or a student, should self-isolate should be directed to use the Alberta [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) or call 811.

School staff have no role for assessing student symptoms, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health care professionals.

- Students who are at home for extended periods of time due to COVID protocols should reach out to their school for educational support during this period.

Illness While On-Site

- Students exhibiting signs of illness must be moved to the infirmary room.
- Parents / caregivers must be notified and advised to pick-up their child immediately.
- Parents must designate an emergency contact for student pick-up. Within the Alberta Government’s pandemic response, this is something that all families must adhere to.
- EICS will communicate to families that they are expected to designate an emergency contact who will be able to immediately pick up the student if parents / guardians are unable to do so.
- An immediate pick-up assumes that the student will be picked up in less than an hour.
- Staff supervising symptomatic students must;
 - Keep all other staff out of the infirmary room;

- Provide the student with a face mask;
- Use strict handwashing techniques;
- Maintain physical distancing.

Students and Staff with Pre-Existing Conditions

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.

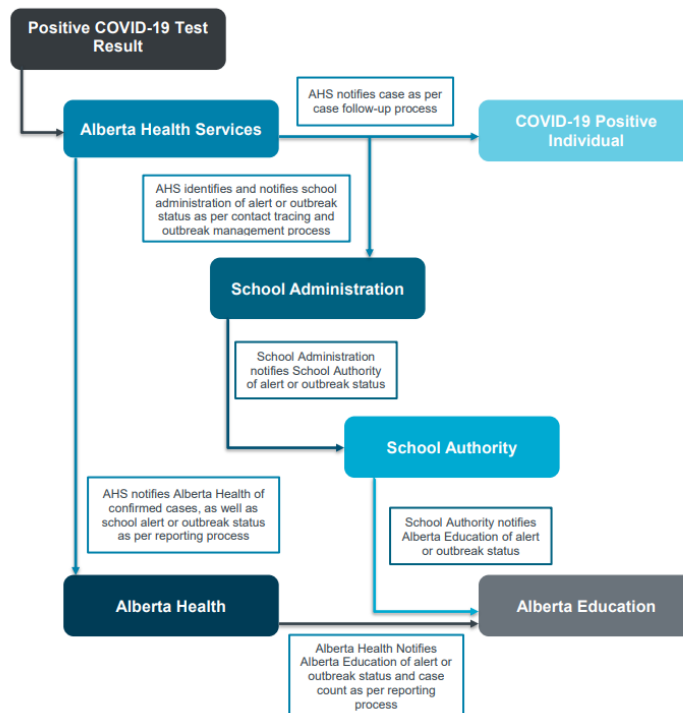
This will establish a baseline for the individual. The student can attend school as long as they stay the same. Talk to your school about your child’s pre-existing medical conditions as the school will keep a confidential record of these conditions.

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

Confirmed case of COVID-19

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, children and students. Individual schools ensure the safety of students and staff by assisting to control the spread of illness. This is done through collaboration with internal and external partners, such as Alberta Health Services during an outbreak response, as outlined in the below diagram.

Appendix A: COVID-19 school outbreak notification process flow diagram



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 to learn at home if they are required to self-isolate.

Student and Staff Wellness

Elk Island Catholic Schools recognizes that positive mental health and wellness for students and staff is a precondition to learning. Beyond learning considerations, we recognize our Christian call to support each other in times of difficulty. We have not been able to control the events on the world stage in the past months, but our schools and communities do have control over how they respond to these events and the kinds of supports and resources they provide for students, families and school staff during the re-entry process. We understand that mental health is a shared responsibility.

The document [“The Heart of Recovery”](#) written after the fires in Fort McMurray for school re-entry has been seminal in our support for schools and communities.

Wellness and connections team in EICS includes but is not limited to, Family Wellness workers, Division Psychologists and consultants, MHCB wellness coaches, School Counsellors, and Collaborative Response Coordinators and school Chaplains, who will provide universal and targeted support as required.

For re-entry, our response focuses on five key areas.

1. Promoting a sense of connectedness.
2. Promoting a sense of calm and safety.
3. Fostering resiliency in staff and students through listening, protecting, modelling, teaching and connecting.
4. Prompting a sense of self and community efficacy.
5. Promoting hope in an effort to Choose Joy.

Plans for Students Requiring Individualized Supports

Children are screened case by case to determine levels of support required to safely bring students into the school environment and any specialized supports will be noted in the ISP and/or BSP. Please see [Appendix C – Detailed Procedures for Students Requiring Individualized Supports](#).

Program and Activity Guidelines

Scenario Selection

Any changes in the school re-entry scenario will be determined by Alberta Health Services with information on local school-based and community information. EICS will remain in communication with public health authorities and will continue to follow their advice.

Alberta Education has indicated that Elk Island Catholic Schools has the autonomy to react to COVID-19 issues regarding learning and instruction. We will communicate clear expectations if / when a change to scenario occurs.

Activity Planning

For activity planning, staff should ask themselves the following questions to determine the risk of the activities and whether they are allowed to proceed:

- Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands?
- Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing?
- What is the frequency/possibility to clean high touch surfaces (e.g., electronic devices, instruments, equipment, toys)?

Music, Dance and Theatre Programs

Practice, rehearsals and instruction of music and vocal performance is permitted, provided the [Guidance for music and vocal performance](#) is followed, including the following.

- Singers should be staggered so they are not directly behind one another.
- Performers should not directly face other performers while singing.
- Singing should occur in a room with a high ceiling, where possible. Singing should be avoided in small, enclosed spaces that lack adequate ventilation, such as, dressing rooms, hallways, or loading areas.
- Limit vocal activity to 30 minutes, followed by a 10-minute break to allow for air exchange in the room. Instructors, directors, conductors and all singers should wear masks, both when singing and when not singing.
- Although local authorities may exempt certain children from masking during regular school activities, everyone participating in singing should wear a mask.
- Singing activities should have a leader (such as a teacher or conductor) to ensure guidance and precautions like distancing and masking are consistently followed.

Dance and theatre rehearsals may take place, provided the guidance is followed for masking and distancing. 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 must be postponed at this time. Consider alternatives such as:

- Recording or live-streaming individual performers in separate locations;
- Including more lessons focused on music appreciation or music theory;

Band classes – in a space where band students could be physically distanced on all sides (i.e., auditorium, outside), band classes may be considered provided the [Guidance for instrumental music](#) is followed.

- Wind instruments may require special consideration and/or extra distancing.
- Shared instruments should not be used unless they can be fully cleaned and disinfected between students.
- Chairs and music stands should be cleaned and disinfected between uses

Field Trips

Field trips and activities requiring group transportation should not be scheduled, they remain cancelled at this time. International and out of province trips are also cancelled and should not be planned. A field trip that is walkable and outdoors may be permitted.

Gymnasiums

Gymnasiums can be used to deliver 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.
- Administrators and teachers should choose activities or sports that support physical distancing (e.g. badminton over wrestling).
- Use of shared items or sports equipment should be discouraged. Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use; users should perform hand hygiene before and after each use.
- Schools must follow the advice of the [Alberta guidance for sport, physical activity and recreation](#).
- 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.

Personal Item Storage

In some classrooms, particularly in lower grades where cohorting is more successfully employed, students should bring what they need for the day and store belongings in the classroom:

- In their backpack under the desk or in a designated space;
- In an assigned bin;

- Jackets/boots can be stored in boot rooms with entry procedures in place to minimize crowding.

Student Lockers

Student lockers use should be discouraged. Schools should encourage participants to come dressed for their activity. In specific cases, lockers may be used but measures should be in place to minimize crowding:

- Space lockers out by closing certain lockers;
- Assign lockers based on cohort/grade/class;
- Consider having students bring what they need for the day and keep school supplies and textbooks in their backpack to minimize locker visits.

Intramurals

As a co-curricular activity, Intramural programs are permitted to take place under the following guidelines:

- Current cohorts will be maintained.
- Daily attendance records are mandatory.
- Daily attendance records are to include: Name of student, name of supervisor, time and location of activity.
- Attendance reports will be turned into the office immediately following intramurals.
- Schools are to follow reentry guidelines for cleaning, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and PPE.
- “Intramural class sizes” are to be limited to the largest class size that exists within a current cohort. (Ex. A middle school has a cohort of 90 grade 7 students because the classes mix for options. The largest “intramural class size” will max out at 32 if that is the largest class for grade 7.)

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular Sports

All extracurricular sports and school sports teams – elementary, junior high and senior high may occur if the following guidelines are followed.

1. A **maximum** of 10 individuals, including coaches and/or trainers are allowed.
2. **Physical Distancing:** Must be maintained at all times between participants following these guidelines:
 - a. 3-metres physical distance for indoor activities.
 - b. 2-metres physical distance for outdoor activities.

- c. **Exception:** Coaches or trainers may enter physical distancing space for brief interactions with participants (for example to correct form or technique.)
- 3. **Masks:**
 - a. Coaches/trainers to wear 100% of the time
 - b. Athletes can only take off their masks when engaged in physical activity
- 4. **Change rooms:** Access must be limited, including accelerated arrival/departure, for emergencies and for washroom use.
- 5. **Games:** not permitted at this time.
- 6. **Attendance Tracking:**
 - a. Attendance records are mandatory.
 - b. Attendance records are to include: Name of student, name of supervisor, time and location of activity.
 - c. Attendance reports will be turned into the office immediately following each activity.

Extracurricular Activities

All on-site extracurricular activities – elementary, junior high and senior high may occur if the following guidelines are followed.

- 1. A **maximum** of 10 individuals, including instructors, for lessons, rehearsals and virtual performances.
- 2. **Physical Distancing:** Must be maintained at all times between participants following these guidelines:
 - a. 3-metre physical distancing between all participants.
- 3. **Masks:**
 - a. Masks are mandatory at all times, except while playing a wind instrument equipped with a cover intended to prevent droplet transmission.
- 4. In person audiences and spectators are not allowed.
- 5. **Attendance Tracking:**
 - a. Attendance records are mandatory.
 - b. Attendance records are to include: Name of student, name of supervisor, time and location of activity.
 - c. Attendance reports will be turned into the office immediately following each activity.

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.

Transportation

Masks are mandatory for all Gr. 4 – 12 students. Gr. 4 – 12 students will be required to wear masks on buses.

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.

Buses used for transporting students are to be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided. Additional measures should be taken, including encouraging private (e.g. parents or caregivers) vehicle use where possible to decrease transportation density. Families should expect transportation delays and cancellations as modified service is implemented.

Before Travelling on a School Bus

Monitoring for Symptoms

- All students and drivers who experience symptoms, need to self-isolate and stay home.
- Parents and students should not be in the pick-up area or enter the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- A student who develops symptoms while at school should not be permitted to return home on a school bus and should be picked up by a parent or guardian.
- If a student develops symptoms while on the school bus, the driver should attempt to isolate the student and inform the school upon arrival. Due to privacy concerns, information regarding student health should not be communicated through the radio system.

Cleaning High-Touch Surfaces in the School Bus

- A vehicle cleaning log must be kept.
- A health grade cleaning system certified to kill the human coronavirus will be used on each bus on a regular basis by bus operators.
- Cleaning is a critical first step for disinfecting affected surfaces.
- High touch surfaces in school buses that should be regularly cleaned.

While Travelling on a School Bus

- Students must be assigned seats and a record of this seating plan should be kept in order to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student being a case of COVID-19.
- Student loading, unloading, and transfer procedures must be established that support physical distancing of 2 metres between all persons (except household members), when possible and should include:
 - Students start loading from the back seats to the front of the bus.
 - Where feasible, limit the number of students per bench unless from the same household.
 - Students from the same household are to share seats.
 - Students start unloading from the front seats to the back of the bus.
- Students will not be permitted to eat while on the schools bus in an effort to limit food sharing and sustain appropriate levels of hygiene.

Physical Distancing

- To the greatest extent possible, physical distancing measures should be implemented in school buses acknowledging that social distancing cannot be achieved on most routes.

After Travelling on a School Bus

- Repeat a thorough cleaning of high-touch surfaces with appropriate disinfectants as described above.

Cleaning

Within Elk Island Catholic Schools, each school / site will be supplied with a health grade cleaning system certified to kill the human coronavirus to be used on a regular basis by trained custodians and bus operators. EICS has developed procedures for frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces (e.g. vending machines, microwave ovens, door handles, stair rails, light switches, water fountain knobs, push buttons), washrooms, shared equipment, and common areas.

Custodians will follow standardized “enhanced cleaning procedures” as directed by the Facilities Director. (See Appendix A). Spray disinfectants, alcohol-based hand sanitizers approved by Health Canada, should be available to staff, to regularly disinfect commonly used surfaces. Staff are encouraged to disinfect shared items after each use.

- Schools should remove all communal items that cannot be easily cleaned, such as newspapers, magazines, fabric, and soft items such as stuffed toys.
- Assign individuals their own equipment when possible. Discourage staff from sharing phones, desks, offices, books, supplies, food, sports equipment, and other tools and equipment.
- Students may not share pencils, pens, rulers, toys, crayons textbooks, food.
- Items such as puzzles should not be moved between rooms and should stay within each cohort room only as they cannot be fully cleaned and disinfected between cohort uses.
- To simplify disinfecting and/or minimize the need for disinfecting consider the following:
 - Use of shared items or equipment is to be avoided where possible.
 - Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Schools should implement health education with all students within the first two weeks of school.

Base hand hygiene frequencies more on activity than on time:

- Entering/leaving school / classroom;
- Boarding / bus;
- Moving spaces within the school;
- Before and after using manipulatives (hands-on learning);
- Before and after donning and doffing a mask;
- Before and after eating.

What we can do to keep everyone safe:

- How to wash hands;
- Good respiratory hygiene;
- Stay home if sick;
- Physical distancing;
- Avoid touch face, mouth, nose, and eyes;
- Schools should post signs encouraging good hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene and how to wash hands (e.g. in bathrooms and classrooms);

- Ensure there is a means to clean/disinfect hands at all points of entry/exit including washrooms, classrooms, and at other locations where employees and students handle items.

Placement of hand sanitizer in entrances, exits, classroom entrances, high-touch equipment and other high traffic areas.

Students and staff are required to perform hand hygiene when entering and exiting the school as well as before entering the classroom.

- Wash or sanitize your hands after touching communal surfaces;
- Wash their hands for at least 20 sec;
- When they arrive at school and before they go home;
- Before and after any transitions within the school setting (e.g. to another classroom, indoor-outdoor transitions);
- Before eating and drinking;
- After using the washroom facilities;
- After playing outside;
- After sneezing or coughing into hands;
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Individuals should cough and sneeze into the crease of the elbow.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Two cloth masks will be provided to all staff and students.
- 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>

Putting a Mask On (proper protocols for [donning and doffing and disposing PPE](#)):

- Do NOT touch the front of the mask;
- Remove mask from box carefully touching only the outside edges of the mask;
- Secure elastics around back of ears;
- Fit flexible band, if applicable, across bridge of nose;
- Fit mask snug to face and below chin;
- Wash hands.

While Wearing Masks ([appropriate use of masks](#)):

It is important to ensure that while a mask is being worn, the mask is not compromised in any way making it ineffective.

- Keep hands away from mask/face. Do NOT touch the mask.
- Do NOT keep masks around the neck/chin area when not using.

Taking a Mask Off:

- Remove gloves before removing mask;
- Unhook elastics from behind ears with fingers/hands;
- Do NOT touch the front of the mask while removing;
- Dispose of mask into garbage (do NOT place on any surface);
- Wash hands after removing mask.

When to Take a Mask Off:

- Using the directions above under the heading “taking a mask off”, remove a mask when going for a break or for lunch, at the end of a workday).
- Masks are effective as long as they remain dry. If they get wet, change them as soon as possible.

Students are also encouraged to bring their own disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.

Communication

It's critical to have open lines of communication between school and parents, and school and staff.

Keep students, parents/guardians, and staff informed about the steps taken to prevent the risk of transmission of infection in the workplace and remind them of their role.

Regularly remind students, parents, and staff of the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Encourage social responsibility (e.g. AB trace together app), share how to mitigate risk:

- At home;
- While commuting to work;
- Outside of home;
- Generally, avoid entering public establishments;
- Encourage wearing masks when entering public establishments.

Signs should be posted reminding individuals not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold. Remind staff, students, and parents about social and mental health resources available to them.

Appendix A: Enhanced Cleaning Procedures

- Custodian will use the health grade enhanced cleaning system purchased for each school on a weekly basis.
- The detergents and disinfectant products will adhere to health requirements and the instructions on the labels will be closely followed.
- Custodians will clean and disinfect. Surfaces will be wiped with a cleaning agent to clean off soil, oils and with a disinfectant that destroys germs
- Custodians must, on a daily basis but ideally more frequently, clean and disinfect high-touch/shared surfaces; such as:
 - Doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, elevator buttons, railings, microwaves, surface counters and community counters, washrooms and kitchens.
- Area rugs and soft furniture that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected are to be removed.

Appendix B: Daily Screening Tool

COVID-19 INFORMATION

COVID-19 ALBERTA HEALTH DAILY CHECKLIST (FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18)

Overview

This checklist applies for all children, as well as all students who attend kindergarten to Grade 12, including high school students over 18. Children should be screened every day by completing this checklist before going to school, child care or other activities. Children may need a parent or guardian to assist them to complete this screening tool.

Screening Questions for Children under 18:

1.	Has the child traveled outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
If the child answered “YES”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child is required to quarantine for 14 days from the last day of exposure. If the child develops any symptoms, use the AHS Online Assessment Tool or call Health Link 811 to determine if testing is recommended. If the child answered “NO”, proceed to question 2.			
2.	Has the child had close contact with a case¹ of COVID-19 in the last 14 days? Face-to-face contact within 2 metres for 15 minutes or longer or direct physical contact such as hugging	YES	NO
If the child answered “YES”: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child is required to quarantine for 14 days from the last day of exposure. NOTE: Individuals who previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the 90 days before being exposed to another case of COVID-19 are not required to quarantine. If the child answered “NO”, proceed to question 3.			
3.	Does the child have any new onset (or worsening) of the following core symptoms:		
	Fever Temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher	YES	NO
	Cough Continuous, more than usual, not related to other known causes or conditions such as asthma	YES	NO
	Shortness of breath Continuous, out of breath, unable to breathe deeply, not related to other known causes or conditions such as asthma	YES	NO
	Loss of sense of smell or taste Not related to other known causes or conditions like allergies or neurological disorders	YES	NO
If the child answered “YES” to any symptom in question 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child is to isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms OR receive a negative COVID-19 test and feel better before returning to activities Use the AHS Online Assessment Tool or call Health Link 811 to arrange for testing and to receive additional information on isolation. If the child answered “NO” to all of the symptoms in question 3, proceed to question 4.			

4.	Does the child have any new onset (or worsening) of the following other symptoms:		
	Chills Without fever, not related to being outside in cold weather	YES	NO
	Sore throat/painful swallowing Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as seasonal allergies or reflux	YES	NO
	Runny nose/congestion Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as seasonal allergies or being outside in cold weather	YES	NO
	Feeling unwell/fatigued Lack of energy, poor feeding in infants, not related to other known causes or conditions, such as depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction or sudden injury	YES	NO
	Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea Not related to other known causes or conditions, such as anxiety, medication or irritable bowel syndrome	YES	NO
	Unexplained loss of appetite Not related to other known causes or conditions, such as anxiety or medication	YES	NO
	Muscle/joint aches Not related to other known causes or conditions, such as arthritis or injury	YES	NO
	Headache Not related to other known causes or conditions, such as tension-type headaches or chronic migraines	YES	NO
Conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye)	YES	NO	

If the child answered “YES” to ONE symptom in question 4:

- Keep your child home and monitor for 24 hours.
- If their symptom is **improving** after 24 hours, they can return to school and activities when they feel well enough to go. Testing is not necessary.
- If the symptom **does not improve or worsens** after 24 hours (or if additional symptoms emerge), use the [AHS Online Assessment Tool](#) or call Health Link 811 to check if testing is recommended.

If the child answered “YES” to TWO OR MORE symptoms in question 4:

- Keep your child home.
- Use the [AHS Online Assessment Tool](#) or call Health Link 811 to determine if testing is recommended.
- Your child can return to school and activities once their symptoms go away as long as it has been at least 24 hours since their symptoms started.

If the child answered “NO” to all questions:

- Your child may attend school, childcare and/or other activities.

Please note: If your child is experiencing any symptoms from the lists above, do not bring them to visit a continuing care or acute care facility for 10 days from when symptoms started or until symptoms resolve (whichever is longer), unless they receive a negative COVID-19 test result and feel better.

Appendix C: Plans for Students Requiring Individualized Supports

Students are screened case-by-case to determine levels of support required to safely bring students into the school environment and any specialized supports will be noted in the ISP and/or RSP. Staff working with students that have a support plan in place must review these plans prior to working with the student (i.e., Medical, Individual Support Plan, and/or Regulation Support Plan).

For students with underlying medical conditions or risk factors, parents should consult their child's physician to consider the health risks and make a decision about returning to school that will best support the child. Parents are directed to schools to discuss available options and support.

Students Requiring Individualized Support, Considerations during COVID-19

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. This document has been created to support students with diverse needs and staff supporting these students during COVID-19.

Because of the long break from traditional routines and face-to-face instruction, some students with diverse needs will require a modified transition back to school. School teams and families will need to work collaboratively together to plan for a student's transition back to school.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves and gowns are determined case-by-case. Staff are to wear additional PPE based on the level of support a student requires. Pathways programs at EICS have been provided with face shields, disposable gloves and masks to support staff who require additional PPE.
- For students where there is a high likelihood of contact with bodily fluids, staff will wear the appropriate PPE that was required pre-COVID.

- Masks must be used in circumstances where there is prolonged close contact and a distance of two metres cannot be maintained.

Physical Distancing

- Support with daily living skills is often required when a student has diverse or diverse needs.
- Where possible limit the amount of physical prompting with students. However, if physical support is required, both the staff member and the student are to wash hands pre and post physical prompting.
- If possible, when physically supporting the student, ask them to face away from the staff member supporting the student. Limit speaking/conversation when physically supporting a student.

Supporting Daily Living Skills

1. Food/Eating

Use good hygiene practices when handling food. Avoid bare hand contact. For example, use utensils, deli napkins, or dispensing equipment to handle food. Frequently wash hands with plain soap and water to reduce the risk of transmission if you are handling foods. Fresh foods will be washed with soap and water and rinsed thoroughly.

- Wash hands as per Hand Washing Protocols.
- Staff prepare student's food wearing gloves; use a paper towel to place fresh food items on and keep food in the container provided by the parents.
- Parents provide their own utensils and containers for their children.
- Students wash hands prior to eating. If required, staff support student in washing his/her hands.
- Staff monitor to ensure the student remains seated while eating.
- Staff return all waste and containers to the student's backpack using the same containers provided by the parents.

2. Toileting

- Staff to ensure the appropriate items are accessible in the washroom to assist in toileting.
- Wash hands as per Hand Washing Protocols.
- Staff are to wear gloves.
- Staff support the student in the washroom as required

- If Staff are to remain at the student's side, ask the student not to speak and to turn their head away from the worker, if able.
- If a second person is required to assist, the second staff member will wear gloves while supporting and the two staff members are to distance as much as possible.
- Keep the bathroom door (or cubicle door) ajar (if appropriate) to support physical distancing.
- If necessary, staff support student in washing hands
- See procedures for [donning and doffing gloves](#).
- Wash hands as per Hand Washing Protocols.

3. Hand Washing

- Staff to support the student to wash hands as required.
- If the student touches his/her face, mouth or nose, whenever possible staff direct and support the student to wash his/her hands.
- Where appropriate, staff to provide verbal cues but preferably visual supports for hand washing.
- Wash hands as per Hand Washing Protocols.

4. Communication Support

- Prior to supporting a student with a communication device or a communication program, wash hands as per Hand Washing Protocols.
- Support student to wash his/her hands
- Ensure assistive communication devices are wiped down with disinfectant on a regular basis (i.e., twice a day).

5. Supporting Regulation

- If able, wash hands as per Hand Washing Protocols.
- Staff to employ an appropriate strategy (verbal, visual, physical action) to support a student as laid out in the student's Regulation Support Plan. When necessary, staff engage by using NVCI strategies.
- Where appropriate, staff to request assistance.
- When the student is regulated, everyone involved in supporting regulation should wash their hands.

6. Sensory Rooms

- Individual sensory bins or activities that are not shared between children may be used (e.g. play dough labelled for individual child use).

- For students who require use of larger sensory equipment for regulation, please speak with our occupational therapist to determine alternative activities or determine a cleaning protocol between uses of the equipment by a limited number of students.

Links to Resources:

[Alberta Education K-12 Relaunch Information](#)

[Hand Hygiene](#) - videos and Protocols

[Choosing and Wearing Non-Medical Masks](#)

[Donning and Doffing Nonsterile Disposable Gloves](#)