

# Turtle Mountain School Division

## Return to School Plan for the 2021–2022 School Year

August 30, 2021



Manitoba 

## Overview—Planning for the 2021–2022 School Year

After 18 months of facing the global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic together, Manitoba is on the road to reopening. Manitoba's test positivity rate, hospitalizations and active cases have continued to decline in June and July, while vaccination rates continue to climb.

This collective effort and progress means that Manitoba schools will open on September 7, 2021, with all students returning to in-class learning.

This document summarizes the plan for reopening schools in the fall of 2021, which includes:

- Ensuring a safe and healthy environment for all students and staff
- Having all students in class full-time
- Continuing to implement public health fundamentals (self-screening, hand hygiene and staying home when sick)
- Monitoring and implementing additional public health measures and contingency planning, as needed, to address changes in local community or school epidemiology
- Shifting towards addressing the impacts the pandemic has had on the mental health, well-being and learning of students and the school community

Four priority areas will guide planning as students and staff return to class:

1. Following health and safety measures as per public health guidance
2. Promoting mental health and well-being
3. Assessing and addressing learning impacts
4. Vaccinating Manitobans through outreach and promotion

For the 2021–2022 school year, \$58 million has been allocated to support the priority areas of health and safety, mental health and well-being, and assessing and addressing the learning impacts in our schools. This includes a \$5 million fund that has already been provided upfront to school divisions over the summer to support summer programming and assessment and learning activities for the start of the year.

Manitoba Education and education stakeholders worked closely throughout the 2020–2021 school year to develop and implement the provincial COVID-19 response for the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system. This partnership was of critical importance to the success of the response. In 2021–2022, education stakeholders will continue to be integral to response planning. Planning will focus on mental health, well-being, and learning within a context of safe and healthy schools.



## Reflecting on the Last School Year

Over the past two school years, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption. After a period of school closures in the spring of 2020, schools reopened for the 2020–2021 year at Caution (Yellow) level on the provincial Pandemic Response System. All Kindergarten to Grade 8 students were learning in-class full-time. Students with special learning needs and students at risk were prioritized for in-class learning. Many students in Grades 9 to 12 followed a schedule that blended in-class learning with learning remotely.

Throughout fall, cases of COVID-19 began to rise in the community. Public health officials advised a targeted implementation of tighter restrictions in select schools. This approach included full-time remote learning for all students in Grades 7 to 12 for two weeks following the December school holidays.

April and May saw a third wave of COVID-19 cases across the province. Again, public health officials advised a targeted approach of tighter restrictions in regions with higher transmission levels. At its peak, 47 per cent of schools were in full time remote learning to support the public health efforts to slow the spread. Students in full time remote learning went from four per cent in April to 34 per cent in May. In June, cases in the community and in schools began to decline, reflecting public health recommendations and orders as well as the increasing rates of vaccinations across the province.

The 4-3-2-One Great Summer Reopening Path, announced in June 2021, offered a phased in approach with fewer public health restrictions depending on achieving vaccination targets and keeping cases of COVID-19 under control. The reopening plan set key milestones and envisioned that, by Labour Day, all services, facilities, and businesses will reopen with limited restrictions in some cases. Because of the high percentage of Manitobans who have chosen vaccination, along with the ongoing efforts to follow public health advice and practice the fundamentals, these milestones have been achieved ahead of time.



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## Priority 1: Health and Safety

*Success: Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools are open for full-time in-class learning for all students, with contingency plans in place.*

**Schools will begin the school year at the Caution (Yellow) level of the Pandemic Response System.**

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### CAUTION

The spread of COVID-19 is at low to moderate levels.

Household and close contact transmission is occurring in Manitoba.

There may be multiple and isolated small cluster outbreaks (or a small number of larger outbreaks) which are mostly contained.

Community transmission is low and/or localized/geographically limited.

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Public health measures have been adapted to reflect the changing public health situation.

While current case numbers and vaccination rates are encouraging, there is a need to plan with public health officials regarding increased cases or a resurgence of COVID-19, as well as a resurgence of other respiratory viruses that may resemble COVID-19 symptoms. Schools need to plan for and be ready to implement additional measures if required.

### Public Health Measures

- Staff and students will continue to follow the fundamentals (self-screening, hand hygiene and staying home when sick).
  - Cohorts will be used for Kindergarten to Grade 6 to reduce the potential exposure in students not yet eligible for vaccination. There is the potential to move away from cohorts as the year progresses.
  - Masks are required for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students, staff, and visitors while indoors and while riding on a school bus. Mask breaks can occur with physical distancing, 2 meters to the greatest extent possible. Masks can be removed when outside.
  - Schools should encourage physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. Schools will manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways and washrooms, to minimize crowding and allow for the ease of people passing through. Schools will continue the practice of staggered entrance and exit times, or use separate entrances (if feasible).
  - Cleaning and disinfecting will focus on high-touch surfaces and common areas but frequency can return to normal practices. Washrooms are the exception as they require more intensive cleaning. These facilities should also be used in a staggered manner.
  - Schools will continue to implement non touch water drinking practices.
  - Sharing toys, manipulatives and shared play stations is permitted, provided good hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.
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- Schools will continue the practice of hand hygiene stations at the entrance and exit of school facilities and classrooms.
- School transportation will return to pre-COVID policies and practices with some additional cleaning requirements. Assigned seating will continue. Mask use is mandatory.
- Extra-curricular activities and field trips are permitted in accordance with public health guidance and orders, with the exception of overnight trips. This exception is subject to change to follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.
- Wind instruments and indoor singing are allowed, while ensuring adequate ventilation and encouraging physical distancing where possible. Instruments, including accessories (e.g. drum sticks, mallets) should not be shared, except for equity of access purposes. If sharing, instruments and accessories will be cleaned and disinfected between users.
- Type and size of gatherings and assemblies will align with public health recommendations and orders for indoor gatherings at the time. Smaller grade specific or cohorted assemblies are recommended.
- Visitors and community use of schools will be permitted for activities allowed by public health recommendations and orders.
- School and classroom libraries are open for use. Ensure good hand hygiene before and after use.
- Schools will focus on maintaining ventilation and continue to ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are working properly, while opening windows when weather permits. Provincial guidance on ventilation will be followed.
- The use of outdoor space for in-class learning is encouraged, weather permitting.

Details of public health measures can be found in [Appendix 1](#).

## Contingency Planning

The degree to which schools can remain open for in-class learning depends on several factors, such as vaccinations, variants of COVID-19 and the capacity of our health care system. We are committed to working with our public health and education partners to keep schools open for in-class learning.

Schools will plan to implement additional public health measures as outlined in the Caution (Yellow), Restricted (Orange) and Critical (Red) levels of the Pandemic Response System ([Appendix 2](#)). As the level of risk changes, public health officials may identify regions or schools of concern. Schools will work with public health officials and Manitoba Education to implement the appropriate additional public health measures and contingency plans. Depending on the situation at the time, public health guidance may require modification to some provisions. School-wide shifts to remote learning will be a measure of last resort.

For symptomatic students who are required to stay home, smooth learning transitions will be needed. Classroom teachers will ensure these students stay connected to on-going learning by providing at-home learning packages and/or remote learning until they are able to return to the classroom.



The provincial *Manitoba Education Standards for Remote Learning* guidelines will be followed by schools in temporary remote learning to ensure students continue to learn and be assessed by their teachers. The guidelines can be found at: [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/remote\\_learn\\_standards.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/remote_learn_standards.pdf)

## **Public Health Case and Contact Management**

Case and contact management of confirmed cases of COVID-19 is an important and effective public health strategy for reducing transmission. With declining cases of COVID-19 and increased vaccinations, it is anticipated that case and contact management will evolve over time as we transition back to normal processes. COVID-19 case and contact management processes that are currently in place will remain until public health officials advise otherwise.

Schools will continue with good documentation practices to record student attendance in class and at extra-curricular activities. All students and staff will continue practicing good hand hygiene and staying home when sick. Schools will plan for students to learn from home when they are sick or symptomatic and required to stay home.

## **Testing**

Public access testing sites across the province, along with the dedicated Fast Pass sites, will remain open to ensure geographical access, appointment options, and quick turn around time to results.

The Provincial Testing Task Force continues to review testing capacity needs. A strategic approach to testing is being developed that meets provincial capacity needs and maintains effective turnaround times for Manitobans. This includes careful planning for a possible resurgence of other respiratory viruses that may mirror COVID-19 symptoms, such as influenza.

## **COVID 19 Dashboard: School-Aged and School Staff Cases in Manitoba**

The Kindergarten to Grade 12 Schools Data Dashboard was frequently used by families and education stakeholders for current and cumulative information on cases associated with schools. A case associated with a school that appeared on the dashboard did not mean that the individual was present at the school when infectious or that acquisition or transmission occurred at the school.

Dashboard updates were paused for July and August, because of summer holidays. Manitoba Education will resume working with public health officials to update the dashboard in September 2021. Changes may occur over time as public health officials shift case and contact management approaches.





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## Priority 2: Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being

*Success: Mental health supports are responsive to the needs of students and school staff.*

COVID-19 has impacted the mental health and wellness of many Manitoba students, educators and school staff. In-class learning, peer contact and school celebrations have been disrupted for a generation of students. Isolation and loneliness, as well as disruptions to routines and a sense of loss, have contributed to increased anxiety and depression. This impact has been heightened for those who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Teachers and staff have been responsive to the changing public health situation and the needs of their students and families, while also grappling with the impacts of the pandemic personally, alongside all Manitobans. This has taken a toll on all involved in the education system and the impacts are expected to be felt for years to come.

In the 2020–2021 school year, the province supported a number of initiatives that support student mental health and well-being with \$2.5 million invested over and above the per pupil funding provided to school divisions. Additional investments included the following:

- Project 11 – A classroom and virtual program developed by the True North Youth Foundation was expanded to additional grades.
- Provincial pilot of Enhanced School-Based Mental Health and Addictions Supports – This pilot integrates and enhances access to mental health and addiction supports for students in Grades 6 to 12.
- Kids Help Phone – The province invested in virtual programming for Kids Help Phone.
- The Remote Learning Support centre also offered services and supports to students and families through their team of service providers and their resources available at [www.mbremotelearning.ca](http://www.mbremotelearning.ca).
- Investments were made in Families and Schools Together to build resilient families with young, school-aged children.
- Investments were made in mental health supports for the Community Schools Program.
- Manitoba also invested in an expansion of Thrival Kits, developed by the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth.

Manitoba Education, the Manitoba School Boards Association, SAFE Work Manitoba, public health officials and other stakeholders also developed the Manitoba Pandemic Support Guides, a series of health and safety resources to support school staff. These guides included:

- Promoting Physical Safety - [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg\\_promote.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg_promote.pdf)
- Taking Care of Yourself - [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg\\_taking\\_care.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg_taking_care.pdf)
- Caring for Our Students - [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg\\_caring\\_student.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg_caring_student.pdf)
- Resources for Students and Adults - [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg\\_resources.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mpsg_resources.pdf)



Mental health and well-being tip sheets that were developed as part of this strategy are available as follows:

- Tips for students – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_students.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_students.pdf)
- Tips for Parents and Caregivers – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_parents.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_parents.pdf)
- Tips for Teachers – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_teachers.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_teachers.pdf)
- Resources for Youth and Adults – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_resources.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_resources.pdf)

While schools have remained safe, it is recognized that some students and school staff may have feelings of anxiety about COVID-19 and returning to school. In 2021-2022, the province is developing a continuum of mental health and well being supports for Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools. These supports will strategically expand existing programming and add new programming to provide a range of supports to respond to the differential mental health impacts of the pandemic on students and teachers. Through per pupil funding and targeted investments, school divisions and independent schools are asked to prioritize mental health and well-being, and develop a plan in response to their local needs. This continuum of supports is important for responding to the needs of individual students and communities.

Partnerships with community organizations and stakeholders like The Manitoba Teachers Society, the Canadian Mental Health Association and the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth will also continue.

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### Priority 3: Assessing and Addressing Learning Impacts

*Success: Students have access to and engage in high-quality learning and plans are in place to address learning impacts.*

The continuity of education is central to our fall planning. The impacts of COVID-19 on student learning will be felt in the 2021–2022 school year and beyond. These impacts have affected students and staff in different ways and a varied, strategic approach to address them is required. Funding is available to schools and school divisions to support learning priorities over the summer and into the next school year.

School divisions and schools will incorporate the following principles into their approach to addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on student learning:

- addressing the mental well-being of students and staff once in class learning has resumed, as a foundation for learning
- using assessments to further understand the impacts of COVID-19 for learners, examining themes across classes and school communities and using the results to inform planning
- understanding individual students' unique strengths and needs
- building plans that acknowledge the diversity of student and educator experiences during the pandemic





- collaborating with students, parents and caregivers, other classroom teachers and student services personnel
- meeting students where they are in their learning process as they transition from periods of remote learning back to in-class learning
- developing plans to address the holistic needs of students, especially students identified as having been most at risk during the pandemic
- providing access to rich learning experiences in all subject areas

## **Provincial Assessments**

The province is committed to developing a new student assessment framework that includes strengthening classroom assessments in all grades and creating new summative assessments in the early years, middle years and Grade 10. In the 2021–2022 school year, the Grade 3 Assessment in Reading, Lecture and Numeracy and the Grade 4 Assessment in French Immersion Lecture, and the Middle Years Assessment of Key Competencies in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension and Expository Writing will continue. The assessments will be important for understanding the impact of COVID 19 on student learning.

The pandemic resulted in the cancellation of the Grade 12 provincial exams during the last two school years. The 2021–2022 school year is an opportunity to move forward with developing a Grade 10 assessment as recommended by the Commission on Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education. Therefore, the Grade 12 provincial tests will not proceed in 2021–2022 and the province will work towards the development of an assessment in Grade 10.

## **Remote Learning**

In addition to the remote learning offered by school divisions in 2020–2021, the province launched the Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre in January 2021 to provide direct remote learning supports to Kindergarten to Grade 8 students and teachers.

For 2021–2022, students who are immunocompromised (or those with household members who are) will continue to require remote learning. The province has committed \$5 million to the Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre to provide remote learning for these students. For students in Grades 9 to 12, InformNet, Teacher Mediated Option (TMO) and Learning from Home School (LFHS)/L'École Apprendre-chez-soi will continue to provide remote learning options. InformNet will have capacity to support up to 3200 students. TMO will have capacity to support up to 800 students. LFHS, a French Immersion online high school, will have capacity to support up to 525 students.

In addition, because the 2021–2022 school year will continue to require staff and students to stay home when they are sick, schools and school divisions will plan for absenteeism. Classroom teachers will ensure smooth transitions to temporary remote learning by supporting the development and provision of at-home learning packages and/or remote learning for students who are isolating.



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## Priority 4: Vaccination Outreach and Promotion

*Success: High vaccine uptake occurs among students and staff.*

It is important that youth in Manitoba are protected against COVID-19. The best way to achieve this is for youth to receive both doses of an approved COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they are eligible.

The campaign to vaccinate Manitobans aged 12 to 17 has been underway since May and close to 65% have already received one dose. Health Canada approval for vaccinating younger children (ages 5 to 11) may be granted in the fall. Public health officials are planning to implement vaccinations for this age group once the vaccines have been approved. Vaccine promotion activities for Manitoba youth are ramping up to support a safe return to schools. The Vaccine Implementation Task Force will bring forward plans for school based COVID-19 immunization campaigns for youth aged 12 to 17 and children 5 to 11 years of age (once approved) to begin in the fall. Schools located in communities with lower vaccine uptake will be prioritized to boost vaccination rates to help prevent outbreaks. Offering vaccinations in schools is safe and effective, and helps address accessibility barriers for many families. Families wishing to have their youth and children vaccinated outside of the school setting will continue to have access to other options, including pharmacies, primary care physicians and pop-up clinics in the community.

## Appendix 1:

Public health measures for the reopening of schools on September 7, 2021

		Measures
Instructional Program	Kindergarten to Grade 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students are learning in class. Full curriculum is being taught.</li> <li>• Modifications to delivery may be required as a result of current public health measures.</li> </ul>
	Students with Special Learning Needs and Students at Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with special learning needs and students at risk may continue to require additional supports, as well as frequent collaboration and planning, strong communication, flexibility and creativity within the student support team. Students will continue to receive appropriate supports, as per the student-specific planning process and where required by their individual health care plans.</li> <li>• School teams will continue to work in collaboration with families and related agencies and organizations that support children, youth and their families. Planning will take into account particular timelines, responsibilities of each partner and key practices across environments, to ensure appropriate educational programming is in place for in-class or remote learning.</li> </ul>
	Students who are Immunocompromised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre will provide remote learning for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 who are immunocompromised.</li> <li>• InformNet, Teacher Mediated Options and Learning from Home School/L'École Apprendre-chez-soi are available for students in Grades 9 to 12 who are immunocompromised.</li> </ul>

	Measures
<b>Physical Distancing and Cohorts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will use cohorts for Kindergarten to Grade 6 to assist with case management and to minimize exposure for students who are not yet eligible for vaccinations. There is the potential to move away from cohorts as the year progresses, depending on public health recommendations at the time.</li> <li>Schools should encourage physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>Schools will manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways, and washrooms to minimize crowding and allow for the ease of people passing through. They will implement the practice of staggered entrance and exit times, or use separate entrances (if feasible).</li> <li>Schools will be prepared to implement physical distancing requirements of 1 to 2 metres when recommended or directed by public health officials.</li> </ul>
<b>Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-medical masks are mandatory in all indoor spaces, including schools, for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. This requirement includes masks in the classroom and while riding the bus. Mask breaks can occur with physical distancing, 2 metres to the greatest extent possible. Masks can be removed when outside. Public health officials will continue to monitor closely and will adjust guidance as needed.</li> <li>The province will ensure masks and personal protective equipment are available to schools for use.</li> <li>Manitoba Education will work with public health officials to determine the level of personal protective equipment required for staff supporting students who require interventions or supports that must be delivered in close proximity. Existing guidance to be followed.</li> <li>For further information on mask use, refer to <a href="http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/">www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School transportation will return to pre-COVID policies and practices with some additional cleaning requirements.</li> <li>Buses will be at full capacity.</li> <li>Assigned seating will be retained.</li> <li>Mask use is mandatory.</li> </ul>
<b>Extra-curricular, sports and field trips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra-curricular activities, including sports, optional programming and field trips, are allowed, as long as the activities follow current public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> <li>Overnight trips remain prohibited. This is subject to change. Any change will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>

	Measures
<b>Assemblies and gatherings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types and size of gatherings and assemblies will align with public health recommendations and orders for indoor gatherings at the time. Smaller grade-specific or cohorted assemblies are recommended.</li> </ul>
<b>Visitors, Community Use of Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors, volunteers and community use of schools are permitted, provided they adhere to public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> <li>• School divisions and schools will ensure that any required public health recommendations and orders are followed by the users of the facilities.</li> <li>• Schools will ensure proper documentation of visitors is implemented to support case and contact management.</li> </ul>
<b>Public Health Fundamentals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and staff will continue to follow hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Guidance is found at <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/focus-on-the-fundamentals.html">www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/focus-on-the-fundamentals.html</a>.</li> <li>• Schools will ensure the on-going practice of hand hygiene stations at entrances and exits to school facilities and classrooms and encourage frequent usage.</li> <li>• It is important that parents and guardians screen their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms before sending them to school each day. A self-screening tool is available at <a href="https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/">https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/</a>.</li> <li>• Schools can require students or staff who are showing symptoms to stay home, encourage them to seek testing and follow public health recommendations and orders on testing. Current public health information on isolation requirements and exemptions is found at <a href="https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html">https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html</a>.</li> </ul>

	Measures
<b>Cleaning and Disinfecting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the risk of COVID-19 transmission from surfaces is low, a transition to pre-COVID cleaning practices will occur.</li> <li>• Cleaning and disinfecting will focus on high-touch surfaces and common areas but frequency can return to normal practices. Washrooms are the exception, as they require more intensive cleaning.</li> <li>• Schools will be prepared to enhance cleaning and disinfection measures and protocols when required.</li> <li>• Schools will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Monitor hand hygiene supplies to ensure an ample supply at all sinks in washroom and kitchen areas.</li> <li>◦ Continue to implement touchless water drinking practice, including the use of water bottles and touchless water fountains where available.</li> <li>◦ Return bus cleaning to pre-COVID practices.</li> <li>◦ Perform good hand hygiene after waste removal. No-touch waste receptacles are preferred.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Health Canada has posted a list of disinfectants shown to be effective against COVID-19 at <a href="http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html">www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Food Handling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only school staff will handle, prepare and serve food, following all safe food handling protocols.</li> <li>• Utensils should be used.</li> <li>• Remove shared food containers from eating areas. If using single serve packets of condiments, provide them directly to students. Use prepackaged snacks and serve them directly to students.</li> <li>• Open kitchen and cafeteria areas to eat, but avoid overcrowding.</li> <li>• Ensure proper hand hygiene practices.</li> <li>• Food and nutrition courses involving food preparation with students may continue if supervised by qualified staff who follow industry standards.</li> </ul>
<b>Sharing toys, and manipulatives and using the library</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can share toys and manipulatives . Ensure hand hygiene before and after use.</li> <li>• Shared play stations (e.g., water tables and sand tables) are permitted, provided good hand hygiene before and after use is practiced.</li> <li>• School and classroom libraries are open for use. Ensure good hand hygiene before and after use</li> </ul>



	Measures
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will apply guidance, including the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>move activities outdoors when possible (for example, lunch, classes and physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit.</li> <li>ensure that the ventilation system operates properly.</li> <li>increase air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system.</li> <li>open windows when possible and if weather permits.</li> <li>maximize space and avoid crowded rooms and hallways.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Music (Wind instruments and singing indoors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wind instruments and indoor singing are permitted.</li> <li>Assess ventilation, encourage spacing where possible and consider outdoor classrooms as weather permits.</li> <li>Sharing of music stands and sheet music is permitted, provided good hand hygiene practices are followed.</li> <li>Instruments, including accessories (e.g. drum sticks, mallets) should not be shared. If sharing instruments and accessories is required for equity purposes, then they will be thoroughly cleaned between users.</li> </ul>
Child Care Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will work cooperatively with school-based child care centres to ensure that they can continue to operate. This includes protection of designated child care centre space for child care centres in schools, and an approach to supporting shared spaces, including cleaning protocols.</li> </ul>
Technology Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology education programming is permitted, provided public health measures are followed.</li> <li>When planning for technical-vocational, industrial arts, human ecology and applied commerce education programs, the following Manitoba COVID-19 support documents may provide useful sector-specific information: <i>Workplace Guidance for Business Owners and Guidance for Industry Sectors</i>. These documents are available at <a href="https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/restoring-workplace-guidance.pdf">https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/restoring-workplace-guidance.pdf</a>.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 2: School reopening contingency plans for Caution (Yellow), Restricted (Orange) and Critical (Red) Levels

Schools will be prepared to implement measures as outlined in Caution (Yellow), Restricted (Orange) and Critical (Red) levels of the Pandemic Response System, as well as any additional public health measures in place at the time. The table below provides an overview of additional public health measures that may be required to ensure student and staff safety.

		Additional Public Health Measures		
		Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Instructional Programming	K to 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students are in full-time class learning to the greatest extent possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students are in class learning to the greatest extent possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remote learning for all students is required. Schools are open for Kindergarten to Grade 6 students of critical services workers who cannot make alternative care arrangements, students with special needs and students at risk.</li> <li>Focus on literacy, numeracy and other curricular areas, as time and resources permit.</li> <li>Rotating in of small groups (5 to 6) may occur for support and assessment purposes.</li> <li>Classroom teacher provides remote learning to ALL students as per the Manitoba Education Standards for Remote Learning.</li> </ul>

		Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Instructional Programming	9 to 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students are in class learning to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>• Modifications to program delivery may be required as a result of current public health measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blended learning is required where two metres of physical distancing and cohorts with a minimum of one metre could not be achieved.</li> <li>• Modifications to program delivery may be required as a result of public health measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move to remote learning.</li> <li>• Students with special learning needs and students at risk may be accommodated at school.</li> <li>• Rotating in of small groups (5 to 6) may occur for support and assessment purposes.</li> <li>• The classroom teacher provides remote learning to ALL students as per the <i>Manitoba Education Standards for Remote Learning</i>.</li> </ul>

	Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Physical Distancing and Cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage physical distancing between students to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>• Other physical distancing and cohort measures for Kindergarten to Grade 6 continue to be followed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools must ensure two metres of physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, and adjust classroom space as necessary; excess furniture must be removed from classrooms to create additional space; other spaces within schools must be repurposed to accommodate more distancing (e.g., multipurpose rooms, shared spaces, common areas, and libraries).</li> <li>• Where physical distancing is not possible, students must remain within cohorts with a minimum distance of one metre.</li> <li>• Other physical distancing and cohort measures found in Caution (Yellow) continue to be followed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two metres of physical distancing must be maintained for students who are in-class learning.</li> <li>• Multiple groups are allowed to operate in a school setting at the same time, provided these groups can be segregated to prevent contact with each other. The use of separate entrances/exits and staggered drop-off/pick-up schedules should be employed to minimize congestion and mixing of groups.</li> <li>• Other physical distancing and cohort measures found in Caution (Yellow) continue to be followed.</li> </ul>
PPE (Masks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mask use and any additional personal protective equipment usage will follow current public health recommendations and orders.</li> </ul>		

	Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seating plans required.</li> <li>• Where possible individuals from the same household occupy the same seat.</li> <li>• Any additional measures would align with public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bussing will be based on divisions' discretions. Urban, rural and northern school divisions may transport children of critical service workers who do not have other means of transportation.</li> <li>• Any additional measures will align with public health recommendations and orders.</li> </ul>
<b>Field Trips and Extra-Curricular Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
<b>Assemblies and gatherings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
<b>Visitors and Community Use of Schools</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
<b>Cleaning and Disinfecting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time</li> <li>• Health Canada has posted a list of disinfectants shown to be effective against COVID-19 at <a href="http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html">www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html</a>.</li> </ul>		

	Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
<b>Food Handling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
<b>Sharing Toys, Manipulatives, and Use of Libraries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
<b>Ventilation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
<b>Music, Wind Instruments and Singing Indoors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		



## ***APPENDIX 3:* RESTORING SAFE SCHOOLS-A Guide for Parents, Caregivers and Students**

# RESTORING SAFE SCHOOLS

## A Guide for Parents, Caregivers and Students



On September 7, 2021, schools will reopen for full-time in class learning for all students with contingency plans in place.

Our planning for the school year focuses on renewal and addressing the impacts that the pandemic has had on mental health, well-being and learning.

We are committed to working with our public health and education partners to keep schools open for full-time in-class learning. Level of risk may change over the course of the year and schools will work with public health officials and Manitoba Education to implement any additional public health measures.

### *What's different from last year?*

<b>Cohorts and Physical Distancing</b>	Cohorts will be used for Kindergarten to Grade 6 to reduce potential exposure in students not yet eligible for vaccination. Schools will manage the flow of people in common areas.
<b>Masks</b>	Masks are required for all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students, staff, and visitors while indoors and while riding on a school bus. Mask breaks can occur with physical distancing, 2 meters to the greatest extent possible. Masks can be removed when outside.
<b>Fundamentals</b>	Staff and students will continue to follow the fundamentals (self-screening, hand hygiene, and staying home when sick).
<b>Bus Transportation</b>	School transportation will return to pre-COVID policies and practices with some additional cleaning requirements. Assigned seating will continue. Mask use is mandatory.
<b>Extra-curricular activities and field trips</b>	These will be permitted in accordance with public health guidance and orders.
<b>Music and band</b>	Wind instruments and indoor singing are allowed, while ensuring adequate ventilation and encouraging physical distancing where possible.
<b>Toys and Manipulatives</b>	Sharing toys, manipulatives and shared play centres is permitted, provided good hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.
<b>Libraries</b>	School and classroom libraries are open for use. Ensure good hand hygiene before and after use.
<b>Food Handling/ Service</b>	Kitchens and cafeterias will be open. Only staff must handle food. Prepackaged snacks are preferred. Avoid overcrowding and practice good hand hygiene before and after.

<b>Cleaning</b>	Cleaning and disinfecting will focus on high-touch surfaces and common areas. Washrooms are the exception, which require more frequent cleaning.
<b>Ventilation</b>	Maintain ventilation and ensure mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are working properly. Open windows when weather permits.
<b>Visitors and Community Use of Schools</b>	Visitors, volunteers and community use of schools will be permitted provided they adhere to public health recommendations and orders at the time.

## Keeping schools safe and open

**Get the vaccine:** The best way to protect youth against COVID-19 is for them to receive both doses of an approved vaccine as soon as they are eligible. Health Canada approval for vaccinating younger children (ages 5 to 11) may be granted in the fall. Public health officials are planning to implement vaccinations for this age group once the vaccines have been approved.

**Practice the fundamentals:** Parents and guardians should continue to screen their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms before sending them to school. A self-screening tool is available at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>.

Schools can require students and/or staff who are showing symptoms to stay home, encourage them to seek testing and follow public health recommendations and orders on testing. Schools will plan for students to learn from home when they are sick or symptomatic and required to stay home.

Good hand hygiene provides significant protection from many infections, including COVID-19. Students should be prepared to clean and/or sanitize their hands when they enter and exit the school and their classrooms. Good hand hygiene will also be practiced before and after activities, such as sharing toys, using common play stations and library visits.

**Be optimistic but ready:** Students can be reassured that Manitobans have made significant progress in slowing the spread of COVID-19. While current case numbers and vaccination rates are encouraging, cases may increase. There may also be a resurgence of other respiratory viruses with symptoms that resemble those of COVID-19. Schools have planned for these scenarios and are ready to implement additional public health measures if required.

Closing schools and shifting to remote learning will be a measure of last resort. Public health will identify regions or schools of concern or those with an outbreak. Schools will work with public health and Manitoba Education to implement the appropriate additional public health measures.

**Talk about mental health and well-being:** COVID-19 has impacted the mental health and wellness of many Manitoba students. In-class learning, peer contact and school celebrations have been disrupted for a generation of students.

Schools have a range of resources and supports that improve student well-being. The province continues to invest in existing and new programs and initiatives. Partnerships with community organizations and stakeholders like The Manitoba Teachers Society, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth will continue.

Tip sheets and resources for student mental health and well-being are available as follows:

- Tips for students – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_students.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_students.pdf)
- Tips for Parents and Caregivers – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_parents.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_parents.pdf)
- Tips for Teachers – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_teachers.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_teachers.pdf)
- Resources for Youth and Adults – [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips\\_resources.pdf](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/tips_resources.pdf)

More information on Manitoba Education's COVID-19 response can be found at:  
<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/>.

The COVID 19 dashboard for Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools can be found at:  
<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/schools/index.html>.

## ***APPENDIX 4:* Guidance for Mask Exemptions in Schools**

# Protecting Manitobans

## GUIDANCE FOR MASK EXEMPTIONS IN SCHOOLS



August 2021

Visit [www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/masks.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/masks.html) for the latest Mask Guidance for Manitobans.

### Under what circumstances will a student be exempt from wearing a mask?

Public health officials advise that inappropriate exemptions to mandated mask wearing have the potential to inadvertently compromise the overall public health measures implemented in schools to mitigate risk to all and to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in Manitoba schools and communities.

School divisions and independent schools shall only grant exemptions to mandated mask wearing for the following specified circumstances:

- children under the age of two years
- children under the age of five years, either chronologically or developmentally, who refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
- people, especially children, with severe sensory processing disorders
- people with facial deformities that are incompatible with masking
- people with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) who are triggered by a face covering
- people with extreme agoraphobia/asphyxia phobia (which is long standing and pre-dating COVID-19)
- people with a cognitive impairment, intellectual deficiency, or autism spectrum disorder for who wearing a face covering will cause severe distress or disorganization
- people with a medical condition unrelated to COVID-19, including breathing or cognitive difficulties or a disability, which prevents them from safely wearing a mask
- people who are unable to apply or remove a mask without help

In a case where a student is having active breathing difficulties, the student will be advised to remove their mask and the parent/guardian/caregiver will be contacted to pick up the student to seek medical attention.

For additional information on medical exemptions, see *COVID-19 Guidance on Medical Exemptions (School Accommodation and Non Medical Masks)* at [www.sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-medical-exemptions-school-and-masks.pdf](http://www.sharedhealthmb.ca/files/covid-19-medical-exemptions-school-and-masks.pdf).



## What should a parent/guardian/caregiver do if their child should be exempt from wearing a mask?

If a parent/guardian/caregiver is concerned about their child's ability to safely wear a mask on the school bus or while at school, they should speak with their child's health care provider. If the child is either unable to properly wear a mask or has a medical condition that does not allow them to wear a mask, the parent/guardian/caregiver must provide written notification to the child's school, specifying the child's specific limitation with wearing a mask from the list above.

A note from a health care provider is not required; however, the school division or independent school has the discretion to request a note be provided by a parent/guardian/caregiver from a health care provider.

Students who are granted an exemption from mandatory mask wearing and who do not wear a mask on the school bus may be seated on the bus in the same seat as household members. They should not be seated with any other passenger from their class or cohort who is not a household member.

In the case of cohorts, if a student has been granted an exemption to mandatory mask wearing, the recommendation in the classroom is unchanged for these students. There is no requirement to adjust the cohort or the seating plan in the class.

For those who are granted exemptions to mandatory mask wearing, it is important to continue practising all the public health fundamentals, including staying home when ill, frequent hand washing with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer, covering coughs, and physical distancing.

## Additional Resources

- Visit the Health Canada website (at [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html)) for more information on how to wear a mask properly.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada provides a poster and guidelines for how to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering: [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering.html).