

Turtle Mountain School Division

Reopening of Schools

September 2020

As of August 14, 2020



On July 30, 2020, Manitoba Education announced plans for the return of students to school effective September 8, 2020 ([Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#)). These plans are based on the following guiding principles:

- Safety, health and well-being for all students, staff, and families is a priority.
- High quality learning and assessment continues for all students.
- Accessible, trauma-informed resources and supports for students, parents, and caregivers.
- Consistent, reliable and appropriate connection to school learning and belonging, for every student, regardless of location, barriers, special needs or challenges.
- System-wide communication and collaboration will promote consistent approaches throughout the province.

Additional information regarding [frequently asked questions](#) can also be found online through the Manitoba government website. The following will occur in order to ensure alignment with provincial requirements, both from Public Health as well as [Manitoba Education](#).

Continued Focus on the Fundamentals

Under no circumstances can any students or staff attend school with any symptoms of illness. Daily use of the [Manitoba COVID-19 screening tool](#) will be necessary in all homes prior to sending students to school. Any students coming to school with symptoms of illness, or who develop symptoms throughout the day, will be isolated. Parents/caregivers would then be asked to pick up the student and seek medical advice.

Frequent sanitizing of surfaces in school will occur, with a focus on high-touch surfaces.

Students will be asked to wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently throughout the day. Hand sanitizer will be available in all classrooms.

Distancing measures will be in place in all classrooms, common areas, as well as school buses.

Students cannot share food/drink or school supplies.

The School Day

Parents/caregivers of students who do not ride the school bus will be asked to drop students off at school no earlier than 8:30 a.m. Upon arriving at school students will be required to proceed directly to their designated classroom, congregating outside or in common areas within the school will not be permitted.

Student cohorts will remain with their groups during recess and lunch periods. This will require the staggering of these breaks during the day. More information will be shared at the school level with parents/caregivers. Schools which have canteens will share more information as to availability in September. Where canteens are operating, distancing requirements will remain and any food will be individually served.

Congregating in common areas such as hallways and entrances will not be permitted. Hallway traffic will be controlled with distancing measures in place. Parents who are picking up children at the end of the day will be asked to remain in their vehicles and not to gather at school entrances.

The wearing of masks is an additional layer of protection, and does not replace distancing requirements. Students in grades 5-12 as well as staff will be strongly encouraged to wear masks in schools, particularly in common spaces and where distancing is more difficult. Non-medical masks will be provided for those needing one.

Water fountains will not be accessible. Students will be encouraged to bring their own bottled water to school.

There will be no outside school visitors, volunteers, or presenters in schools until further notice.

There will be no school assemblies or similar gatherings until further notice.

Fire and lockdown drills will occur with distancing requirements in place, one metre for students within a cohort and two metres for students not within a cohort. Cohort groups must remain four metres apart.

When cohort groups are sharing the same space, such as in a gymnasium or library, cohorts will remain at least four metres apart.

Effort will be made in schools to create space between assigned lockers, coat racks, and other storage areas. Students will be required to use these spaces with efficiency and not to linger or congregate. These spaces will also be assigned in accordance with student cohorts.

Equipment in spaces such as computer and science labs will be sanitized after each use.

Student groups, such as student government, will be permitted to meet during the school day, and will be required to maintain two metres distancing.

There will be no sharing of school equipment or manipulatives which cannot be easily sanitized.

Mental Health and Well-Being of Staff and Students

The mental health and well-being of students and staff will remain of paramount importance. Teachers, guidance counselors, as well as our divisional social work clinician will provide ongoing support for students. Students will be encouraged to talk about their concerns. Staff will receive an orientation on the reopening of school during the first week of September. In addition, students, families, and staff will be encouraged to reference resources which are publically available:

-[Kids Help Phone](#) 1-800-668-6868 or text Connect To 686868

-A [comprehensive list of suggested mental health resources](#) for students, families, and staff can be found in the Well-Being and Mental Health Resources document. Also available is contact information for the [Youth Quaranteen Support Line](#).

-[Helping Children and Teens Cope with Anxiety About COVID-19](#)

-[Managing Your Stress](#)

-The Manitoba Teachers' Society, [What to do to Take Care of You](#)

In-Class Learning

Attendance at school, as per provincial direction, is required unless a student has a medical condition which results in more vulnerability to COVID-19 infection. In cases where this occurs, students will be provided with programming to work remotely from home. Parents/caregivers will not have the option to voluntarily keep students home and receive remote learning materials.

All students in Kindergarten through grade eight will return full-time, five days per week. Students will be assigned into cohort groups, meaning groups of students who stay together throughout the day and do not intermingle with other students. This will occur both within class as well as during any breaks or recesses throughout the day. The maximum size of a cohort is 75 students.

Recommended distancing remains at two metres, however students within the same cohort can maintain one metre of distance.

Establishing cohorts in grades 9-12 is more difficult given the nature of high school programming. Given this, students will be assigned to attend part-time in person and work remotely from home part-time. More information regarding the assigning of students in this regard will be shared with parents/caregivers at the school level. As school reopens in September, grade 9-12 students will attend in-person at least 50% of the time with the intent to achieve full time attendance in school where possible. Students who require technology and/or connectivity in order to work remotely will be provided with the necessary equipment to do so.

In September, and as needed moving forward, the focus will include [recovery learning](#) particularly in the areas of literacy and numeracy. We want to ensure students have the skills required to move forward successfully in their programming. This will involve teachers assessing where students are in their learning and planning accordingly to move forward.

Classroom spaces will be set up to support physical distancing, with the use of alternative spaces within schools as required. This may mean the use of gymnasiums, libraries, and other spaces within schools. In September physical education programming will occur outdoors weather permitting.

Use of equipment in classes such as physical education, home-economics, and industrial arts will occur with equipment being sanitized after each use.

In September, and until further notice, no choral activities will occur in music classes. In addition, no wind instruments will be used within band programming. The playing of the national anthem will continue to occur each morning, but students and staff will refrain from singing.

Planning will occur for the inclusion of special needs students and given COVID-19 precautions which must be in place. Personal protective equipment will be provided to both students and staff where working in close proximity for extended periods of time is required.

Activities Outside the School Day

In September, and until further notice, no outside user groups will be permitted to use school facilities.

Extra-curricular school activities, including sports, will resume as per [return to play guidelines](#) provided by the Manitoba High School Athletics Association.

Student Transportation

Parents/caregivers are encouraged to transport children to school where possible. The transportation department will establish who is able to do so as part of planning for bus seating. Student transportation with school buses will occur in accordance with [provincial guidelines](#).

Students will be seated on the bus one per seat as much as possible. Students who reside in the same home will be asked to sit together two or three to a seat, as well as students who are in the same cohort in school. Once a seating plan has been established for each bus route it will remain exactly the same and will not vary day to day.

Buses will be sanitized after each bus route is complete in the morning and afternoon.

All students in grades 5-12 and bus drivers will be required to wear a mask while on a bus. A mask will be provided to students who do not have one. Younger students may also wear a mask if parents/caregivers choose to do so.

In-town bus pickup will be limited only to students who reside 1.6 kilometres or greater from school. In Killarney this includes Ellis at the hospital, 51 Lakeshore Drive (Country Club), and 550 Lakeshore Drive (beach). In Boissevain we will have one in-town pick up at the bus garage at 340 Broadway Street. Students residing further than 1.6 km's from the school will be eligible.

Contact Tracing and Outbreak Management

If a student or staff member reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The principal will immediately advise the superintendent.
- The superintendent will contact Public Health, seek advice, and collaborate with division and school administration to implement recommendations from Public Health.
- Public Health will lead the response and provide guidance, including ensuring appropriate supports are in place to coordinate the response.
- Public Health will advise staff and students if they have been in close contact, if they need to self-isolate or self-monitor and when they can return to school.
- Public Health is responsible for communicating with close contacts and advising the community if there is a confirmed case. Schools will not communicate such information.

To facilitate contact tracing, schools must:

- Record student attendance in school and on busses regularly and accurately.
- Maintain a log of all itinerant employees that access the building.
- Keep groups of students together and avoid interactions between groups. This will drastically reduce potential exposure to the virus and assist with contact tracing.
- Upon request from Public Health, schools will provide contact information for students and staff who would be considered a close contact of any individual who tests positive for COVID-19.

Individuals with Symptoms

- If symptoms develop while at school, the person will be isolated in a predetermined isolation room and kept at least two meters away from others.
- A medical mask will be provided for and worn by the individual unless there are safety issues that prevent the wearing of a mask.
- Parents/caregivers will be notified to pick up their child immediately and contact Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 or the child's health care provider for direction.
- A staff person may stay with the student until the caregiver arrives but should stay 2 meters from the student, be mindful of hand hygiene and wear a medical mask.
- If a staff member or volunteer becomes symptomatic while at school, they will immediately isolate, notify the administrator and go home to monitor symptoms.

Arrangements as noted in this document are subject to change as we move forward. We will continue to monitor the position of Manitoba Education and Public Health. As has been the case since March/2020, we will continue to post updates on our website at www.tmsd.mb.ca, send email communications to all staff, parents/caregivers, as well as post updates to our [Facebook](#) page.