



# Return to School Plan

Fall 2021

*Welcome* **BACK!**

*Please Note: Division plans will evolve as required by emerging health risk assessments.*

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## Introduction

Welcome back! On behalf the Board of Education and our Senior Leadership Team, I want to thank all staff for an exceptional 2020-21 school year, considering the challenges posed by the pandemic. Across the province, we know that fewer than 15% of COVID-19 cases were acquired in the school setting; most school-associated cases acquired outside the school environment. You did an excellent job of keeping students safe!

I want to thank our families, too, for their support and patience as we did our best to ensure the safety of students while also trying to keep in-school learning happening as smoothly as possible.

Now, we turn our attention to this school year.

On Sunday, July 11, Saskatchewan moved to Step Three of the Re-Opening Roadmap. This means that all public health orders were removed, including the province-wide mandatory masking order and the limits previously placed on events and gathering sizes.

However, COVID-19 continues to spread, and the variants of concern are even more transmissible than the original virus.

I acknowledge that we may have to agree to disagree on some of the recommendations in our plan throughout the year. Please know that every health-related decision we make is done in consultation with local health officials and out of genuine concern for the health and safety of Living Sky School Division's students and staff.

Our schools will continue to have the support and engagement of local Medical Health Officers (MHOs) in responding to any public health risks in school settings, including COVID-19. Our MHOs can provide locally tailored approaches to respond to the presence of COVID-19 in school settings, should this occur, and put in place mitigation and response protocols that align with provincial standards.

We will continue to meet regularly with our local health team and adjust our plan as necessary.

Brenda Vickers

*Brenda Vickers*

Director of Education  
Living Sky School Division

**Living Sky School Division will return to in-class learning with guidance from the province's Re-Opening Roadmap and our local medical health officials.**

**This plan is subject to change should provincial or local circumstances warrant enhanced restrictions.**

**Because of the unpredictability of COVID-19, these guidelines may shift on short notice.**

## Safe Attendance

Health officials continue to advise us all to self-monitor for symptoms. In addition, for everyone's safety, we should stay home if we are sick and seek a COVID-19 test.

At Living Sky School Division:

- Students and staff who are ill should stay home.
- Guests and parents/guardians should refrain from entering schools if they are ill.
- Every school will have a sign-in book to ensure all visitors to the school are documented. Staff are required to sign in if they return to the school after hours or on weekends.

## Masks

Indoors:

- Masks are required for all elementary students and staff who work directly with them. Mask breaks can be taken at each teacher's discretion when it is safe to do so (e.g. when seated and front facing or when taking part in strenuous activity).
- Masks are required in common areas of K-12 schools.
- Masks are strongly recommended for all other staff and students.

Other:

- Masks are required to be worn on buses.
- Masks are required for visitors to the school.
- Masks are not required outdoors.
- Mask use for indoor events such as gym classes, choir and band will be promoted where possible and practical.

**It is important to create a mask-friendly environment in all LSSD buildings.**

A supply of disposable masks will be available at every school and our Central Services office.

All schools will follow our **Illness in Care** plan:

- Staff and students who are ill should stay home until they are symptom free.

Schools will:

- Follow existing notification processes related to communicable disease outbreaks.
- Identify an appropriate isolation area for anyone who is ill until they can leave the facility.
  - Provide the student with a medical mask to wear.
  - Notify the parent or guardian to pick up the student immediately.
  - Remain with the student until he/she is picked up.
- Once the student has left, staff in contact with the student should wash their hands thoroughly.
- The areas where the student was located are to be cleaned and disinfected.

## Communication

The school division will:

- Ensure timely and consistent messaging to all families and employees.
- Post the Division's plan on the LSSD website.
- Ensure the Division's website is up-to-date.

Schools will:

- Ensure timely and consistent communication from the school to families.
- Ensure the school's website and social media feeds are up-to-date.
- Post the school's plan on the school website.

### **Self-Testing Pilot Program**

- Saskatchewan is developing a rapid test self-administration pilot to gauge the demand and uptake for self-administered rapid tests for families who may wish to screen for COVID-19 on an ongoing basis.
- The pilot program would see rapid tests provided to families through their schools, along with instructional information on how to properly self-administer the rapid tests.
- Information regarding the rapid test self-administration pilot for families will soon be provided to school divisions for distribution to families.
- It is anticipated that rapid tests for the pilot program will be allocated to areas of the province where COVID transmission is highest.
- While the recommendation to seek testing and stay home at the first sign of any symptoms will continue, the pilot rapid testing program is intended to gauge public uptake of the use of rapid tests as a self-administered asymptomatic screening tool.

### **Safe Transportation**

- All staff and students on buses are required to wear masks.
- Transportation will provide principals with accurate lists of students riding each bus.
- Drivers will implement seating plans.
- Recreational travel requiring vehicles, such as field trips and extracurricular travel, will occur as it did prior to the pandemic. Masks must be worn if students, Prek-6, are on the bus.
- Additional cleaning and disinfection of buses will remain in place. Drivers will mist between trips and clean their buses thoroughly at the end of each day.

### **Safe Access**

School-day Structure

- No prescribed school-day structure is required.
- Several schools have decided to commence the year with a staggered start. Schools will let families know about start times.
- Schools that have chosen to continue with a modified structure, such as a blocked timetable in the high schools, will have already shared this information on their websites and through social media.

### **Safe Facilities**

School-wide plans for enhanced cleaning and disinfection will continue to be in place.

- Schools will post signs at entrances reminding parents and guardians not to enter the facility if they are sick.
- Visual aids demonstrating appropriate hand hygiene techniques and cough etiquette will be displayed throughout schools.
- Schools will ensure handwashing facilities are operational (hot and cold running water) and

stocked (soap and paper towel).

- Schools will establish procedures for:
  - Cleaning spaces that are shared among different groups during the school day.
  - Cleaning food contact areas and eating locations immediately following use.
  - Emptying garbage bins frequently.
  - Cleaning devices between users.
- Water fountains will not be used except to fill water bottles.

The school division will:

- Ensure appropriate disinfectants are purchased for the purposes they are used.
- Ensure adequate soap and hand sanitizer are available in each building and provide spray bottles and rags for wiping down frequently used surfaces. Wipes will be available for electronics.
- Provide signage to display at the main entrances, reminding parents and guardians not to enter the facility if they are sick.
- Establish priorities for caretakers and create and share guidelines regarding what needs to be cleaned after each use, daily, weekly, etc. (same as those that were in place for 2020-21).
- Provide schools with information regarding proper cleaning protocols for shared spaces and food contact areas.

## Safe Classrooms

### Hygiene

Promote appropriate hand hygiene:

- Properly washing with soap and water is our main strategy.
- Hand sanitizer will be available in every classroom and at the main entrance of all schools and school division buildings.
- Children will be taught how to clean their hands properly using age-appropriate materials.

### Physical Contact

- Although there are no strict guidelines for physical distancing for students or staff, schools will do their best to space students appropriately in classrooms and common areas.

### Instruction

- Full Saskatchewan curriculum will be taught by teachers.
- The Provincial and School Division Interim Plans provide guidance in this area. School Learning Plans will be aligned with the Division Plan.

### Assessment

- There is no requirement for provincial exams for the 2021-22 school year.

## Safe Activities

### Sports and Fitness Activities

- Regular activities may resume within the parameters of LSSD's Safe Schools Plan.

## **Dance, Drama, Band, Choir**

- Regular activities may resume within the parameters of LSSD's Safe Schools Plan.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities and Field Trips**

- Extracurricular activities add value to our students' educational experience. Clubs, sports and the arts allow for students to participate in areas of passion.
- Regular activities will resume in the fall within the parameters set out in this plan.

## **Nutrition Programs**

- Breakfast programs, hot lunches, snack programs, etc. will resume in the fall.
- Schools will continue good safety practices:
  - Control areas where students are preparing food.
  - Ensure proper hand hygiene and surface cleaning methods are used.
  - Ensure students eating lunch at school practice proper hand hygiene (before and after eating), remain seated while they are eating, clean surfaces properly and dispose of garbage before leaving the room.
  - Students should not share food.
  - There should be no self-serve or family-style meal service.

## **Other Items**

### **Vaccinations**

High community vaccine uptake is key to protecting children ineligible for a COVID-19 vaccine. Anyone turning 12 this year and all those who are older are currently eligible for vaccines.

- Staff assume the shared responsibility of assisting one another in maintaining healthy and safe workplaces.
- Staff are encouraged to avail themselves of all Ministry of Health recommended vaccinations.
- Staff are encouraged to discuss the efficacy of recommended vaccinations with their personal health care providers.
- Once vaccines are approved and widely available to children under the age of 12, recommendations regarding masking and other measures in schools will be revisited to factor in increased immunity within the student population.
- The Saskatchewan Health Authority will offer school-based vaccination clinics similar to those offered toward the end of last school year. These clinics will enhance vaccine accessibility for students or staff who have not yet been vaccinated or have received just one shot.

### **Ongoing Response to COVID-19**

- The collaboration between the Saskatchewan Health Authority and schools will continue and will reflect the needs of the school as required.
- All public health agencies respond to localized outbreaks of transmittable diseases like influenza during the course of a year. Public health will continue monitoring and respond to localized COVID-19 outbreaks.
- COVID-19 testing will be available. Testing locations and hours may depend on local rates of transmission and demand.
- Contact tracing is a common practice for disease investigation and will continue for COVID-19.
- Cases and close contacts who are not fully immunized will be advised by public health officials.

## Contingency Plan

- Although we have planned for a safe and full return to school for students and staff, we must be ready to implement a contingency plan if necessary.
- The ability to move smoothly from in-school learning to at-home learning is critical, and once again, blended learning will allow us to flip from a more open scenario to a more closed scenario as seamlessly as possible.
- We will be ready to move from a return to normal to a more restricted model (levels 2, 3 and 4 of our previous plan) if circumstances warrant us taking this action.

## More Information

More information is available at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca).