



**Sturgeon  
Public Schools**

Dare to reimagine learning

2021-2022 School Year Plan

*This document will be updated based on orders from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Education.*

*[GoA Staying Safe and Healthy this School Year Website link](#)*

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Table of Contents

Context.....	3
Health Measures.....	3
Vaccinations .....	3
Illness/Self-Screening Practices .....	4
Illness While at School.....	4
Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 .....	5
Reporting and responding to high rates of absenteeism .....	5
Isolation Requirements .....	5
Physical Distancing .....	6
Masks.....	6
Environmental Measures.....	7
School Operations.....	8
Student Arrival and Entry .....	8
Hand Hygiene .....	8
Respiratory Etiquette.....	8
Classroom Setup.....	8
Student Groups/Cohorts.....	8
End of School Day.....	9
Water Fountains/Water Bottles.....	9
Visitors/Parents/Guardians/Volunteers .....	9
Eating Lunch .....	9
Recess.....	10
Extra-Curricular Activities .....	10
Performance Activities .....	10
Off Site Activities .....	11
School Councils .....	11
Breakfast/Lunch/Snack Programs .....	11
Before and After School Programs.....	11
Shared School Technology .....	11
Learning.....	12
Grade 12 Diploma Exams - NEW .....	12
Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs).....	12
Supporting At-Home Learning While Sick .....	12
Transportation.....	12
Masks on Buses.....	12
Transportation of Students .....	12
Cleaning.....	12
Buildings.....	13
Cleaning.....	13
Community Use of SPS Spaces .....	13
Government of Alberta CMOH Orders & Contingency Plans.....	13
Appendix: Guidance for Schools (K-12) and School Buses.....	13
Appendix: Medical Exception Letter Template.....	13
Appendix: CMOH Order 44-2021 & 48-2021 .....	13
Appendix: GoA Contingency Plans.....	13

## Context

During the October 05, 2021, COVID-19 update, the Premier, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Health announced new actions to manage COVID-19 in schools. These measures include:

- Public Reporting of COVID-19 cases in schools
- Initiating contact notification in schools
- Clarifying COVID-19 outbreak definitions
- Providing rapid testing for K-6 classes experiencing outbreaks
- If three or more COVID-19 cases have been identified in a K-6 class over a five-day period, the class will shift to at-home learning for 10 days.

Due to the dynamic nature of COVID-19, the government has prepared two (2) contingency plans in the event that there is a resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic that impacts Alberta and its education system:

- Contingency Scenario 1: in-school classes (near normal with enhanced health measures)
- Contingency Scenario 2: at-home learning (in-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

During the 2021-2022 school year, Sturgeon Public Schools may request short-term operational shifts to at-home/online learning due to operational reasons.

Implementation of the 2021-2022 School Year Plan is subject to change with the direction from the Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health.

The Government of Alberta will continue monitoring and take whatever actions are needed to manage any high-risk outbreaks of communicable diseases in schools.

The Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH) may recommend additional measures if a school experiences a respiratory illness outbreak including screening for symptoms, masking, and cohorting.

Zone Medical Officers of Health and their designates are available to support school authorities throughout the province.

## Health Measures

### Vaccinations

All staff and students born in 2009 or earlier (turning 12+) can get the COVID-19 vaccine.

COVID-19 vaccines help prevent infection and severe illness. All vaccines are safe, effective and save lives.

### Illness/Self-Screening Practices

Rapid testing kits are being provided to school authorities for distribution to Kindergarten to Grade 6 for schools that are experiencing an outbreak. The rapid testing program is voluntary.

September 23, 2021, COVID daily checklist – [LINK](#)

Dr. Hinshaw has added a recommendation for any unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals when there is a positive COVID case in their household. The recommendation is that any unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals (including children under 12) should stay home for 14 days when a person who lives in the same house has tested positive for COVID-19. This request to stay home for 14 days is only a strong recommendation, not a mandate.

This means that anyone who is not protected with two doses of vaccine after a household positive case is identified should quarantine for 14 days. Dr. Hinshaw indicated that this recommendation only applies to household contacts and not school based (i.e. classmates) or workplace exposures/close contacts.

To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses, parents or guardians **must assess their children daily**, before leaving home, for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory diseases and keep their child(ren) home if they are sick.

If a student or staff member has any of the following core COVID-19 symptoms (new or worsening and not related to other known causes), they are required to isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms or until they receive a negative COVID-19 test result, as per provincial guidelines:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Sore throat (adults only)
- Runny nose (adults only)

#### Students

Children under 18 years of age, including all students who attend Kindergarten through Grade 12 and high school students over 18 years of age, must complete the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist for Children under 18](#) before going to school, child care, or other activities.

#### Adults

School staff and visitors must review the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) to determine if they may enter a school.

### Illness While at School

Students exhibiting signs of illness will be moved to the school's infirmary room. Parents/guardians will be notified and advised to pick-up their child. If the parent/guardian is unable to pick up their child, they must designate an emergency contact for student pick-up. It is the expectation that students are picked up by the family or emergency contact.

- A staff member caring for an ill student must wear a mask.
- If a student or staff member begins developing new symptoms of respiratory illness (e.g., cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, etc.), they will be provided with a mask to wear while waiting to go home.
- Proof of a negative COVID-19 test result is not necessary for a student or staff member to return to school.
- Individuals should not return to school until they are feeling well.

### Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Alberta Health currently posts information publicly regarding school-level COVID-19 cases in schools. Schools with at least two COVID-19 cases are identified. Access the information [here](#).

AHS currently shares positive case information with schools for cases that have been found to be infectious while in attendance. School authorities and schools follow AHS guidance to determine in-school close contacts and notify parents/guardians of the identified close contacts.

If three or more COVID-19 cases are identified within a five-day period in a Kindergarten to Grade 6 class/cohort, AHS will issue an exclusion notification, shifting students to at-home learning for 10 days. Exclusion letters will be issued class-by-class as outlined in **CMOH order 48-2021**

All Albertans are asked to routinely monitor for symptoms and stay home and seek testing if they are feeling unwell, even if it feels like a minor illness.

As outlined in the *Guidance for Schools (K-12) and School Buses*, classes will not be sent home or told not to come to school if there is a case within a class. (The case is isolating and no longer at the school, therefore the risk of transmission from that person has been removed from the school).

### Reporting and responding to high rates of absenteeism

A school outbreak is reported when there are ten or more COVID-19 cases within a 14-day period that were infectious while at school.

The 10% absenteeism rate will no longer be used for COVID-19 cases but will remain in place for other respiratory or gastrointestinal illnesses. Schools report to AHS when there is a school-wide absence rate of 10% or greater due to illness OR there are an unusual number of individuals with similar symptoms.

### Isolation Requirements

**Isolation** helps prevent the spread of COVID-19 by reducing the number of people you could infect if you are sick. This means staying home and avoiding situations where the virus could spread.

Albertans are legally required to **isolate for 10 days** if they have tested positive or have any core symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition.

If you have symptoms, [take the online assessment to arrange testing](#).

### Physical Distancing

We will not always be able to maintain two metres physical separation between students, therefore, it is important for everyone to follow masking requirements and anyone showing symptoms to stay home and follow all AHS guidelines.

Students and staff at a school building are not required to maintain two metres physical distance if doing so inhibits the guidance or instruction being provided or where it is not possible to maintain two metres physical distance.

A school does not need to ensure that students, staff members and visitors are able to maintain a minimum of two metres distance from every other person when a student, staff member or visitor is seated at a desk or table:

1. within a classroom or place where the instruction, course or program of study is taking place, and
2. where the desks, tables and chairs are arranged in a manner
  - a. to prevent persons who are seated from facing each other, and
  - b. to allow the greatest possible distance between seated persons.

### Masks

**CMOH Order 44-2021** is in effect until rescinded by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

#### **CMOH Order 44-2021 Masking Requirements in Schools:**

All students enrolled in Grades 4 through 12, staff, and visitors **MUST** wear a face mask while attending at a school building.

#### **Grades 4-12 students, staff and visitor exceptions to masking in schools:**

Students, staff or visitors are **NOT** required to wear a face mask at all times while attending at a school building if the student, staff or visitor:

1. is unable to place, use or remove a face mask without assistance;
2. is unable to wear a face mask due to a health condition;
3. is consuming food or drink in a designated area;
4. is engaging in a physical activity;
5. is seated at a desk or table;
  - a. within a classroom or place where the instruction, course or program of study is taking place, and
  - b. where the desks, tables and chairs are arranged in a manner
    - i. to prevent persons who are seated from facing each other, and
    - ii. to allow the greatest possible distance between seated persons;
6. is providing or receiving care or assistance where a non-medical face mask would hinder that caregiving or assistance; and/or
7. is separated from every other person by a physical barrier.

Schools will make best efforts to ensure that any student, staff member or visitor who is **NOT** required to wear a face mask:

## STURGEON PUBLIC SCHOOLS – 2021-2022 School Year Plan

1. is able to maintain a minimum of two metres distance from every other person in areas not within a classroom or place where the instruction, course or program of study is taking place.

The September 10, 2021, Board approved mask guidelines remain in effect for students enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 3:

Masks for K-3 **students** can be removed indoors while:

- Engaging in instruction in a classroom;
- Consuming food or drink;
- Participating in physical exercise, music, band, or arts performances; and
- Providing or receiving care, assistance, or instruction where a mask would hinder that care, assistance, or instruction.

Masks are not required for K-3 students who are unable to place, use, or remove a non-medical face mask (i.e. factors such as age, developmental or physical reasons).

### **In-School Mask Exemption Grades 4-12 students, staff and visitors:**

All students enrolled in **Grades 4 through 12**, staff, and visitors **MUST** wear a facemask while attending at a school building. CMOH Order 44-2021 is applied throughout the Province of Alberta and remains in effect until rescinded by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Information on COVID-19 mask requirements can be found on the Government of Alberta [Website](#).

In-School Mask Exemption for Grades 4 – 12 requires a *Masking Medical Exception Letter*. In-School Mask Exemption for students enrolled in Grades 4 to 12 previously submitted and approved that did not include written confirmation by an authorizing health professional which verifies that the person has a health condition that prevents the person from wearing a face mask are **no longer valid**.

Anyone unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition requires a *Medical Exception Letter* from an authorized health professional.

The *Medical Exception Letter* template can be found on the Government of Alberta Website - [Mandatory Mask Requirements Page](#). (It is also attached as an appendix).

School Buses: see Transportation section

### **Environmental Measures**

HVAC systems will be maintained in accordance with manufacturer operational guidelines.

Windows and doors will be opened where possible to increase air circulation and outdoor activities will be encouraged when weather permits.

## School Operations

### Student Arrival and Entry

To reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 or other respiratory illnesses, parents and guardians are asked to remain outside the school when dropping off their child and asked to not enter the school unless approved by the Principal. The Principal will utilize as many entry doors as possible and assign all students an entry point. Students should move directly to their designated entry door and wait for permission to enter the building. Students will enter the building from their assigned meeting spot to minimize physical interactions. The Principal will create a schedule for student entry. Student entry may require staggered times, which do not necessarily align with established bell times.

All staff and students will have access to hand sanitizer upon entering the building.

### Hand Hygiene

Hand sanitizer stations will be set up at all entrances. Schools will promote good hand hygiene (washing with soap and water or using hand sanitizer) before and after activities such as:

- entering/leaving the school or classroom.
- before and after using shared equipment.
- before and after eating.
- after using the washroom.

### Respiratory Etiquette

Students, staff, and visitors are encouraged to use proper respiratory etiquette:

- sneezing into the elbow or tissue.
- discarding tissues immediately after use.
- performing hand hygiene.

### Classroom Setup

Staff and students are encouraged to utilize their own personal items (i.e. electronic devices, writing instruments, school supplies) and minimize any shared items. Where possible, teachers will organize their curricular content to minimize the need for shared resources at the beginning of the school year.

Students will be asked to clean any shared resources after individual use (i.e. microscopes, electronic devices, manipulatives, etc.).

Items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected between routine use (i.e. paper books) should be stored for 24 hours.

### Student Groups/Cohorts

Elementary classes, Kindergarten to Grade 6, are cohorted wherever possible. A

cohort is defined as a group of students and staff who remain together. The size of the cohort will depend on the physical space of the classroom or learning setting and the number of students assigned to that teacher. Staff will work to limit cohort/class interactions where possible. Activities that bring together multiple classes or grades are to be limited wherever possible in this scenario.

Cohorting for other grades may be recommended temporarily to prevent the spread of infection if there is a respiratory illness outbreak at school.

### End of School Day

Parents and guardians are asked to remain outside the school while waiting for their children and to not enter the school unless approved by the Principal.

Schools will communicate their plan to address students exiting the school in an orderly manner with appropriate supervision, maximizing the number of exit doors as practical. This may mean that schools may require classes/learning spaces to have staggered dismissal times while ensuring bus schedules are maintained.

Students waiting for pick up are to wait outside in a supervised designated area. During inclement weather, the Principal will make alternate arrangements for the waiting area.

### Water Fountains/Water Bottles

Students and staff are encouraged to bring their own filled water bottle each day. Water refilling stations may be used to refill personal water bottles.

### Visitors/Parents/Guardians/Volunteers

Parents and guardians, delivery personnel, SPS staff, RCMP and AHS must review the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) to determine if they may enter a school and use the posted self- screening tool and use their mobile phone to check-in with the QR code before entering the building. The QR code is posted on the entry doors of all schools and Division Office. All outside doors will remain locked and visitors **must** book an appointment before coming to the school.

All visitors, parents/guardians and volunteers must wear a mask when inside a Division school or site. If a school is on outbreak status, volunteers and guest presenters will not be permitted until the outbreak status has ended.

### Eating Lunch

Students will be encouraged to not share utensils, dishes, water bottles or drink containers. Students will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating. Students may be asked to help wipe down their own desks or tables used for eating.

### Recess

Schools will develop a coordinated exit/entry schedule utilizing as many exit/entry doors as possible for grades to leave their class/learning space to go outside for recess and to return to class/learning space.

### Extra-Curricular Activities

SPS extra-curricular athletics and fine arts performances resume. Sturgeon Public Schools is working with Alberta Education, Alberta Health and Education partners, including the Alberta School Athletics Association, to support athletic activities and events within the context of health measures that may be in place.

Spectator attendance for athletics:

High School Sports

- SCHS and Redwater High School will follow Alberta Schools' Athletic Association guidelines and their respective league guidelines.

Junior High School Sports - **NEW**

- The following guidelines are in effect:
  - Indoor sports, fitness, recreation, and performance activities are permitted in schools, with requirements to maintain 2 metres physical distancing where possible;
  - Masks and distancing are not required by youth under 18 while engaged in physical activity;
  - Sturgeon Volleyball Finals November 19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> will remain no spectators due to lack of space to accommodate 1/3 fire code capacity and physical distancing (having both courts running);
  - The Sturgeon Volleyball All-Star game November 23<sup>rd</sup> and all future school sports games will implement spectator attendance restricted to a maximum of two spectators per athlete (1/3 fire code capacity of the area designated for spectators). All attendees must be masked and must maintain 2 metres physical distance between households. School Principals to provide further communication;
  - No students are permitted to stay and watch games after school unless they are a sibling of an athlete AND are in attendance with a parent (Siblings are included in the two spectator maximum);
  - If a school is placed on outbreak status, no spectators are permitted;

### Performance Activities

Students may participate in a group performance activity (i.e., singing, dancing, playing instruments, theatre) as part of their education program curriculum:

- Maintain 2 metres physical distancing between participating students, where possible.

## STURGEON PUBLIC SCHOOLS – 2021-2022 School Year Plan

- Singers and wind instrument musicians should keep 2 metres away from other performers and individuals.
- Wind instruments should be equipped with a cover intended to prevent droplet transmission.
- In indoor settings, groups should not sing or play wind instruments for more than 30 minutes at a time, with a 10-minute break afterwards to allow for air exchange in the room.
- When performance activities involve singing, all singers, including students in kindergarten through grade 3, are strongly encouraged to wear masks when singing indoors.
- As singing is a higher risk activity, students who have an exception to masking can be provided with another musical part (e.g., percussion) or if the child will be singing, they should be alone in a dedicated space or room (e.g., a different classroom, using a virtual video participation option).
- Spectator attendance at indoor performance activities is limited to 1/3 fire code capacity. Attendees must be masked and must maintain 2 metres physical distance between households. Individuals who live alone may sit with their two designated close contacts.

Students may participate in an extra-curricular performance activity following the CMOH orders for general youth performance activities. For more information about current restrictions, see the webpage for [public health actions](#).

### Off Site Activities

Off Site Activities resume as per Division Policy. If transportation is required during the school day for offsite activities, all students Kindergarten to Grade 6 must sit in their cohort.

### School Councils

School Council members and the school Principal may choose to meet via an online environment, in a hybrid setting or face-to-face. If meetings are to occur face-to-face, they must be scheduled outside the regular school day and follow school and AHS guidelines and protocols.

### Breakfast/Lunch/Snack Programs

Programs will resume and vending machines will be operational.

### Before and After School Programs

Before and After School Programs operated in Sturgeon Public sites will continue to operate under the Government of Alberta Daycare Guidelines.

### Shared School Technology

Schools will work to limit multiple students accessing the same device in a day. Students are encouraged to bring their own devices to school to minimize shared usage of devices. Families may purchase a device through SPS's Technology Store by placing an order through the PowerSchool portal. Schools are encouraged to divide

devices into cohorts and/or grade levels and limit the number of people that contact the device.

## Learning

### Grade 12 Diploma Exams - NEW

The administration of diploma exams will resume and be mandatory for the 2021-2022 school year, as per normal practice.

Diploma exam weighting will change to 10% from 30% of a student's final diploma course mark for the 2021-22 school year.

### Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)

Grades 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) will resume as normal practice for the 2021-2022 school year.

### Supporting At-Home Learning While Sick

Should a child need to stay home for a period due to illness, classroom teachers will provide key work for the student to be able to work on while at-home. Homework bundles or tasks will be provided to the student by the regular teacher.

## Transportation

### Masks on Buses

Students, teachers, staff, and visitors **must** follow provincial requirements for masks.

Masks are required on school buses for all staff, visitors, any individual who transports students and students Kindergarten to Grade 12:

- Masks remain mandatory for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12, teachers, staff members and visitors on school buses and publicly accessible transit, such as municipal buses, taxis and ride-shares.
- Exceptions to the mask requirement on school buses are listed in CMOH Order 34-2021.

### Transportation of Students

Regular transportation service levels resume.

Students registered for service are assigned a route and are expected to utilize their electronic bus pass each time they enter and exit a bus. Regular fees will apply to all riders. All fees must be paid in full for students to receive an electronic bus pass to board the bus. Families can withdraw their student from the bus at any time. Refunds will not be processed for a partial month of service.

## Cleaning

Bus Contractors continue to follow enhanced COVID-19 routine cleaning standards, including regular cleaning, and disinfecting of high touch surfaces.

## Buildings

### Cleaning

Schools continue to follow enhanced COVID-19 routine cleaning requirements, including regular cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces. Anyone entering the building will need to use hand sanitizer. Should medical exemptions from using hand sanitizer be required, those individuals will need to wash their hands prior to moving about the school. Sanitizer stations will be available at the various entrances during school days and outside each room within the school.

Caretaking staff will maintain schools within SPS's pandemic cleaning protocol.

### Community Use of SPS Spaces

Community and joint-use of indoor spaces in schools is suspended until further notice.

## Government of Alberta CMOH Orders & Contingency Plans

**Appendix:** [Guidance for Schools \(K-12\) and School Buses](#)

**Appendix:** [Medical Exception Letter Template](#)

**Appendix: CMOH Orders:** [34-2021](#)  
[44-2021](#)  
[48-2021](#)

**Appendix:** [GoA Contingency Plans](#)