



**Sturgeon
Public Schools**

Dare to reimagine learning

2021-2022 School Year Plan

This document will continue to 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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Context - NEW

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
- Contact notification in schools
- Clarifying COVID-19 outbreak definitions
- If three COVID-19 cases, who attended school while infectious, have been identified in a K-6 class within a five-day period, the class will shift to at-home learning for 10 days.

The *2021-2022 School Year Plan* has been updated to reflect these new mandatory health measures.

Due to the dynamic nature of COVID-19, the government 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.

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Immunizations will be available through temporary clinics in schools for students in Grades 7 to 12 (Grade 6 if born in 2009 or earlier), teachers, and staff September and October.

Students, teachers, and staff can receive whichever dose they are eligible for in school. However, if they receive their first dose at the in-school clinic, they will need to book their second dose at a local pharmacy or Alberta Health Services (AHS) clinic when it is time to do so.

Students under 18 will **NOT** be vaccinated in schools without parent or guardian consent.

- Parental or guardian consent for students will be required through consent forms. Schools will email the AHS consent form to parents and guardians as soon as they are received from AHS and immunization dates are set.
- It is important that parents or guardians return completed consent forms for their children as quickly as possible.

Illness/Self-Screening Practices - NEW

It is strongly recommended that any unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals (including children under 12) stay home for 14 days when a person who lives in the same house has tested positive for COVID-19.

This means that anyone who is not protected with 2 doses of vaccine after a household positive case is identified should quarantine for 14 days from the date of the last household exposure. Individuals should be monitored for symptoms for 14 days from the last day of household exposure, and if they develop any symptoms, should be taken for testing. For more information on isolation requirements for people with symptoms, please visit alberta.ca/isolation.

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 pickup. 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, teacher, or staff member to return to school.

Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 - NEW

Public reporting of COVID-19 cases in schools resumed October 6, 2021. Schools with at least two COVID-19 cases will be identified. Access the information [here](#).

Beginning the week of October 12, 2021 contact notification within schools will resume. School authorities and schools will follow AHS guidance to determine in-school close contacts and notify parents/guardians of the identified close contacts.

If three COVID-19 cases, who attended school while infectious, are identified within a five-day period in a Kindergarten to Grade 6 class, the class cohort will be excluded from school. The exclusion notification letter will be sent to families and the class will shift to at-home learning for 10 days. During an exclusion period, it is strongly recommended that excluded individuals do not participate in any activities outside of their home.

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.

Reporting and responding to high rates of absenteeism - NEW

Effective October 6, 2021 a school outbreak will now be reported as 10 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 you 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

Where possible, schools will avoid large gatherings of students and staff and offer virtual options instead of in person gatherings. 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

September 20, 2021 - **CMOH Order 42-2021** in effect until rescinded by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

CMOH Order 42-2021 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.

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

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 will 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 face mask while attending at a school building. CMOH Order 42-2021 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:

- Masks are mandatory for students, 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.

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 (e.g. 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.

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

Items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected between routine use (e.g., 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 ensure students exit 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 - NEW

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

- **Effective October 18th, 2021, the following guidelines are in effect:**
 - Students can participate in an extracurricular physical activity.
 - Masks and distancing are not required by youth under 18 while engaged in physical activity;
 - Out of an abundance of caution, spectator attendance is not permitted at this time;
 - No students are permitted to stay and watch games after school;

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.
- 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.

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- 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 extracurricular 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 - NEW

Off Site Activities must follow Division Policy and any sector-specific restrictions relevant to the location of the field trip. If transportation is required during the school day for offsite activities, all students Kindergarten to Grade 6 must sit in their cohort. **Individual classroom cohorts for K-6 students should be maintained at the location of the field trip site.**

An organization or facility should only host one classroom cohort at a time or should take clear steps to separate multiple groups to ensure they do not use shared areas.

Organization or facility staff at the offsite activity must maintain physical distancing from visiting students and staff.

Hold activities outdoors as much as possible.

If a student develops symptoms during the fieldtrip, parent/guardians must be notified, and the child transported home from the offsite activity.

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 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 device 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 restrict sharing as much as possible.

Learning

Grade 12 Diploma Exams

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

Diploma exam results will continue to constitute 30% of a student's final diploma course mark.

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 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 will resume.

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Students registered for service will be assigned a route and are expected to utilize their electronic bus pass each time they enter and exit a bus. Regular fees will apply for 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 will continue to follow enhanced COVID-19 routine cleaning standards, including regular cleaning, and disinfecting of high touch surfaces.

Buildings

Cleaning

Schools will 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

Appendix: Guidance for Schools (K-12) and School Buses

Appendix: Parents' Guide 2021-2022 School Year

Appendix: Medical Exception Letter Template

Appendix: GoA Contingency Plans