

August 28, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

In preparation for the school year, the students' and faculty's safety is the top priority as a school and district. As part of the start-up to the school year, our faculty meeting agendas focused heavily on COVID-19 health measures and protocols within our school community. Over time, there has been a need to prepare the building to welcome students back to Albert Lacombe Catholic Elementary School. I am very proud of the faculty of Albert Lacombe Catholic School. They have done their best to understand and assist with the preparations of the measures we need to have in place for the safety and well-being of our students and the school community as a whole. As we begin the school year, our faculty will also endeavour to ensure that they will continue their work with our students in building connections, relationships, and learning excellence. As shared by our Superintendent of Schools on August 21:

Multiple measures have been put in place in all Division buildings, including all schools, to reduce the risk of COVID-19 and help keep our students, staff, and communities safe. These protocols are described in detail on our website, as well as in the Parent Guidebook for School Re-Entry: 2020-2021 that was sent to families last week (this can also be downloaded from our website). This resource provides essential details about programming, health and safety, sports and recreation, transportation, communication, and other important logistical matters for school re-entry so that parents/legal guardians can prepare for the upcoming school year.

In addition to division information about school re-entry, we wanted to share with our parents and guardians more information specific to our school so that you have a better understanding of what you can expect while your child/ren are at school. As we plan and prepare to welcome students back to school, if there is any the information that lacks clarity related to safety practices, we will err on the side of caution. In this communication, we will be addressing:

- Pick Up, Drop Off, and Parking information.
- What parents/Guardians can expect in the first few days of the school year.
- Health and Safety protocols and practices that will be occurring within the school.

Parents and guardians may wish to scroll to items that are of most interest or relevant to their child.

First Few Days of School:

During the first week of school, teachers will be dedicating a great deal of time to teach and reinforce proper hygiene practices within the school. These practices will include:

- Review and practice proper handwashing techniques - AHS Poster (<http://www.al.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/295976>).
- Practice maintaining physical distance - AHS Poster (<http://www.al.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/295979>).
- To safely use hand sanitizer - AHS Poster (<http://www.al.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/295973>).
- The proper process for coughing and sneezing - AHS Poster (<http://www.al.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/295970>).

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- Other topics include:
 - Putting on and taking off masks
 - Lining Up
 - Hallway movement and transitions

All faculty will be practicing these protocols with students over the next week and will be revisiting them when necessary over the school year.

Pick up, Drop Off and Parking:

There are a few quick reminders with parents regarding pickups and drop off of students over the day. As a school, we value our partnership with our parent community as we endeavour to work collaboratively to create a safe and caring environment for our children. Our collaborative work includes creating a safe and caring journey to and from school and our school day for our students and families. The following information is to communicate expectations for our community regarding parking in proximity to our school.

Our parking lot is for faculty only. All visitors and parents need to park on the street. To ensure the safety of our children and alleviate congestion and confrontation, parents must not drive into the parking lot to drop off or pick up their child or use the entrance driveway to turn your vehicle around. Signs in proximity to the crosswalk located in front of the school that indicates there is no parking within 5 meters of the crosswalk.

The area along the street in front of the school is for dropping off students only. This location not for any parking or waiting in vehicles. The space is limited in size (approximately three cars) and requires the efficient drop off of students to accommodate all families dropping off their child(ren). When using the drop-off area, please ensure that you pull up so that as many vehicles can drop off at the same time and depart as soon as you have dropped off your child(ren). To further ensure your child(ren)'s safety, we ask if at all possible, to have your child(ren) exit the vehicle on the curbside as opposed to on the traffic side.

We are strongly encouraging all families that routinely pick up their after school children to use a designated area away from these trouble zones to ensure the safe crossing and reduce risk to all students. We truly need everyone's cooperation and the best effort to follow the recommendations. Please communicate this information with any other caregivers who may be dropping off or picking your child(ren).

Parents and guardians of older children are encouraged to make arrangements to pick their child up a block or two away from the school to minimize traffic congestion in the school's proximity.

As a courtesy to our neighbours, please be mindful of driveways, sidewalks, and congestion during busy times. Bylaw officers regularly patrol the area, and complaints will be directed to their office by community members.



There have been adjustments to practices related to students riding the school bus. The following protocols are in place for students riding the school bus:

1. All students in grades 4-12 must wear a mask on the school bus as per the health measure implemented by Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health.
2. Students in grades K-3 in GSACRD schools are also required by the Division to wear a mask on the school bus where social distancing is impossible.
3. Students will have assigned seating (letter and number like on an airplane) this information will be communicated by the driver on the first day your student boards the bus. Students will not be permitted to change seats for any reason; this is important for cohort contact tracing should a positive case on the bus or school be identified.
4. Students first on the bus will be seated at the back of the bus regardless of grade/age.
5. Students at the end of the school day will line up based on the bus's seating plan, with those being dropped off last at the back of the bus and those being dropped off first to the front of the bus.
6. Students will not be allowed to share any personal items, including toys, books, etc.
7. As is generally in effect, NO FOOD OR DRINK is to be outside of the backpack or consumed on the bus.
8. At no time should a student leave their seat unless loading or unloading the bus.
9. If a student feels sick at any time, they must make the driver aware so that the driver can follow the appropriate COVID-19 protocols.
10. Parents should note that transportation routes may be canceled on short notice due to the COVID-19 situation due to driver/staff sickness. We will endeavor to keep parents updated but strongly encourage you to monitor the Parent Portal for cancellations.

When Students arrive on School Property:

Supervision at our school begins at 8:10 am. Our first bell rings at 8:25 am, and students will enter the school through their designated doors at this time. However, for entrances with more than one homeroom class, we will begin having students enter the school by homeroom classes by no later than 8:20 am. To start the school year, teachers will assist students with this procedure to become familiar with the routine. We will rotate classes, so it is not always the same one entering the school first or last. Lines have been painted on the tarmac to serve as visual reminders for students to stand on when they wait to enter the school.

Your child's homeroom teacher will have shared a photo of where they are to line up to enter the school as part of their welcome email to their class. Only one homeroom class may enter at a time.

End of the Day:

Homerooms will not be dismissed all at once to limit the number of students in the hallways. Students will be exiting the building through their designated entrance doors. We will ensure that all students are dismissed in a timely fashion, so students who take the bus have time to board. Students are expected to promptly leave the building at the end of the school day, so our custodial staff can ensure a deep clean in preparation for the following day.



As stated in the communication dated August 24, it was suggested for families with older children to identify a meeting location a block or so away from the school for pick up to minimize traffic congestion in proximity to the school.

Late Arrivals:

Adults bringing students to school late will need to remain in their vehicles. Those who need to enter the school must first contact the school and wear a mask while in the building.

Students who are late will enter through the main entrance. They are to go to the office to obtain a late slip and proceed directly to their classroom. Teachers will then call the front office to communicate the child's arrival.

Illness Protocols:

Parents will need to go through the COVID checklist (<https://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/281096>) each morning before sending child/ren to school. If your child should become ill during the day, we will isolate him/her in the office and call the parent immediately. If possible, we will ask your child to wear a mask while waiting for you. Please make sure that you've provided us with your most recent contact information. Anyone who reports symptoms must stay home, seek advice from a healthcare professional as appropriate (e.g., Call Health Link 811 or your primary health care practitioner, or 911 in an emergency). All parents and staff should use the AHS Online Self-Assessment tool.

If your child becomes ill at school, your child will be brought to the office and will wait in our school infirmary for monitoring and supervision. The office staff will contact parents/guardians to pick up their child. In the event a parent/guardian cannot be reached, we will contact the emergency contact on file.

Students with pre-existing medical conditions:

We will keep a record of your child's known pre-existing conditions on PowerSchool. You are not required to get a doctor's note for pre-existing conditions. If you have any documentation you wish to share; please email it to the school office at ksware@gsacrd.ab.ca.

If your child tests positive for COVID-19, Alberta Health Services will assist us in the procedures we need to follow.

Washrooms and Water Fountains:

Washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day. There will be a maximum number of students permitted in the bathroom at one time. Albert Lacombe will assign certain homerooms to specific washrooms. In the event a bathroom has reached the maximum number of students, there are floor markers outside of the bathrooms for students to wait at, which mark out the 2-meter social distancing space.

For proper hydrations, we encourage all students to bring their full water bottle each day. The bottle filling station will be available, but the drinking fountains will not. There are floor markers by the bottle filling station for students to wait to mark the 2m social distancing space.



Office Phone Access:

As it may not always be possible to ensure that the courtesy phone for students to use to contact parents can be sanitized between student uses, it will not be accessible for the time being. Please ensure any after school arrangements are made in advance to the school day. In any emergency, our office support faculty will contact the parent and guardian and inform them of the situation.

Lockers and Coat Hooks:

Students will not be permitted to use lockers or coat hooks outside of the classrooms. Students will keep their supplies in their classrooms. This guideline may change as health protocols evolve to ensure that health measures can be met by accessing lockers and coat hooks.

Classroom Cohorts:

Students will be remaining in their classrooms during the day. We are endeavoring to limit students' movement from room to room to keep our cohorts together in the same space. Teachers will move when they need to teach a class, rather than the students moving.

All classes will have assigned seating in the classroom.

Physical Education:

Students will participate in regular physical education classes (student part of the academy program receive physical education through their respective sports) at Albert Lacombe. Whenever possible, classes will outdoors.

As the change rooms are small, making it very difficult for any social distancing and proper student supervision, students will not change out for physical education class this year. Therefore, gym clothes are not required.

For consistency, Mr. Hayes will be teaching the physical education program where equipment used for the classes can be carefully tracked to ensure that another class does not reuse it before sanitation after the school day.

An emphasis on skill development instead of competitive interactions will be emphasized within the program to begin the school year.

Parent Access:

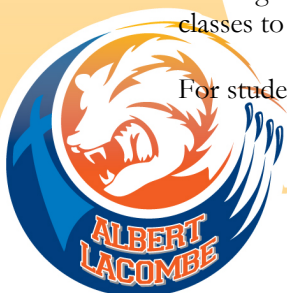
It is crucial for ongoing communication between teachers and classroom teachers. Parents and guardians are encouraged to reach out to their child's teacher via email or telephone if they have any questions or concerns. If a face-to-face meeting is required, appointments are needed to be made in advance to visit the school.

Options:

In the first week of school, we will assess which options we can offer students that both meet the health and safety components related to COVID-19 health protocols and provide meaningful learning opportunities. At this point, we have determined that we are not in the position to give music classes to students this year safely.

For students participating in Sports Academy Programming, their programs will be September 8.

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School Fees:

We are reviewing which of the approved school fees that we will be changing parents in the school year. Several student fees are no longer relevant due to COVID-19 restrictions. We will be discussing the school fees at our September 9th school council meeting. The student fees will be posted to accounts once finalized.

Field Trips/Guest Speakers/Assemblies/Volunteers:

To begin the school year, we will not participate in any off-site field trips, extending any invitations for guest speakers to come into the school, or have school-wide assemblies. Teachers will explore offerings of virtual field trips and other digital means to enhance learning opportunities for their students.

At this time, volunteers may not be present in our schools.

School Photos:

We are evaluating how we may safely proceed with school photo packages for our students.

Student School Supplies:

Each child will have an assigned location to store their school supplies inside their classrooms. Please note that school supplies will not be pooled together this year. Some parents may opt to have their child bring their supplies home daily. If you wish to do so, please let your child's teacher know.

As students will not be changing for Physical Education class, they will not require a change of gym clothes. Students will only need indoor shoes.

Recesses and Breaks:

Students will continue to have their breaks in the school as they have done in the past. However, morning recess and the lunch hour breaks will be staggered to minimize the number of students on the playground. We divided classes into two groups: group one (Grades 1, $\frac{2}{3}$ 3, and 5) and group 2 (grades 2, 4, $\frac{5}{6}$, and 6). As kindergarten is only half-day, snack time, or instances where students go outside will be at a different time than the grades 1-6 students.

For the morning recess, one group will go out while the other group will continue learning in the classroom. When the group outside re-enters the building, the other group will then have their recess. At lunch, a similar process occurs where one group will eat their lunch first then go outside, while the other group will go out first and then come into the school to have their lunch.

We will alternate the areas of the playground that each class will use during recesses. Each day, we will rotate the homeroom classes on the playground equipment to minimize classroom cohorts' mixing. We have previously engaged in a similar practice with playground equipment in demand by our students to ensure equitable access.

Unless signed out by a parent or guardian, students may not leave the school during their breaks.



Students will need to bring their school lunch each day, where they will be kept in student backpacks inside their homeroom classes. Please ensure that you pack sufficient food for your child during the school day. At this time, we will be unable to distribute snacks or have any fruit bowls accessible for students during the school day.

As previous practice in our school, there will be no access to school microwaves. Regrettably, we cannot permit class-wide snacks (no food sharing between students), provide any eating utensils, or have condiments and salt and pepper for student use. Students will be eating lunch in their homerooms as they did in previous years.

Due to health and safety restrictions, the Healthy Hunger hot lunch programs will not be taking place, but we will keep you informed if/when the status changes. Meal delivery services such as Skip the Dishes, Uber Eats, and restaurant delivery are not permitted as previous practice.

To minimize movement during the eating period and promote proper environmental stewardship for recyclables (e.g., bottles and juice containers) as we will not proceed with bottle recycling within the school, students will bring any lunch wrappers and recyclables home. Parents may wish to have an additional Ziplock for garbage to hold them in their child's lunch box/lunch bag.

Student Birthday Recognition:

As a past practice, many families decided to send in a treat to share with classmates to celebrate their child's birthday within the context of the classroom community. The distribution of goodie bags and other treats brought from home cannot be shared/distributed in the classroom. An announcement will recognize birthday celebrations over the intercom by school administration and homeroom teachers within the classroom.

Movement Through the Hallways - Floor markings:

Like many places in this new reality, aisles and hallways are marked with arrows to direct people, limit interaction, and maintain physical distancing. Our hallways will be the same with floor markings indicating traffic flow. At the end of the day and when classes need to move locations during the day, we will stagger when homerooms leave their classrooms.

Grade 4-6 students will be required to wear masks any time while in the hallways.

Library:

We will continue to offer a weekly library class for our students. We are assessing how we can provide the opportunity for students to continue signing out books from our school library, while still adhering to the necessary sanitation guidelines.

Our classrooms have their reading collections as well, and we will continue to maintain this practice this year. Once we have clarified a protocol for checking out books in the library, teacher classroom libraries will operate on a similar principle.



Classrooms and Instructional Spaces:

To maximize the amount of space available to spread students out and facilitate classroom sanitization over the school day and after school, we removed all soft surfaced items along with any excess furniture and learning materials not immediately required for student learning. For students who have accommodations for flexible seating in their IPPs, flexible seating arrangements (e.g., rocker chairs and Hoki chairs) will be maintained.

In addition to the recommendations within our Division re-entry planning documents:

- Each homeroom class is assigned a classroom with an opening window for additional air movement and ventilation.
- As part of the classroom improvements that were initiated last school year at the east end of the school, the classrooms housing our kindergarten to grade 4 students will have sinks and soap dispensers to facilitate supervised hand washing for our younger students. The plumbing connections to the sinks will be completed shortly.
- Hand sanitizer dispensers outside the entrance to each instructional space.

Custodial:

To maintain cleanliness in the school building, our Division has increased our custodial services. We will have a custodian at the school during the day and one in the evening.

All faculty will be assisting with the sanitizing classroom surfaces during the course of the school day. Desktops will be sanitized a minimum of two times during the school day before students eating at their desks for morning snack and lunch. Spray bottles with sanitizing and disinfecting products and microfiber cloths will be kept in classrooms to facilitate classroom sanitizing during the school day. These approved products are safe to use in the presence of the students.

Technology:

Next week, your child's homeroom teacher will reach out to you to inquire if your child will be bringing their robust learning device (Chromebook or notebook computer) to school. If you considering the purchase of a robust device for your child, we have worked with Staples in St. Albert to provide some options with pricing, protection plans, and optional financing for families. It is essential to note that this is not a fundraiser for the school. For more information, you can access the Staples brochure here:

<http://www.al.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/280913>

For students who will not have a personal device, we are working on distributing and sanitizing division-owned devices between student uses to ensure that we meet the sanitation standards between student use.

Students who have their own devices will not be permitted to share them with other students in the class.



School Council Meetings:

We will resume with our school council meeting through Google Meet sessions as we did for the remainder of the last school year. An invitation will be sent early next week to our first school council meeting on September 9. More information about the meeting and processes to register and sign in at that time.

BEAR Bones/Newsletter:

The first edition newsletter/BEAR Bones for the school year will occur on Sunday, September 6. If there are any emerging communication needs in the first week of school, a notice will be forwarded to parents and guardians via email and posted to our school website.

Mask Lanyards:

Recently, many advertisements showcasing 'mask lanyards' that will hold masks around a person's neck when not in use have circulated. Within our Division, students are not permitted to wear lanyards for safety considerations. These present similar safety concerns to regular lanyards, and students will not be permitted to wear them.

On behalf of the faculty and administration, we would like to thank you for your ongoing patience, support, and understanding as we work through logistical matters to optimize learning opportunities and safety protocols for our students. As the school year progresses, we will make continual adjustments to health and safety protocols as Alberta's Chief Medical Officer makes recommendations. If you have any questions, please contact the school at 780-459-4478.

Yours in education,



Allan Menduk, M.Ed.
Principal
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