

January 8, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

As a follow-up to the email sent out by our Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Clint Moroziuk, on January 7, 2022, I will include further information specific to our school context. Many of the amendments to the health and safety protocols outlined in the January 7 updated Return to School Plan have been existing practices that we have had in place at our school.

Upon our return on January 10, teachers will take time to review and reinforce school expectations and sanitation protocols such as handwashing/sanitizing, mask-wearing/removal and other health and safety practices.

Summary of Changes as per the GSACRD Back to School Plan:

You can access the full GSACRD Return to School Plan here: [Return to School Plan – January 7 Update](#). The changes to any Return to School Plan protocols that apply to our school context are listed below. The page numbers have been noted for your reference if you require further information or context.

1. Student Masking Protocols (Page 5):

Masks are required to be worn by all Kindergarten to Grade 6 students in all situations inside the school and while on the bus. The exceptions include:

- The classroom teacher will establish a designated mask break time for each of the instructional blocks in the day.
- Students will **not** be required to mask during **strenuous physical exertion** and while **eating and drinking**.

Masks are not compulsory outside, but we encourage students to practice physical distancing.

2. Isolation (Page 7)

Parents of children who test positive have a legal obligation to keep their child in isolation in accordance with the COVID-19 protocols set out by AHS. Please check <https://www.alberta.ca/isolation.aspx> and adhere to the required isolation measures. Classroom contacts are not being asked to isolate at this time.

3. Returning from Isolation (Page 6 and 7)

Fully (Double) Vaccinated:

The Division Return to School Plan states that the:

*The isolation requirement is **five days**. For five days following the isolation, these individuals are required to be CONTINUALLY MASKED. This means that they would not be able to take mask breaks at school and would need to leave the school in order to eat lunch... Please make arrangements to ensure that these conditions can be met prior to returning to school. Students who are returning after five days of isolation will be asked to refrain from physical education classes.*



WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD

Partially/unvaccinated:

Students may return after their ten-day isolation provided they are symptom-free.

4. Field Trips (Page 11):

Until further notice, off-site field trips will be paused. The faculty at Albert Lacombe Catholic Elementary School will continue to explore opportunities for additional virtual field trips for the interim. The Academy Program will still be accessing recreation centers and studio venues for program delivery.

5. Volunteers (Page 12):

GSACRD schools will temporarily suspend visitors and volunteers in our schools.

6. Hot Lunch – Healthy Hunger and Classroom Treats (Page 12):

Food service and hot lunch programs are permitted but cannot be supported by volunteers. We have relied on volunteers to support the program within our school this year and in the past. Many families value the Healthy Hunger program as it helps with lunch preparation and our students enjoy it. The Albert Lacombe administration will sort and deliver the food to the classrooms for the interim. If the suspension of volunteers in Division schools is more long-term, contingency plans are in place to sustain the program.

There are no changes for parents and guardians who wish to send a classroom treat for their child's birthday or other special events. All food items need to be individually packaged. Please continue to let homeroom teachers know if you will send in a treat.

7. Transitions to Online Learning (Page 7 and 10):

Single Class:

The metrics used to determine if a homeroom class transitions to online learning include:

- When a single K-9 class **reports 3 cases in a 5-day period**, the homeroom class will transition to online learning for up to 10 calendar days (Same as before).
- When a single K-9 class **reports 20% absenteeism due to illness**, the homeroom class will transition to online learning for up to 10 calendar days, even if the illnesses are not confirmed COVID-19 cases (New).

Entire School:

A decision to place an entire school online will remain with the Minister of Education as in the past. The metrics for this decision are based on the Division's ability to staff the school for the continuity of instruction and health and safety of students and staff.



8. Notifications of Positive Cases (Page 7)

The GSACRD Return to School Plan states:

Although AHS will no longer be informing schools of positive cases, GSACRD schools will continue its practice of collecting and reporting on positive cases. We will rely on the voluntary disclosure of our families. When families inform us that a student in one of our schools has tested positive for COVID-19 (by RAT or PCR Test), we will notify parents/guardians of students in the class and adhere to the following guidelines:

- Classroom contacts will be informed via email.
- School administration will keep track of confirmed cases on our division website. You can access this information here: <https://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/covid-19-information-and-protocols>
- Please note that all case numbers are approximate as they are through voluntary disclosure.

Other Important Notes Regarding our Return to School

Reporting Absences:

It is greatly appreciated when parents and guardians notify our school when their child is away from school. If your child is away for non-illness reasons – appointments, vacation, mental health day, voluntarily keeping them home as they were close to a positive COVID-19 case and not symptomatic, etc., please specify as such.

We require as much accurate information in the coming weeks related to student attendance. As shared earlier, the metrics for transitioning a class from in-person to online learning for up to 10 days has a single K-9 class **reports 20% absenteeism due to illness, even if the illnesses are not confirmed COVID-19 cases.**

Daily Health Checks:

GSACRD students and staff will continue to use [Alberta's Daily COVID-19 Checklist](#) so that families and staff exercise an abundance of caution and stay home if they exhibit signs of illness, particularly any symptoms associated with COVID-19. This will help reduce the risk of spreading the virus and contribute to a safe environment where all can feel protected. **Please note that if individuals (staff, students or guests) begin to exhibit any symptoms of illness (especially those related to respiratory issues) during the day, they must go home immediately. Please have a plan to pick up your child if they become symptomatic over the course of the day.**

Faculty Protocols when Symptomatic:

Last year, we did a few parents inquire about protocols for school faculty if they were symptomatic during the school day:

- All faculty members to complete the daily health screen.
- Should a faculty member become symptomatic during the school day, they will be required to inform the school administration, depart the building, and put provisions to cover their position for the remainder of the day.
- Faculty have had access to rapid tests.



- Any faculty member exhibiting symptoms or receiving a "presumed positive result" on a Rapid Antigen Test will be required to book a PCR test before returning to work. GSACRD has established a partnership with other school divisions and a private testing company to expedite appointment bookings for staff.

Missing Work Due to Isolation/Illness:

We recognize that there is a likelihood that we will have multiple students away from each homeroom class over the next few months due to illness or families taking preventative measures (e.g. choosing to keep a child home due to a positive COVID case in the home). Your child's homeroom teacher will reach out to the parents and guardians of all of the students in their class and inform/remind them how work can be accessed if their child is absent from school.

Please note that as teachers are teaching during the day, they cannot respond to questions and parent inquiries during class time. Teachers will respond to questions sent during the school day after school.

Medical Grade Masks and Rapid tests:

We received notification from Alberta Education that deliveries will occur the week of January 10. Once we receive further details and the shipments, we will communicate to parents and guardians as to:

- When rapid tests will be sent home to parents and guardians.
- Instructions on how to use and administer the rapid tests.
- Processes for the phased distribution of the medical-grade face masks.

For children in K-6, we have been informed that the medical-grade masks we will receive will be **pediatric-sized** to ensure a proper fit.

As a Catholic School Community of parents/guardians, students, and faculty, we will continue to learn and adjust as required as the pandemic situation continues to evolve. We are eager and look forward to welcoming your child/ren back to our school on Monday, January 10!

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 780-459-4478.

Yours in education,



Mr. Allan Menduk, M.Ed.
Principal
Albert Lacombe Catholic Elementary School

