



## **2021-2022 Return To School Plan**

St. Paul Education is committed to the health and safety of students and staff. Our return to school plan has been developed to support the safe start to school for the 2021/22 school year within the direction provided by Alberta Education and the Chief Medical Officer of Health. The audience for this plan includes parents/guardians, community members, students and staff.

We must continue to work together to manage risk, use common sense and take reasonable proactive measures to minimize the transmission of illness.

The St. Paul Education 2021-22 Return to School Plan is subject to change as more information becomes available from the province. We will continue to update this plan with more details through the remainder of the summer and during the school year.

On August 13, the Government of Alberta shared its guidance for the upcoming school year:

- Alberta Education - [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#)
- Alberta Education - [2021-22 Parent Guide](#)
- Alberta Health - [Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools](#)

### **Activities Resuming for the 2021-2022 School Year**

Restrictions for many school activities and services have currently been lifted or eased. These include:

- Local and provincial field trips
- Athletics and extracurricular activities
- All fine arts and options classes
- Assemblies and special events
- Provincial exams
- Graduation and school farewell activities
- School Council meetings
- Cafeteria services, breakfast programs, etc.
- Student lockers

Moving forward, please be aware that we are required to follow public health measures that may be in place at the time of any event or activity.

### **Health and Safety Measures**

#### **DAILY SCREENING FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS**

- Students are required to complete the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) to determine whether they can attend or should stay home.
- Staff will also use the screening checklist before coming to work.
- At the direction of Alberta Health, students and staff who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate and cannot attend school. Contact 811 or refer to [alberta.ca/isolation](https://alberta.ca/isolation) for isolation requirements.

- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 or who is experiencing illness cannot attend school and is directed by Alberta Health to stay home, seek health care advice, and fill out the AHS Online Self-Assessment tool to determine if they should be tested.

## ILLNESS AT SCHOOL

- Should a student or staff member exhibit signs of illness at school, they will be moved to a designated private area within the school. Parents/guardians will be notified and advised to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- Staff supervising symptomatic students will keep all students and staff out of the designated isolation area and wear recommended PPE.
- If a student needs to stay home due to illness, their teacher will support them by sharing what they've missed but will not provide online instruction.
- Students with a chronic health issue that is medically diagnosed and unrelated to COVID-19 should monitor for new, different, or worsening symptoms.

## POSITIVE COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOLS

- At the direction of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health Services will no longer notify close contacts of potential COVID-19 exposure including close contacts in schools.
- Due to privacy laws, we cannot ask or disclose if students and staff are exposed or positive.
- Schools will continue to report an absence rate of 10% or higher or an unusual amount of individuals with similar symptoms to Alberta Health Services. (This was established pre-pandemic and helps health officials monitor for illness that may not be related to COVID-19.)
- Alberta Health Services will investigate outbreaks at schools and work with Division staff to determine if additional measures are required.
- AHS Public Health will not inform school authorities or administrators of individual cases of COVID-19 within their school setting.

## WEARING MASKS

- Masks are not required but still recommended. Staff and students who choose to wear a mask will be supported.
- As per AHS guidelines, masks are required on school buses until September 27 when the province will provide further direction.

## VISITORS AND VOLUNTEERS

- All visitors and volunteers are required to report immediately to the school office, sanitize and use the daily screening tool.

## HANDWASHING, SANITIZING, ENHANCED CLEANING, AND OTHER MEASURES

- Anyone who enters a school will be encouraged to practice hand hygiene.
- Alcohol-based sanitizers will be available throughout the school and at designated entry points.
- Handwashing will be part of daily routines, including washroom use, recess, and lunch.
- Schools will have visible [signage](#) about hand washing and proper respiratory etiquette.
- Schools will continue with the enhanced cleaning practices that began last year, including regular cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces.

## SHARED SPACES & COMMON AREAS

During the pandemic, there were a number of health and operational practices that were put into place to limit the transmission of COVID-19. Going forward, a number of these practices may remain in place both to prevent the transmission of illness and improve the overall operation of individual schools. Individual school practices will be influenced by the physical layout of the school, size of student population, age of the students, etc. These may include:

- Using designated entrances
- Having staggered release times
- Changing cafeteria and common area table configuration
- Limiting gatherings (ie: avoid full school opening assembly, conducting staff meetings in gymnasium, having fewer students at a cafeteria table)
- Encouraging spacing when possible (ie: avoiding face to face close contact with desk groupings, reintroducing group work slowly)
- Reviewing the setup of classrooms and learning environments
- Serving individually packaged food

## TRANSPORTATION

- As per AHS guidelines, all students will be required to wear masks. Exceptions will be made for students with severe medical conditions or exceptional needs.
- School bus drivers will be required to wear masks when transporting students.
- While protocols for loading and unloading are no longer in place, students will have assigned seating.
- Cleaning of high-touch surfaces will be completed once daily.

## VACCINATION

- The most important step we can take to ensure the health and safety of our community is to get vaccinated against COVID-19. Children aged 12 and up are eligible to receive a first and second dose of an approved vaccine in Alberta.
- St. Paul Education will support Alberta Health Services as it runs temporary vaccination clinics in our schools. Immunization is voluntary and will be available for staff and eligible students born in 2009 or before. More information will be provided to parents and guardians. Please note, parental consent will be required for in-school immunizations.
- Due to privacy laws, we cannot ask or disclose if students and staff are vaccinated.
- Below are links to additional information about the COVID-19 vaccine to help you make an informed decision for your family.
  - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/vaccination-children.html>
  - <https://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/immunization/covid-19-vaccine-for-children>

## VENTILATION

- St. Paul Education will continue to ensure HVAC systems are maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications and adjust to maximize air exchange.
- Natural ventilation is encouraged in schools by opening the doors and windows to increase ventilation and bring in fresh air.
- We will also support classes and activities to be held outside when possible.

## Fostering Student Learning

As parents, you may have concerns about your child's learning at this time. At the beginning of September, our teachers will be focusing on welcoming students back to their school, helping them to feel safe and comfortable with the return to classes. As part of their regular practice, teachers will be confirming where students are at in their learning, providing specific measures and targeted instruction to help each individual student move forward. Parents who are concerned about their child's learning are encouraged to contact their school.

## Supporting Mental Health and Well-Being

The wellness of students remains a priority for St. Paul Education. This includes a Division wide responsibility to foster resiliency, build relationships and stay connected. Schools, staff, and the school community are collectively responsible for fostering welcoming, caring, respectful and safe environments that provide a continuum of supports and services for student's physical, social and mental well-being. In supporting resilience within this environment our existing wellness structure will continue to focus on:

- Trauma informed care practices
- Social-emotional learning for all students
- Use of the Traumatic Events Systems (TES) principles considered in addressing challenging events
- Providing education on ways to support one's mental health
- Providing supportive counselling services through our Family School Liaison Worker program
- Linking students and families to community resources

Please contact your Family School Liaison Worker or school administrator for more information.

For additional support information visit the [Mental Health and Wellness Resources](#) page on our website.