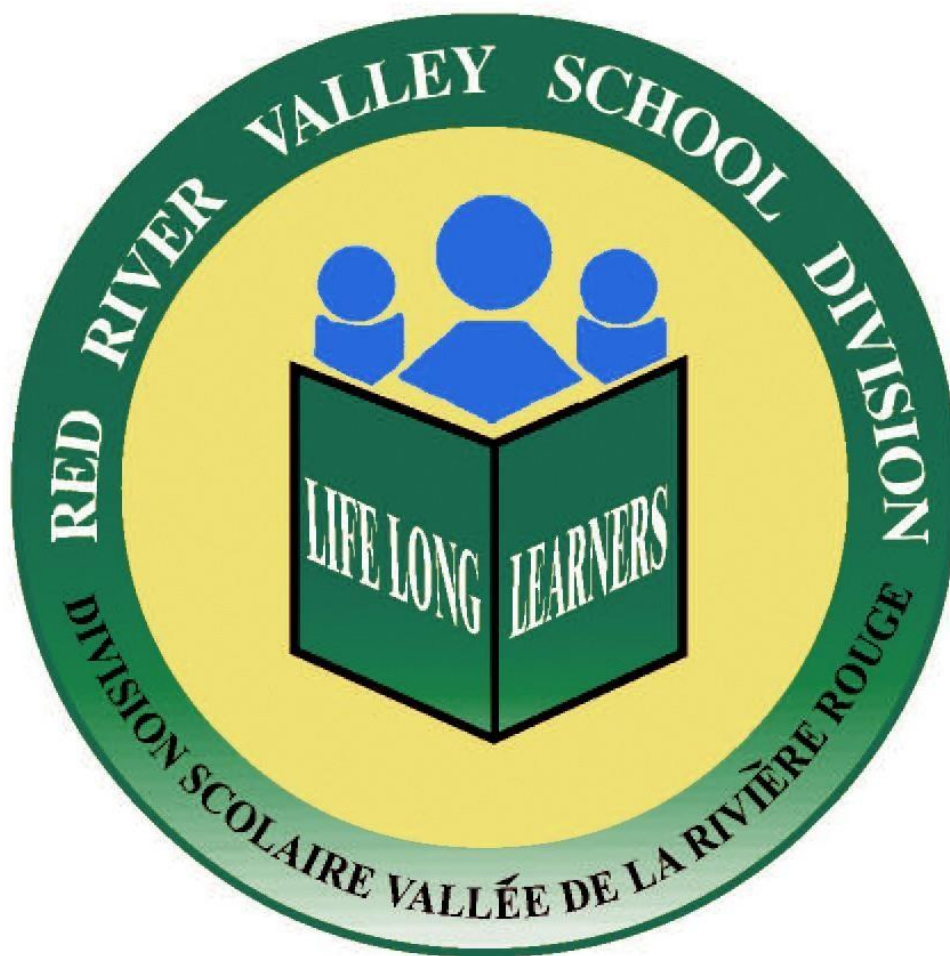


# Red River Valley School Division Planning for Reopening 2020-2021 School Year



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# Introduction

The following is our school division reopening plan based on the Government of Manitoba's announcement for September 2020. Our staff have been busy working to make appropriate plans to allow the safe return of students in response to this next phase. The Chief Provincial Public Health Officer has provided direction and guidelines in order to have students return safely to school. We want to assure everyone that the Red River Valley School Division is making plans based upon the recommendations from Manitoba Health. Our divisional and school staff are planning for the return of students to the school with the priority remaining the safety and well-being of staff and students. We deeply appreciate the patience, co-operation and support that families have provided as we navigate these changing conditions.

This is a brief summary of the document details.

## **1. K – 8 Students:**

- a. All K – 8 students will be able to attend school on a daily basis beginning September 8<sup>th</sup>. Schools will notify families of their child's schedule before school starts.
- b. Classroom configurations and bus seating plans will be configured to comply with Manitoba Health's current guidelines.
- c. Entrances and exits to and from school will be communicated clearly to students. School staff will manage student traffic in the school.
- d. Parents and caregivers will be expected to screen their children before boarding the bus or dropping off at school. Students and staff who are experiencing any symptoms are expected to stay home.
- e. There will be enhanced cleaning protocols in all of our schools and students and staff are expected to cooperate and follow health guidelines appropriately.

## **2. High School Students:**

- a. All students with exceptional needs will be able to attend school up to five days per week and their first day is September 8<sup>th</sup>.
- b. Our high school teams are currently developing plans where all high school students will attend school every second day and will work with students to develop "blended learning" plans which is a combination of in-class and remote learning. Your son/daughter's individual schedule will be provided to you before school starts.
- c. September 8<sup>th</sup> will be the first day of in-class learning for grade 9 and 10 students. The first day of in-class learning for grade 11 and 12 students will be September 9<sup>th</sup>.
- d. Entry and exits to school will be communicated clearly to students. School staff will manage student traffic in the school.
- e. Each school will have designated areas for student cohorts. Physical distancing and cooperation is required for the safe return of students to the school.
- f. Enhanced cleaning protocols will be implemented daily with any shared spaces cleaned prior to different cohorts using shared spaces.

- g. High School students will need to maintain 2 meters social distancing outside of their cohort and will not be allowed to congregate in large close groups.

*Note: Cohorts involve keeping groups of students (e.g. grades) together and avoiding interactions with other groups. The maximum number of students in a cohort is 75 and students can belong to more than one cohort. High school students will be placed in cohorts according to grades and programs. Cohorts are used for transportation, lunch hour and other allotted times.*

### **3. Transportation:**

We recognize that transportation is a critical component of having students arrive safely and regularly to school and are very proud of the service we have been able to provide for our families. To meet the provincial health guidelines for the safe transportation of students, we have to temporarily change the level of service we have provided in the past. The following is a summary of the changes:

- a. For the short term, parents are encouraged to transport their own children if at all possible.
- b. All students residing within 1.6 km from the school will not be provided bus transportation. These families will be contacted directly by the transportation department.
- c. All students and staff will be required to wear non-medical masks on the school buses. Masks should be put on before loading and taken off after offloading. The province will provide masks for distribution to students and staff if they do not have personal PPE.
- d. Some school buses will be “double-routed” meaning that they will drop off students at the school and then go back out to pick up another cohort of students.
- e. All school buses will be cleaned in between bus cohorts and at the end of the day.
- f. Bus arrival/departure times will be staggered at the school as much as possible to avoid student congestion.
- g. Specific information regarding transportation (ie seating plan, pickup times) will be communicated prior to the start of the school year.

*Note: Transportation services could be disrupted due to changing conditions*

### **4. School Access:**

- a. Visitor access to schools will be minimized to the greatest extent possible.
- b. Community use of schools is suspended.
- c. Anyone entering the school (staff, students, visitors), must adhere to self-screening, physical distancing and recommended hygiene practices.
- d. All school doors will be locked to control access. Schools are required to keep a record of all people entering the building.

Schools will be providing families with information regarding instructions that are site specific prior to students attending school in September. The division is providing an increase in custodial staff and classroom supports to maintain cohorts. The school division will be following Public Health's guidance for the use of PPE (personal protective equipment such as masks, shields, gloves).

More information regarding educational programming will be forthcoming from your respective schools. We will continue to update our website and share information as it becomes available.

## **Public Health Measures**

### **Understanding Transmission**

COVID-19 is most commonly spread from an infected person through respiratory droplets generated through coughing, sneezing, laughing, singing and talking. It spreads more easily when contact is close (within six feet or two metres) and prolonged (more than 15 minutes). COVID-19 can also be spread by close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands, or touching something with the virus on it and then touching one's mouth, nose, or eyes before cleaning one's hands. Some people who have few or no symptoms can spread COVID-19. Although public health measures can significantly reduce the risk of COVID-19 entering and being transmitted in child care and school settings, the risk is never zero. It is important to remember that children tend to have less severe illness from the disease, this is not always the case. COVID-19 can cause more severe illness among people who are 60 years of age and older, and among those who have weakened immune systems or underlying medical conditions. Children under one year of age and those with immune suppression and chronic medical conditions are considered more vulnerable and at higher risk for severe illness. Parents, guardians and staff are encouraged to consult with their health-care provider if they have concerns about their own health, their child's health, or the health of other household contacts.

The most effective measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 include separating people by maintaining physical distance and the use of physical barriers. However, these measures are not always practical in child care and school settings. Therefore, it is most effective to use a layered approach, including multiple measures from the areas listed below, and to develop administrative measures that support individuals to consistently follow personal preventive practices (e.g., environmental cleaning and conducting frequent hand hygiene) that decrease the number of interactions while increasing the safety of interactions that occur. Adapted responses and recommendations may be required in situations where health, age, ability, status, or other socio-economic and demographic circumstances may limit the ability of some groups or individuals to follow the recommended measures.

Note: All options should be considered to support the implementation of public health measures, including leveraging volunteers to support staff and administrators where needed. This may include parents, volunteers and student leaders. The public health measures outlined in these protocols must be followed for all of these individuals, even if not specifically indicated.

## Staying Home When Sick

Individuals should self-isolate and not enter schools or education facilities if they:

- are experiencing symptoms suggestive of COVID-19
- have travelled outside Manitoba in the previous 14 days (outside of areas excluded by public health orders, which currently exclude locations in Western Canada, the territories, and Ontario west of Terrace Bay)
- are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- are awaiting a COVID-19 test result (excluding persons tested as part of voluntary asymptomatic surveillance for COVID-19, as they do not need to isolate)

An up-to-date list of symptoms can be found at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/about/index.html>.

## Screening

Screening for symptoms is critical to identify any potential cases of COVID-19 as quickly as possible before exposure to others. If someone is unsure whether they or their child should be tested and self-isolate, they should be directed to the COVID-19 Screening Tool at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>.

All screening that identifies suspected cases of COVID-19 should be referred to Health Links – Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257.

Symptom and exposure screening must occur at the start of each day.

- Staff must self-monitor daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Staff who have any symptoms of COVID-19 must stay home, isolate, and be excluded from work. Schools must maintain records of staff absenteeism.
- Schools must communicate that parents and caregivers need to monitor their child daily for symptoms and exposures before sending them to school. Parents and caregivers are responsible for ensuring their children are not displaying symptoms before sending them to school or on the bus. Schools can also support children with self-screening upon arrival at school.

Signage, with exclusion criteria, must be posted at all entrances to the school.

A student or staff member who meets any of the exclusion criteria will not be admitted to the school and will be advised to immediately isolate and consult Health Links – Info Santé or their health-care provider. Those with symptoms should be tested. If the test is negative for COVID19, they can return 24 hours after symptoms resolve. If individuals do not get tested, they should isolate for 14 days from symptom onset, and they may return if symptoms have resolved at that time.

A chronic stable cough, sneeze, runny nose or nasal congestion that is unchanged and clearly linked to a known medical condition such as asthma or allergies, is not an absolute requirement for exclusion. As well, children who are crying can exhibit a runny nose. Changing or worsening of chronic symptoms require isolation and contacting Health Links – Info Santé. Staff should exercise judgment based on the symptoms, but when in doubt, err on the side of caution by excluding the child and advising the parent or caregiver to contact Health Links – Info Santé or their health-care provider.

Routine screening or monitoring of temperatures with a thermometer or other device to assess for fever is not recommended. Normal temperatures can vary throughout the day and can be different between individuals. It is recommended that parents and staff focus on monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19, as outlined in the Screening Tool and poster at <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool>.

## **Visitor Access**

Visitors or volunteers are permitted at schools, but visits should be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Where possible, online communication, video, and telephone should be used to interact with families, rather than in person.

Parents, caregivers, healthcare providers, volunteers and other non-staff adults (e.g., visitors) entering the school should be prioritized to those supporting implementation of public health measures and activities that benefit student learning and well-being (e.g., teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.). This should also be limited to those who regularly volunteer to minimize the number of possible exposures.

All visitors and volunteers must adhere to self-screening, physical distancing, and recommended hygiene practices. Visitors with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not enter the school. Schools are required to keep a list of all visitors.

Community use of schools will be suspended, with the exception of child care centres operating in schools. Independent schools with shared space rental agreements will need to ensure that public health measures are followed if the owners of the buildings utilize space that is also used for the school's purposes.

## **Physical Distancing**

Physical distancing of two metres or six feet between all individuals should occur whenever reasonably possible in a school setting.

The maximum number of individuals congregating (i.e., close interactions among people longer than 15 minutes) in a common space for indoor and outdoor settings must comply with the most up-to-date public health orders at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/soe.html#current>.

- Where possible, arrange spaces to encourage the recommended separation. For example, space children to avoid close contact and assign a designated chair and table for each child.
- Schools must manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways, to minimize crowding and allow for the ease of people passing through. Young children need easy-to-understand visual prompts. For example, use tape on the floor, hoops, mats, or other items that can mark off personal space. Another idea is to organize play activities with a visual cue about how many children should be in that area (e.g., two chairs next to an activity with markers or numbers taped to the floor).
- Implement the practice of staggered entrance and exit times, or use separate entrances (if feasible).
- Avoid close greetings (e.g., hugs and handshakes).



- Stagger staff break times and avoid large, in-person staff meetings.
- Assemblies and gatherings are discouraged, and those that exceed public health advice may not be scheduled.
- Physical barriers can be used, where appropriate, when physical distancing cannot be maintained. These must be implemented with a plan for frequent cleaning and sanitizing for infection prevention and control.
- Fire drills and lock-down requirements must be considered within the COVID-19 environment, as current procedures are not conducive to physical distancing. Modifications of drills to achieve goals should be considered.

### **Cohorts/Groups**

It is recognized that strict physical distancing at all times—particularly with young children - is not practical in the school setting. When physical distancing is not possible, cohorts can be used to limit exposure and facilitate contact tracing if a case is identified. Students will likely be a part of multiple cohorts from within and outside of the school setting. The purpose of cohorts is to limit the mixing of students and staff so that, if a child or employee develops an infection, there are fewer possible exposures and contact tracing can be more easily done.

Cohorts involve keeping groups of students (e.g., classes) together and avoiding interactions with other groups.

- Physical distancing within the cohort is required to the greatest extent possible, including a minimum of one-metre separation between students in the cohort when seated at desks or tables.
- Maximum cohort size is to be no more than 75 students. There is no limit on the number of cohorts in a school, as long as distinct cohorts of 75 can be separated to prevent contact with other groups. Each cohort must be able to arrive, depart, and participate in school activities without co-mingling with members from other cohorts as much as possible.
- Whenever possible, keep children and staff together with the same cohort throughout the day, including lunch breaks and recesses. Locations of classrooms, use of additional space, and timetabling by cohorts can all be considered to reduce mixing.
- Stagger schedules and movement of cohorts to avoid being in shared spaces (e.g., foyers, hallways) at the same time.
- Different cohorts/groups should not be in shared spaces at the same time. Where this is not possible, physical distancing between groups is required. It is important to maintain at least four metres between groups or cohorts of children (i.e., two groups of children can be in the same area, provided the groups do not intermingle and four metres of space is maintained between the two groups).
- Avoid the movement of classes of students where possible. It is preferable that teachers move between classrooms instead of students.
- Keep daily records that include the names of students, staff and volunteers of cohorts.



## Ventilation

There is less likelihood of transmission in well ventilated environments. Consider the following strategies:

- Avoid recirculation of air to the greatest extent possible, and ensure filters are clean.
- In general, ventilating indoor environments with fresh air—whether by increasing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings as much as possible or by opening windows and avoiding or reducing recirculation—will dilute the air exhaled by the occupants, including any infectious particles. Even if this is not feasible for the whole facility, consider this for higher risk areas (e.g., where crowding may be an issue).
- Minimize the use of fans and limit them to the lowest settings if they are needed. Direct air flow away from people and surfaces. Ensure that these surfaces are cleaned along with other high-touch surfaces.
- Assess the risk of opening windows and doors (i.e., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms). Do not prop open fire doors to increase ventilation or to reduce exposure to frequently touched door handles.

## Transportation to Schools

Physical distancing and/or cohorts are also required in school transportation. For more information, refer to the Guidelines for Transportation to Schools at

<https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/reopening/transportation.html>.

To support physical distancing on buses, to the greatest extent possible, parents are encouraged to transport their own children if they are able. Active transportation, such as walking and biking, should also be encouraged. For advice on carpooling, please visit

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/transportation.html>.

## Hygiene Practices

Handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the recommended hand hygiene practice. Staff and students must engage in frequent hand hygiene, including at the following times:

- the start of the day and before going home
- before and after recess
- after going to the washroom and helping children with washroom routines
- after a diaper change (both children and staff)
- before and after preparing food
- before eating or drinking
- after getting hands dirty
- after wiping nose or handling dirty tissues
- after coughing, sneezing or blowing nose
- after soothing a crying child
- before and after putting on and taking off a mask
- before and after being on a bus
- after cleaning tasks (staff)

School staff should help young children to ensure handwashing is done correctly.

Where possible, encourage and supervise hand hygiene and make alcohol-based hand sanitizer available at all building access points and throughout the facility. Young children require supervision when using alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Good hygiene practices can be taught in an age-appropriate and playful manner. One idea is to have timers to help ensure students wash for an adequate time. See how many 20-second songs the children can identify. Be creative—engage the children in coming up with games and other ways to encourage everyone to wash their hands for 20 seconds.

Respiratory etiquette should be modelled, taught and reinforced regularly. This includes coughing and sneezing into a tissue or sleeve, as well as properly and promptly disposing of any used tissues, and exercising proper hand hygiene.

Personal items (e.g., hats, hair accessories, lip balm, food and drinks) should not be shared.

Avoid touching one's mouth, nose or eyes, and encourage children to do the same.

As part of these routine measures, signage should be posted and highly visible, and it should include visual cues that remind staff and children to perform hand hygiene (e.g., sneezing or coughing into their elbow, putting used tissues in a waste receptacle, and washing hands or using hand sanitizer immediately after using tissues). Several printable resources, including posters and factsheets, are available online at the following websites:

- <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/resources/index.html>
- <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/providers/posters/>

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Non-medical masks can play a role in reducing the transmission of COVID-19. Wearing nonmedical masks is an **additional** personal practice that can help to prevent the infectious respiratory droplets of an unknowingly infected person (the wearer) from coming into contact with other people. Nonmedical masks have not been tested to meet any standards. Although encouraged, wearing a nonmedical mask or face covering is not a substitute for physical distancing and handwashing. Those wearing masks should be reminded, in age-appropriate language, not to touch their mask and to comply with other personal preventive practices, such as frequent hand hygiene and physical distancing as much as possible.

- Non-medical masks are recommended in situations where a person cannot maintain a two-metre physical distance for extended periods of time and is in close proximity to a person outside of their regular contacts. This includes hallways and when riding the bus to school, and it may include classroom settings.
- Students (Grade 4 and up), teachers, staff, visitors and volunteers are required to wear non-medical masks in areas where physical distancing of two metres is not possible. We are strongly recommending students under Grade 4 use non-medical masks.
- All school bus passengers including staff, are required to wear a non-medical mask. These should be put on before loading and taken off after offloading if removal is appropriate for the setting.

Masks will be provided to students and staff who need them. Inventory will be monitored to ensure adequate supply.

Non-medical masks should not be worn by anyone who:

- is unable to remove the mask without assistance (e.g., due to age, ability or developmental status)
- has breathing difficulties
- is under two years of age

When a non-medical mask is used, your hands should be cleaned before and after putting it on and taking it off. Follow the recommendations listed above for the use of non-medical masks, including for their removal. Removed masks are considered contaminated and should be placed in a container or bag for appropriate cleaning and disinfection at a later time.

Nonmedical masks should be laundered daily.

A medical mask (surgical or procedural mask) is required when unable to maintain a distance of two metres or six feet from a child who is exhibiting signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID19.

To put on a mask safely, perform hand hygiene by handwashing with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Place the mask on your face carefully so it covers your mouth and nose, handling it with the strings or elastic ear loops as much as possible, and mould the nose bridge to ensure it does not move while it is on. Avoid touching the mask once you have put it on. If the mask needs to be adjusted, hands should be cleaned before and after adjusting the mask. Never pull the mask down below the nose, mouth, or chin. Never dangle the mask from one ear or both ears.

To remove the mask safely, remove it from behind using the strings or elastic ear loops. Do not touch the front of the mask. Discard the mask immediately, ideally in a no-touch receptacle. Perform hand hygiene by handwashing with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Visit <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/prepareandprevent/index.html> for the latest guidance on the use and care of masks.

Consideration can be given to teachers and staff to wear face shields or coverings and eye protection, in addition to a mask (not in place of a mask).

Visit the following Public Health Agency of Canada page to access a poster and guidelines for how to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering: <https://www.canada.ca/en/publichealth/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-facecovering.html>.

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Increased frequency of cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing - particularly on high-touch surfaces and in common/shared areas - will be required. Schools must:

- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, electronic devices, chairs, desks, art supplies, toys, games, gym equipment, tools and equipment) frequently - at least twice daily, or more often as needed.
- Increase monitoring of hand-cleaning supplies to ensure an ample supply at all sinks in washroom and kitchen areas.
- Ensure washrooms and lunchrooms are cleaned and disinfected frequently (at least twice daily, and more often as needed) and stagger use.
- Turn off water fountains that are not touchless or cannot be cleaned between users.
- Ensure there is enhanced cleaning of bus seats and other high-touch surfaces (e.g., windows and railings) before each new group of students attends the bus.

Health Canada has posted a list of disinfectants shown to be effective against COVID-19 at [https:// www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid19/list.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid19/list.html).

School administrators are encouraged to review existing activities and practices within their settings to help determine where enhancements or increased cleaning frequencies may be beneficial. This includes limiting the use of high-touch objects and surfaces by multiple individuals (e.g., providing children with their own containers of arts and crafts materials that are not shared with others).

Waste should be disposed of regularly. Hand hygiene should be performed after waste removal. No-touch waste receptacles are preferred.

## **Staff COVID-19 Orientation**

All staff will be provided with the following orientation prior to the return of students to the classroom.

[COVID Orientation Powerpoint](#)

# Guide for Supporting Staff and Students When Returning to School

As we return to schools, we recognize that we have been resilient and flexible, and in many ways we have been able to carry on through the COVID pandemic. However, it is important to acknowledge that many of us have been impacted by loss, grief and trauma behind the scenes. As we reflect, it is important to remember that not everyone will be experiencing this pandemic in the same way. Many of us will only show how we are surviving, not our emotional challenges. There is a spectrum of experiences and while not everyone has experienced trauma, some have. Many of us have also experienced loss and grief and it can be helpful to recognize these differences.

## Understanding Loss, Grief and Trauma

**Loss:** Loss of a loved one, a job, a home, or the experience of significant relationship changes such as isolation. Loss of expectations/events such as cancelled graduations, postponed events etc.

“Non-Death Related Loss is defined as emotional distress following the realization that an event, experience, or opportunity will not happen or not happen in the way it had been anticipated. This includes human relationships and connection not including death. In the school context, this could be missing graduation or not being able to say goodbye to a favorite teacher who was retiring at the end of the year” (NACTATR, 2020).

**Grief:** Intense emotional distress associated with loss, accompanied by feelings of guilt, anger, confusion etc. The experience of grief can be complicated and can last a while after the event. Often a reflection of what we value and love.

**Trauma:** The individual experience of a distressing event that exceeds our capacity to cope. Many factors impact whether an event is experienced as traumatic (including: resources, past experiences, current circumstances and our interpretation of the event). Trauma can have lasting effects that can impact everyday life.

## Supporting Ourselves & Each Other

Before we can support students to return, it is important to have awareness of how we are feeling, how we have been impacted, how our experience may differ from others, and what we need moving forward. We need to take care of ourselves before our students will feel safe, secure and comfortable in our building. Understanding how we may have experienced loss, grief and/or trauma is an important first step.

Ways to self-assess:

1. Coronavirus Impact Scale (document attached).
2. Staff check-ins or debrief at meetings.
3. Personal self-care and awareness (through personal self-reflection practices such as conversations, journaling, meditation, body scans to understand our physical responses to stress, reading, etc.).

Ways to care for yourself:

1. Know and name your emotions - We need to know what we are feeling and identify the emotion to be able to recognize our needs. This is also the first step in being able to help students manage their emotions. (For example, we can't help students deal with frustration and uncertainty if we are being triggered by our own frustrations with changing circumstances).
2. Maintain healthy boundaries - This includes recognizing your own feelings and not taking on the emotions of others. Acknowledging how much we can take on at a time and not trying to do more than we can manage. You don't need to take care of everyone and everything.
3. Self-care - Take care of yourself first. This requires awareness and effort. It may include setting boundaries, taking time for appointments, and saying "no" when we are unable to manage our loads and remain healthy.
4. Get support - Rely on your natural supports and seek out additional support as needed. This may include reaching out to school admin, EAP, or other resources. While we are all in this together, we are not all in the same boat and may need different things at different times.

## **Supporting Students**

Students will be impacted by COVID and the disconnection from school in different ways. Our primary goal is to re-establish connection and a sense of safety. While there is stress associated with recovery work and learning outcomes, there is a better chance for success for all students if they feel connected and secure.

We cannot predict how our students may have been impacted and what they have experienced. Physiological, emotional, behavioral and cognitive reactions we may see from students and parents may stem from loss, grief or trauma as well as uncertainty, insecurity, loss of connection, changed expectations, and changes in routines and structure. All we can do is try our best to understand, have empathy and patience, and create a stable environment.

Ways to assess student impact and needs:

1. Coronavirus Impact Scale (completed by students or families).
2. Check-ins with students - one-to-one or group (feelings chart, daily journal, sharing circle, etc.).
3. Class meetings.
4. Consult with student services team as needed (use of Resiliency Scale, accessing additional resources, observation, in-class support or co-teaching).
5. Regular student services meetings to discuss student strengths and needs.

Ways to support students:

1. Connect (use the student's name, say "Hi", talk about their personal interests, build positive relationships, ask them questions, affirm their thoughts and ideas, build a sense of community in your classroom through things like games or class meetings).
2. Focus on resilience - Identify and acknowledge strengths and resources, use these as a starting point for growth (what are they good at - how can that be used to increase confidence, motivation and success).
3. Incorporating regular social-emotional learning - This could be a short mindful moment or emotional check-in, or the use of a program (Kimoichis, Thrival Kits, Stress Lessons, Kids Have Stress Too etc. - talk to student services team or clinician for more information).
4. Provide calm reassurance - Students will be looking to their teachers to provide a sense of security and reassurance that school is a safe and stable place. Student stress levels will be lower when teachers are calm and in control. Additional ideas to support re-entry:
  - Delight in them and welcome them - Say "Hi (name)! I am so glad to see you!"
  - Have a short class meeting with each group of students at the start of your day.
  - Re-establish clear expectations early - What are the set, specific expectations right now?

Explain them clearly to students. While expectations may change, we need to make them as clear and consistent as possible.

- Allow time for play and social interaction.
- Use the first day to focus on re-establishing connection and familiarizing students with the new normal.
- Add visual markers to help students maintain physical distance.
- Create belonging amongst "cohorts" by coming up with a name and developing rituals as a group.



**Coronavirus Impact Survey**  
**Dr. Stoddard and Dr. Kaufman**

Rate how much the Coronavirus pandemic has changed your life in each of the following ways.

1. Routines:
  0. No change.
  1. Mild. Change in only one area (e.g. work, education, social life, hobbies, religious activities).
  2. Moderate. Change in two areas (e.g. work, education, social life, hobbies, religious activities).
  3. Severe. Change in three or more areas (e.g. work, education, social life, hobbies, religious activities).
2. Family Income/Employment:
  0. No change.
  1. Mild. Small change; able to meet all needs and pay bills.
  2. Moderate. Having to make cuts but able to meet basic needs and pay bills.
  3. Severe. Unable to meet basic needs and/or pay bills.
3. Food Access:
  0. No Change
  1. Mild. Enough food but difficulty getting to stores and/or finding needed items.
  2. Moderate. Occasionally without enough food and/or good quality (e.g., healthy) foods.
  3. Severe. Frequently without enough food and/or good quality (e.g., healthy) foods.
4. Medical health care access:
  0. No change.
  1. Mild. Appointments moved to telehealth.
  2. Moderate. Delays or cancellations in appointments and/or delays in getting prescriptions; changes have minimal impact.
  3. Severe. Unable to access needed care resulting in moderate to severe impact on health.
5. Mental health care access:
  0. No change.
  1. Mild. Appointments moved to telehealth.
  2. Moderate. Delays or cancellations in appointments and/or delays in getting prescriptions; changes have minimal impact.
  3. Severe. Unable to access needed care resulting in severe risk and/or significant impact.

6. Access to extended family and non-family social supports:
  0. No change.
  1. Mild. Continued visits with social distancing and/or regular phone calls and/or televideo or social media contacts.
  2. Moderate. Loss of in person and remote contact with a few people, but not all supports.
  3. Severe. Loss of in person and remote contact with all supports.
7. Experiences of stress related to coronavirus pandemic:
  0. None.
  1. Mild. Occasional worries and/or minor stress-related symptoms (e.g., feel a little anxious, sad, and/or angry; mild/rare trouble sleeping).
  2. Moderate. Frequent worries and/or moderate stress-related symptoms (e.g., feel moderately anxious, sad, and/or angry; moderate/occasional trouble sleeping).
  3. Severe. Persistent worries and/or severe stress-related symptoms (e.g., feel extremely anxious, sad, and/or angry; severe/frequent trouble sleeping).
8. Stress and discord in the family:
  0. None.
  1. Mild. Family members occasionally short-tempered with one another; no physical violence.
  2. Moderate. Family members frequently short-tempered with one another; and/or children in the home getting in physical fights with one another.
  3. Severe. Family members frequently short-tempered with one another and adults in the home throwing things at one another, and/or knocking over furniture, and/or hitting and/or harming one another.
9. Personal diagnosis of coronavirus.
  0. None.
  1. Mild. Symptoms effectively managed at home.
  2. Moderate. Symptoms were severe and required brief hospitalization.
  3. Severe. Symptoms severe and required ventilation.
10. Number of immediate family members diagnosed with coronavirus: \_\_\_\_\_ Rate the symptoms of the person who was most sick:
  1. Mild. Symptoms effectively managed at home.
  2. Moderate. Symptoms were severe and required brief hospitalization.
  3. Severe. Symptoms severe and required ventilation.
  4. Immediate family member died from coronavirus.

11. Number of extended family member(s) and/or close friends diagnosed with coronavirus: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate the symptoms of the person who was most sick:

1. Mild. Symptoms effectively managed at home.
2. Moderate. Symptoms were severe and required brief hospitalization.
3. Severe. Symptoms severe and required ventilation.
4. Extended family member and/or close friend died of coronavirus.

12. Other. Please tell us about any other ways the coronavirus pandemic has impacted your life  
OR Are there any other ways the coronavirus pandemic has impacted your life?

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## Resources

School Student Services (Guidance, Resource, Administrators), Divisional Student Services Department (Social Work, Psychology, Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathologists)

Community Mental Health (Southern Health) <https://www.southernhealth.ca/en/finding-care/finding-service/mental-health>

AbilitiCBT Program - Free Online Therapy Program - A free, online program available to Manitobans aged 16 and over who are struggling with anxiety related to COVID-19.

<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html>

Stronger Minds by BEACON - A free, online mental health and wellness program to help you cope with stress, anxiety, and depression and build resilience.

[https://www.mindbeacon.com/strongerminds?utm\\_campaign=Stronger+Minds&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_medium=paidsocial&utm\\_content=performance](https://www.mindbeacon.com/strongerminds?utm_campaign=Stronger+Minds&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=paidsocial&utm_content=performance)

Anxiety Canada <https://www.anxietycanada.com/>

Mood Disorders of Manitoba <http://www.mooddordersmanitoba.ca/>

Government of Manitoba <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html>

Kids these days: A game plan for reconnecting with those we teach, lead, and love. Carrington, J. (2019).

FriesenPress

Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic: Executive Summary  
Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic: Managing the SocialEmotional and Traumatic Impact Response, N. A. C. for T. A. and T. (2020).

## References

Coronavirus Impact Scale - Dr. Joel Stoddard, MD and Dr. Joan Kaufman. PhD. -  
Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic © 2020  
North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response  
Response, N. A. C. for T. A. and T. (2020). Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School  
Setting During the Pandemic: Executive Summary Guidelines for Re-Entry into the  
School Setting During the Pandemic: Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic  
Impact.

## School Attendance

Unless an underlying health condition prevents a student from being at school, regular attendance is expected.

There may be times where a child needs to stay home or returns home because they exhibit signs of illness.

Barring any exceptional circumstances, if a student is at home, it is expected they engage in remote learning.

## School Calendar

Manitoba Education has communicated the following:

The school calendar will have three additional days added prior to Labour Day weekend, meaning the school year will start September 2, 2020 for staff.

Students will return to class on Tuesday September 8, 2020.

September 2, 3, and 4 are mandated as non-instructional days. These days will be used by schools to prepare physical spaces, educate staff on public health protocols, and engage collaboratively on approaches to recovery learning and learning in the 2020-2021 school year. RRVSD has scheduled the remaining non-instructional days. All professional development days will be focused on COVID-19 related priorities and response.

Please see the entire calendar for the 2020-2021 school year (following page).

## RED RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DIVISION SCHOOL CALENDAR 2020 – 2021

### 2020

September 2	Administration Day – No Classes	Wednesday
September 3	In-school PD Day – No Classes	Thursday
September 4	In-school PD Day – No Classes	Friday
September 7	Labour Day – No Classes	Monday
September 8	Classes Begin	Tuesday
October 12	Thanksgiving Day – No Classes	Monday
October 23	MTS PD Day – No Classes	Friday
November 6	School In-service/Administration Day – No Classes	Friday
November 11	Remembrance Day – No Classes	Wednesday
November 20	School In-service/Administration Day – No Classes	Friday
December 18	Last day before Winter Break	Friday

### 2021

January 4	Classes Resume	Monday
February 8	Semester 1 Turn-Around/Administration Day – No Classes	Monday
February 15	Louis Riel Day – No Classes	Monday
March 19	School In-service/Administration Day – No Classes	Friday
March 26	Last day before Spring Break	Friday
April 5	Classes resume	Monday
April 16	School In-service/Administration Day – No Classes	Friday
May 24	Victoria Day – No Classes	Monday
June 29	Last Day of Classes	Tuesday
June 30	Administration Day – No Classes	Wednesday

## Provincial Assessments

An update from Manitoba Education on the provincial tests and assessments scheduled for the 2020-2021 school year:

### **Grade 3 and 4 Assessment and Middle Years Assessment**

The provincial data collection associated with the Grade 3 Assessment in Reading, Lecture and Numeracy and Grade 4 Assessment in French Immersion Lecture, as well as the Middle Years Assessment of Key Competencies in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Expository Writing, and Student Engagement will be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year.

Schools and school divisions are encouraged to continue to use the assessments as one of many tools to help identify students' strengths and needs in key competency areas in order to guide instructional planning.

### **Grade 12 Provincial Exams**

A decision regarding the status of the Grade 12 provincial tests will be made as more information becomes available regarding the return to school in the fall.



## Institutional Preparedness

As mandated by Manitoba Education in Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools, RRVSD shall ensure institutional preparedness by:

- Preparing school facilities to accommodate physical distancing, including increased sanitation, hand hygiene and other public health provisions.
- Following the guidelines for re-opening school facilities. These will be updated regularly to reflect new public health orders and guidance.
- Posting information about physical distancing, cleaning, and other public health measures to help schools prepare for in-class learning.
- Planning for adjustments to transportation routes and schedules for all stages of reopening, including asking parents to transport their own children where possible.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that RRVSD will implement to achieve these goals.

### **a. Schedule increased cleaning and sanitation and ensure supplies are available.**

We have developed a cleaning schedule of sanitizing high contact surfaces (doorknobs, table tops, bathrooms, water fountains) every 60-90 minutes. Each classroom will be provided with a bottle of disinfectant that is safe for all staff to use. This disinfectant is approved by Health Canada and is effective against the Coronavirus. Signage is placed on all rooms to indicate date, time, and name of the person who performed the cleaning.

### **b. Plan for increased hand hygiene.**

Hand sanitizer stations have been placed strategically throughout our buildings, including all main entrances. Signage will be placed throughout the building reminding all staff, students and visitors of frequent hand washing. All washrooms will be adequately stocked with appropriate hand wash and dry supplies.

### **c. Develop self-screening and symptom monitoring protocols.**

As per the Limited Use of School Facilities Guidelines, the expectation is that staff reporting to work will have conducted a self-screen prior to entry or in presence of colleagues, students or visitors to the school. No COVID-19 related screening (including physical examination, temperature taking, etc.) is to be conducted by employees of school divisions on other staff, students or visitors entering a public school facility. Applicable posters are placed at the entrances of all division buildings.

**d. Develop protocols for staff and students exhibiting symptoms.**

Should a staff member or student exhibit symptoms, they will be provided with a mask immediately. The staff member will immediately leave the building, while a student will be quarantined until a parent or guardian can come and pick them up. The quarantined area will then be disinfected before the next occupant.

**e. Display COVID-19 information signs.**

There are many different types of signage throughout the buildings. At every main entrance there are signs indicating people to maintain physical distancing of two meters and symptom information. Physical distancing and hand washing signage are posted throughout the hallways.

**f. Create physical distancing plans.**

Every classroom had the square footage measured. The classrooms were then analyzed to determine the safe amount of students that can occupy the area, based on a two square meter and one square meter buffer zone. All hallways also have markings on the floor to indicate two meter distances.

**g. Create a plan to manage foot traffic flow in entrances, hallways and shared space to avoid congestion.**

Hallways have been measured to ensure there is enough space for two-way traffic flow, with arrows on the floor indicating the direction of traffic. Hallways that do not meet the size requirement are designated as “one-way only”. Signage is posted at both ends of those hallways to indicate as such. Entrances that cannot accommodate two-way traffic will be designated as “Enter Only” or “Exit Only”.

**h. Restrict the use of space that does not allow for physical distancing.**

All rooms were measured. Rooms that are too small for physical distancing will not allow more than one individual.

## **Health and Safety of our Community**

According to Manitoba Education, "current evidence indicates that staff and students can return to school while protecting individual health and minimizing risks from a public health perspective."

As schools plan for the return of staff and students, a balanced focus on maximizing people's health and wellbeing while mitigating risk is our paramount goal.

## **Contact Tracing**

If a student or staff member reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The principal will immediately advise the superintendent.
- The superintendent will contact public health officials, seek advice, and collaborate with divisional and school colleagues to implement the recommendations of public health officials.

To facilitate contact tracing, schools must:

- record student attendance in school and on buses regularly and accurately
- maintain a log of all visitors and itinerant employees that access the building
- keep groups of students (regular classes in scenario 1 and cohorts in scenario 2) together and avoid interactions between groups - **If there is a case of infection in a school, this practice can help with contact tracing, but also limit potential exposures and drastically reduce the potential number of exposed staff and students.**

Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for other students or staff who would be considered "close contacts" of the individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools must not communicate such information without specific direction from the superintendent and public health officials.

### **Rethinking Spaces in Schools**

Manitoba Education has explicitly stated that resuming in-class learning still requires a level of physical distancing:

- Schools will need to implement strategies to avoid crowding in hallways, entrances and other non-instructional spaces.
- Schools will need to limit nonessential visitors and stagger drop-offs, pick-ups, class times and breaks to the greatest extent possible.
- Schools will not schedule assemblies and gatherings that exceed public health advice.

Manitoba Education recommends keeping groups of students together (cohorting), and preventing circulation and exposure between cohorts where possible, to limit exposure to and spread of COVID-19 while pandemic restrictions are in effect.

Cohorting is recommended but not required if two metre spacing between students is possible.

The extent to which cohorting will occur will depend on available space, age of students, and students' developmental ability to follow safety protocols, school configurations and staffing requirements.

We are planning to meet the requirements for physical distancing and cohorting of students by analyzing and implementing the completed space audit of schools to determine how appropriately sized cohorts of students can be spread out across a school's footprint and in some instances require satellite locations in other buildings.

### **Rethinking Learning and Teaching**

The three reopening scenarios will require us to reimagine teachers and support staff in relationship to smaller learning cohorts of students and a holistic approach to learning and teaching.

Some staff assignments will need to change temporarily.

To ensure all 3 schooling scenarios are successful we need to co-create and co-articulate a K-12 learning journey that values essential learning with relevancy and creativity as much as rigor and accountability.

Manitoba Education makes explicit that 2020-2021 will require school systems to continue to refine their 'Blended Learning' strategy:

- Teacher-directed remote learning will be an essential component of K-12 education throughout the pandemic.
- Asynchronous (working independently on their own) and synchronous (working with a teacher in real-time) options will need to be refined.
- Remote and blended in-class and remote learning plans may need to be implemented on short notice.
- Remote learning plans will also need to be developed for students with underlying health conditions that prohibit them from returning to in-class learning (before broad access to a vaccine) and students in 14-day quarantine or isolation.

RRVSD will continue to:

- Monitor students that require support to obtain access to devices and the internet.
- Enhance staff access to technology (devices, software and systems) to ensure the ongoing development of its 'blended learning strategy'.
- Refine its 'blended learning strategy' by meaningfully engaging staff, students and parents/guardians to develop their technical proficiency and capacities.

## **Board Meetings**

The Red River Valley School Board will continue to meet regularly throughout 2020-2021. Should a public health order restrict physical gatherings, meetings will occur via electronic means.

## **Community Use of Schools**

Community use of schools for evening and weekend facility use are suspended until further notice. The suspension will accommodate increased cleaning requirements and afford schools greater flexibility to repurpose gyms and multipurpose rooms for other types of instruction.

## **New Student Registrations**

We can expect that families will continue to relocate within the RRVSD boundaries both in summer and throughout the school year.

To guide the safe and successful welcoming and registration of new students, the following guidelines apply:

- Families new to RRVSD must contact the school by phone or email to arrange a registration appointment. Families who are uncertain of which school to contact can contact the Board Office for assistance.

- The school will arrange an appropriate time and mechanism for registering new students (in-person, online, or other).
- If the family is relocating from a region that warrants a mandatory quarantine or isolation period, they may be asked to verify their travel dates, and quarantine dates and plans. New registrations will only occur after any mandatory quarantine or isolation period has been completed.
- Scheduling and timetabling of new students may require additional time to comply with distancing and cohort limitations. Families will be advised that this may take more time to arrange than normally occurs.

### **Out-of-Province Student and Staff Travel**

All out-of-province student travel is suspended for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year. A similar suspension of any RRVSD related staff travel is likewise in place. The travel ban will be reviewed no later than November 30, 2020, regarding any trips intended for the period from January 2021 to June 2021.

The rationale for the suspension of travel is as follows:

- The concern for student and staff safety and wellbeing.
- Continued uncertainty about predicting the spread, impact, and potential second wave occurrences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Travel restrictions and quarantine requirements vary across regions and countries.
- Significant and unpredictable insurance issues regarding both medical and liability insurance for travelers and the Division.
- Unpredictable cost projections due to uncertainty regarding the availability and cost of transportation, variability of currencies and exchange rates.
- Reducing the financial impact on families by cancelling trips with as much advance notice as possible.

## **Technology**

### **Online and Technology Capacity**

RRVSD will continue to leverage technology (Google Hangouts, Google Classroom, Google Meet, SeeSaw...) to support learning for all three planning scenarios. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our priorities have been:

- Ensuring students have access by loaning out divisional devices for student use and supporting Wi-Fi access to families in need.
- Offering professional development support for teachers to transition to an online teaching environment.
- Enhance technology in the classroom for staff and students.

## Cleaning & Sanitizing Electronic Equipment

- All equipment should be sanitized by school staff between each new user. This includes laptops, computer screens, keyboards, mice, printers, photocopiers, smart boards, remotes.
- Use an approved sanitizer, that should be sprayed on a soft cloth which is then used to wipe down the equipment. Sanitizing solution should NEVER be sprayed directly on the surface of any equipment.
- Wash or sanitize hands before and after use of equipment (beginning and end of each class).
- Review computer lab configurations and rearrange to allow for proper social distancing based on provincial recommendations.
- Retired laptops will be retained to ensure additional laptop availability should learning from home be mandated.
- Technician presence will be minimized in schools from 9:00am to 3:30pm when possible.

## Student Transportation

On August 13, Manitoba Education released “[Guidelines for Transportation to Schools](#)” for the 2020-21 school year.

RRVSD is continuing to work diligently on the student transportation plan.

Based on the division’s plan for student cohorting and alternating high school days, we are able to accommodate all students who are eligible for transportation.

We are currently planning to include a range of temporary options to reduce the number of students on busses. We will be implementing the following strategies:

- Staggered bus pick up times, where the same route will be run twice at the beginning and end of the day.
- Discontinuing transportation to K-6 students in an urban area living less than 1.6 km away from the school.
- All school bus passengers, as well as the driver and other staff, are required to wear a non-medical mask. These should be put on before getting on the bus and taken off after exiting the bus, if removal is appropriate for the setting. Students in lower grades may also wear non-medical masks.
- Enhanced cleaning and sanitizing of “high-touch” areas in buses after each route is completed as directed by the provincial guidelines.
- Provide all drivers with training and information for proper cleaning protocols.
- Online WHMIS training will be provided by the Transportation Department in September 2020.
- Weather permitting, windows and roof vents will be opened for additional ventilation.

- Mandatory seating plans will be in place for each bus route.
- Students will be seated in the same seats every day for regular bus routes.
- Students will be seated one per seat on the school bus. When possible students from the same household or school cohort will be assigned seats together. Students requiring additional supports in the form of a companion to ride the bus will be treated as if they are from the same household.
- A daily record of attendance for each bus will be maintained by the Transportation Department.
- All buses will be loaded from back to front and unloaded from front to back when possible.
- The unloading of buses at schools and transfer points will be limited to one at a time when possible to assist with the staggering of students entering the schools.
- The Transportation Department will communicate to parents/guardian and schools any revisions to scheduling for bus routes related to bus drop off and pick up schedules.

## Student Services and Clinical Services

Student Services and Clinical Services staff are also preparing for a 'new reality' in 2020-2021 school year that may include smaller student cohorts, remote learning, ongoing disruptions to on-site learning due to student health and pandemic restrictions, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other changes required to adapt to pandemic restriction requirements.

RRVSD Schools regularly engage in student-specific, classroom and school-level student services planning. RRVSD will strive to support students with additional needs in school settings where and when possible.

It is expected there may be an ongoing need for some remote learning due to possible changes in provincial public health restrictions or more frequent student health barriers to onsite learning. During pandemic restrictions, which may increase or decrease quickly, school teams will need to navigate various contexts for student support including small cohorts onsite and remote learning. It will be important that student-specific planning include continual capacity building for remote learning and use of technology for communication and learning where possible, to mitigate disruptions in learning when students are not able to attend school. Please see important additional information from Manitoba Education: [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#).

### Priorities

- Wellbeing of students, families and staff
- A focus on equity for our most vulnerable students
- Maintaining connections between school staff and students



## Guidelines

- Student specific resources/ supports and services can be effectively provided remotely if necessary
- We will continue with our service delivery models as much as possible. Ongoing capacity building (identification and preparation) for remote and small cohort learning opportunities will be important
- Remote learning comes in many forms and is not always online learning
- Engagement and dialogue with families is key
- Schools and families have local contexts that they must navigate
- Planning and time for planning are key
- We will adopt a [Growth Mindset](#): we are in a novel situation and we will learn and improve service delivery

## Issues Requiring Additional Planning During Pandemic Restrictions

- Student and staff physical and mental health and well-being
- Student transition planning
- Planning for students unable to follow physical distancing requirements
- Designing cohorts where students with greatest needs have the greatest access to necessary professional staff, support, and spaces
- Reducing staff and student circulation in schools
- Ongoing Remote learning
- Special needs transportation
- Home situation and family/childcare availability
- Equipment and space sharing and cleaning
- Appropriate understanding, use, care, and disposal of PPE

## Guidance for School Administration

- Principals are responsible to lead and organize the school's support team collaboration (Administrators, Resource Teachers, Guidance Teachers, etc.)
- Review Manitoba Education's Covid-19: [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#) with school team
- Review Manitoba Education's Covid-19: [Guidelines on Support Students Who Require Interventions or Supports that Cannot be Delivered at a Distance](#) with school team
- Lead and support the school team's planning for comprehensive school health and wellbeing, including planning proactively to anticipate stress behaviours in students by optimizing physical spaces, establishing universal classroom routines, and teaching students about self-regulation
- Arrange School Support Team Meetings
  - Confirm scheduled meetings and provide options for Google Meet participation
  - Invite Clinicians assigned to your school to your team meetings to participate in planning as needed
  - Maintain communication with Student Services Administrator and invite to your team meetings for specific support requests

- Provide information to team members in advance where possible to make meetings more efficient
- Use and collect data to identify students at-risk due to pandemic or family circumstances (access to technology, requiring 'Student Specific Planning', well-being, loss of contact with student/family, etc.)
- Update class profiles and student-specific planning to include remote learning and physical distancing requirements as necessary
- Prepare transition planning, intakes, and cohort configurations for 2020-2021 year
- Support collaborative problem solving and open communication with the entire staff
- Plan ongoing necessary communication and training for staff to work safely with students including:
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - [Guidelines on Supporting Students Who Require Interventions or Supports that Cannot be Delivered from a Distance](#)
  - Safe Work Procedures

### **Important Tasks During Pandemic Disruptions**

- Review and assign case management to staff
- Review and implement Manitoba Education's Covid-19 guidelines for [Case Managers: Reaching out to Parents/Caregivers](#) with staff
- Ensure early connection with parents/guardians is established to create an ongoing communication plan
- Review Class Profiles, and transition information with teachers and identify students requiring new student-specific planning in the current context
- Plan meeting dates with the School Support Team as soon as possible and invite Clinicians or Student Services Administrator
- Have general resources for parents prepared in advance specific to their child's needs
- Case Manager arranges virtual Student Specific planning meetings for students to establish educational continuance goals and planning with parents and school teams
- Prepare resources/supports and arrange services/connections to support students with tier 2 and tier 3 programming
- Re-evaluate transportation plans and supports as necessary

### **Communication**

- All communication to parents should use plain, direct, accessible language
- It is essential to connect with parents/guardians to understand their circumstances and needs, to establish a consistent and predictable communication plan, and share information to inform student-specific planning whether at school or at home
- We need to provide notice to families regarding specific tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 supports that student services will provide to their children remotely if necessary
- Arrange regular, ongoing check-ins with families (phone, email, online tools, etc.)

- Use check-ins to discuss resources, supports and services, prioritize learning needs, problem-solve learning and behavioural issues at home, and customize the daily schedule for students
- Help to overcome individual obstacles to accessing materials and resources
- Scheduled times with students and families is recommended
- Consider office hours and staff accessibility
- Specific hours in the day parents can sign-up for ahead of time and touch base with a specific person at the school

### **Guiding Resource Teacher Service Delivery During Remote Learning**

- Co-plan inclusive, developmentally appropriate learning activities with teachers and develop learning resources for parents/students
- Provide student-specific planning support for teachers and families
- Support student-specific planning implementation
- Support outreach for students in-risk and struggling to engage in remote learning easily
- Support understanding of each child's remote learning environment and current considerations for student-specific plans
- Support teachers in the identification of students' learning recovery needs upon return to school

### **Domains of Remote Service Delivery (where necessary)**

- Providing Supports and Resources for remote learning activities
- Providing remote instruction and services (small group and individualized)

### **Student Specific Plans**

- Learning should be enjoyable and promote relationship, communication and wellbeing
- Student specific goals must consider new learning environments and supports available
- Consider greater use of outdoor spaces
- Move from student-specific programming to cohorts of students with common needs where possible to reduce social isolation and staff circulation/distribution of resources and needs for spaces. Inclusion must be meaningful and purposeful, not merely physical/social
- Assets and resources available to students will vary
- Co-planning and co-constructing using a team approach with parents/guardians and older students is even more essential
- Whether curricular or student-specific, goals should be developmentally appropriate and relevant and appropriate for onsite or remote learning contexts
- Focus on making curriculum learning accessible (accommodation, adaptation, modification if the student is eligible)

## The Role of Support Staff Working with Students During Pandemic Restrictions in RRVSD

RRVSD recognizes the value of its support staff and their contributions in supporting the inclusion of all students in our schools. During the pandemic period, the learning environment has changed to include remote learning and learning in schools in smaller cohorts with public health restrictions. As a result, the context and possibilities for meaningful work for support staff working with students have changed.

Support Staff will play an important role in supporting the transition of students back to schools and greater supervision responsibilities as we work to organize students into smaller cohorts needed to respect physical distancing requirements. **Support staff who work with students will experience changes in expectations and assignments as required to supervise and support students in their cohorts.**

However, the distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of support staff and professional staff have not changed. The norms for roles and responsibilities, and the requirement for professional staff to plan for and assess learning, provide initial instruction to students and support staff, and to schedule and manage communication between staff, students and parents/guardians, remains in effect. For clarity on roles and responsibilities please see the document [Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools](#).

The following applies to engaging support staff in work with students:

- Support staff may have increased responsibility for supervision and support of student learning planned by professional staff
- Remote student engagement is to be scheduled and supervised by the teacher/supervisor in Google Meet in collaboration and as planned with students, staff and parents/guardians
- It will be understood that professional staff will join and supervise/participate in the remote or onsite learning activities with a frequency and duration as they deem appropriate and necessary depending upon the learning task, the staff/student relationship and familiarity with each other, the learning task, and other factors which may require more direct support
- Professional staff will be available to support as needed
- Support staff will communicate student progress or other feedback to supervising professional staff daily and not to parents/guardians
- Only professional staff will communicate with parents regarding students as per normal protocols

During any future class suspension period, the assignment of meaningful work for support staff will be directed by school administration and will support our current Student Support Services priorities. Meaningful work includes the following:

- support home learning by assisting with check-ins and maintaining connections
- offer supplemental support and encouragement to students as staff are capable and trained to do
- follow-up and reinforce instruction provided by teachers
- support reading/speaking activities (especially in 2nd language programming)
- review social stories and assist with transition activities
- help prepare resources, supplies, and care packages for students
- support learning resource creation guided by teachers (e.g. .ppt, videos, print resources, visual schedules)
- engage in other normal duties to support professional staff and students as assigned

## Student and Family Preparedness

As mandated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#), RRVSD shall promote student and family preparedness by:

- Identifying students with disabilities and those who are vulnerable to disengage from school, develop and implement strategies to re-engage them and prioritize these students for five days a week in-class learning, where possible.
  - Refer to [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#) for principles and practical resources to assist with planning.
- Communicating expectations for in-class attendance and participation in remote learning.
  - Students are expected to attend in-class learning. If remote learning is included as part of their learning plan, students will be expected to participate.
  - Students who are unable to return to school due to personal or family health risks factors related to COVID-19 will be supported in remote learning.
- Developing comprehensive strategies for regular communication with families to raise awareness of the health and safety measures implemented at the school
- Ensuring the understanding that students may not attend school when sick or exhibiting symptoms of illness.
  - Refer to the online COVID-19 screening tool to develop materials.
  - Signal that in-class learning may be increased or suspended on short notice in response to changing public health advice.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that RRVSD will implement to achieve these goals.

## Modifying Behaviours that Mitigate the Risk

There are many uncertainties about the COVID-19 pandemic that may cause us to feel stress. How long will the pandemic last? How long will I have to work from home? How long until I can return to school full time? Will I or my loved ones get sick?

We are not in control of the answers to these questions and spending too much time worrying about them may make us feel worse. Some things that you **CAN control daily**:

- **Stay home** if you show any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue)
- Wash hands regularly
- Exercise every day
- Spend time outside
- Take time to focus on breathing
- Treat others with kindness
- Focus on schoolwork
- Talk with friends or family members on the phone or online

## Student Screening and Self-Assessment

Students must be in good health to attend school. Before leaving for school parents/guardians are to use the [Manitoba COVID-19 Screening Tool](#), using the following guidelines:

- If a student shows any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue) they should remain at home.
- If a person in the household has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province, they are required to consult with [Health Links](#) prior to attending school and follow their directions.

## Reporting and Contact Tracing

In the event of a student or member of the same household reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The parent/guardian will immediately advise the school principal.
- The school and division will work with public health officials.

To facilitate contact tracing, schools will record attendance regularly and accurately. Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for other students or staff who would be considered "close contacts" of the individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools will not communicate such information without specific direction from their superintendent and public health officials.

## **Personal Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

- Students will use hand sanitizer or wash their hands immediately upon entry into the school
- Students will be instructed to follow all floor signage such as directional arrows or physical distancing spacing at all times within the school building
- Personal hygiene practices that minimize the risk of virus transmission must be followed at all times. These include:
  - Covering the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow
  - Immediately disposing of used tissues in a garbage container
  - Washing hands frequently, particularly after coughing or sneezing without a tissue, touching frequently used surfaces such as door handles or taps as well as before and after eating
  - Avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth
  - Cleaning and sanitizing of shared spaces will be a priority in RRVSD schools and facilities. Washrooms will be cleaned on a regular basis according to health and safety guidelines



## Communication

Our divisional website will continue to provide the most up to date and comprehensive information for students and families. Regular email updates will also be provided.

RRVSD will continue to engage all stakeholders as we approach a return to schools in the fall to share up-to-date plans and procedures for re-entry and gather feedback from employee groups and various provincial organizations to support the safe return to school.

## Learning Preparedness

As mandated by Manitoba Education in Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools, RRVSD shall ensure learning preparedness by:

- Planning for recovery learning.
- Developing action plans to address students' recovery learning needs identified in the June 2020 report card and referring to the Recovery Learning Guidelines to inform this planning.
- Adapting schedules to facilitate levels of physical distancing (outdoor classrooms, frequent and staggered hand-washing breaks, staggered recesses and lunch breaks, physical distancing measures in place in classrooms and bathrooms).
- Planning for blended in-class and remote learning models and referring to the list of learning resources for educators provided on the Manitoba Education website.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that RRVSD will implement to achieve these goals.

Manitoba Education has defined [Recovery Learning](#) as the "process to enable Manitoba students to transition back from remote learning to classroom learning in schools, while addressing their mental and physical wellbeing and academic success". [Manitoba Education](#) highlights the following principles for school teams to reference as we plan for students' return to school:

- When in-class learning resumes, schools will plan for a period of reorientation to classroom routines, rebuilding community and relationships, and planning for instruction. In September 2020, educators will use their existing assessment processes, along with the information provided on recovery needs on the June 2020 report card.
- Dialogue between the previous year's teacher(s) and the current teacher(s) will aid in transition planning. Families may add insights about the student's experiences with remote learning. Schools should ensure that there are sufficient supports in place to facilitate this dialogue, as well as joint planning among colleagues, parents, and students.

- Recovery learning will differ according to the opportunities and constraints of the school year. Schools are encouraged to develop a flexible learning approach and allow the implementation of recovery learning to vary according to the needs of the students, the opportunities and constraints of the school schedule, and available resources.

Manitoba Education requires that the following considerations be incorporated into planning for the return to school:

- School teams will need to review the diverse student and educator experiences that will have unfolded during the suspension of classes and intentionally address the mental wellbeing of the school community upon their return to school. Students who are most at risk due to the disruption of their learning will require additional supports when classes resume so that they may reach their full learning potential within their grade level.
- Schools will need to plan for varying lengths of time, as well as diverse models and strategies for recovery learning, depending on student needs, grade levels, subject areas, and school contexts.
- There may be additional waves of COVID-19 over the next 18 to 24 months, and recovery learning and alternate ways of addressing learning needs will be considered as part of this planning.

## **Responding to the Needs of Students**

Establishing a safe return to school and the building of school and classroom communities alongside recovery learning is the primary focus of the first six weeks of school and may extend further as needed or even recur should subsequent waves of COVID-19 take place. School teams will leverage existing structures such as opening day conferences and class profiles to plan for both the socioemotional and academic needs of students.

If, as expected, recovery learning needs are greater this fall than in a typical year, these processes will be even more important than ever. A coordinated, collaborative, intentional and responsive approach to recovery learning will promote accelerated learning.

## **Planning for Recovery Learning is Not New**

Each year, students arrive in classrooms with varying abilities. To mitigate this reality and thus promote the success of each student, schools employ a number of valuable processes, notably:

- referencing learning goals indicated on the final report card
- holding transition meetings between the teachers of the current and previous years
- holding Opening Day Conferences to learn more about students directly from families
- conducting baseline assessments and addressing gaps in learning by re-teaching concepts before introducing new content
- preparing class profiles to document Tier 1, 2 & 3 strategies

## School Staff Preparedness

As mandated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#), RRVSD shall ensure staff preparedness and compliance with Public Health orders and guidelines in all our schools and workplaces by:

- Orienting staff to new public health protocols that must be followed in the school, before resuming in-class learning.
- Including all staff in orientation, including bus drivers, custodial staff, etc.
- Providing orientation to volunteers, if they are on site in a limited way, to ensure they receive orientation when they begin.
- Using the online [COVID-19 screening tool](#) to inform staff orientation.
- Presenting information on self-monitoring, managing a suspected case of COVID-19, managing shared spaces, etc.
- Identifying staff who may need to work at home due to underlying health concerns that make them more vulnerable to exposure to COVID-19, and making any necessary adjustments.
- Planning for health and safety training that may be required, and also ensuring that professional learning focuses on COVID-19 pandemic priority areas, including recovery learning, collaborative planning, mental health and wellbeing and remote learning strategies.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that RRVSD will implement to achieve these goals.

### Modifying Behaviours That Mitigate Risk

To ensure the safety of the work environment for all, staff will adhere to the safety protocols created by MSBA and keep abreast of updated procedures and protocols.

In the event that a family member of the staff person in the same household reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The staff member will immediately advise their direct supervisor.
- The school and division will work with public health officials.

### Staff Screening and Self-Assessment

Staff members must be in good health to attend work. Before leaving for the worksite all staff are to use the [Manitoba Health COVID-19 Screening Tool](#), using the following guidelines:

- Any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue) they should remain at home.

- If a person in the household has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province, they are required to consult with [Health Links](#) prior to attending school.

## Reporting and Contact Tracing

To facilitate contact tracing, staff attendance will be tracked at each location.

Visitors to schools and itinerant Divisional Employees will upon entry to each work site, sign-in on the Entry Log with the date, name, and entry time, and the location(s) being accessed in the building. Staff will need to sign-out their departure time on the Entry Log.

Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for staff who would be considered "close contacts" of any individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools will not communicate such information without specific direction from their superintendent and public health officials.

## Personal Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

It is especially important to clean your hands:

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for a sick person
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands, or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

Physical distancing [measures](#) to reduce your risk of infection:

- Minimize prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two meters/ six feet) contact between your co-workers and other individuals in public.
- Where possible, meet with colleagues online or via telephone instead of in person.
- Avoid greetings that involve touching, such as handshakes.
- Avoid travel, crowded places, and events, especially if you are at higher risk (e.g., seniors and those with underlying medical conditions).
- Disinfect frequently used surfaces in your workspace.
- Follow public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have been exposed to COVID-19 through travel or contact with someone infected with COVID-19.

## **Communication**

Since the onset of the pandemic,

RRVSD has strived to communicate effectively with staff through:

- Emails
- Memos
- Announcements and updates posted on RRVSD Websites
- Remote meetings with staff

Our divisional website will continue to provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information for staff. Other forms of communication will be used, as deemed appropriate. RRVSD will continue to engage staff as we prepare to return to schools in the fall. Up to date plans and procedures for re-entry will be shared with all staff. Staff are encouraged to check their email prior to returning to school.

It is anticipated that public health orders may change suddenly, prompting an immediate change to existing practices. It is essential that staff stay informed. Staff are expected to check their email regularly. Should the need arise, schools will activate their emergency phone tree to ensure timely communication with staff when class is not in session.

Staff must advise their supervisor immediately should they learn that they or a member of their household has tested positive for COVID-19 or that they or a member of their household has been in close contact with someone that has tested positive for COVID-19. Staff should note their supervisor's contact information so that such communication can occur after school hours, if necessary.