

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

Overview

The guidance provided in this document is intended to support school and school authority leaders in the safe launch of in-person classes in September 2020 under Scenario 2 of the Re-Entry Plan and reduce opportunities for transmission of COVID-19.

Schools refer to public, separate, francophone, charter schools, independent (private) school authorities, independent (private) Early Childhood Services (ECS), online/distance education programs, and First Nations education authorities. School-based activities which may be impacted by this guidance include sports, music and field trips into the community or to other schools, care provided outside of regular school hours (e.g. before and after care), professional development/activity days and school break day camps.

Although this information is relevant to all schools, it is recognized that First Nation schools on reserve are a federal responsibility. Information shared with First Nation schools is for information only. For public health information, COVID-19 questions or for reporting purposes, First Nation schools should contact their local Health Centre or Indigenous Services Canada-First Nations or Inuit Health Branch Environmental Public Health Services (ISC-FNIHB) office (see Appendix A), in accordance with normal practice.

There are measures that school settings in Alberta can take to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Such measures include, but are not limited to, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection and having staff and children/students stay home when ill are important steps that can support the health and wellbeing of our children/students, staff and community. School authorities in consultation with their local Medical Officer of Health (MOH) should implement the guidance for schools as applicable to their unique situation.

Schools/School authorities should establish their own COVID-19 plans prior to reopening schools.

Parents/guardians play an integral role in the screening process for the child's/student's daily involvement in school.

MOHs and their designates are available to support school authorities throughout the province. Their role is to provide guidance on communicable disease risk as well as risk management. If you have concerns, need specific guidance, or have questions about how to apply the measures in this document, please contact Environmental Public Health in your Zone for assistance (see Appendix B).

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

Any school authority/school connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 will be contacted by Alberta Health Services (AHS) and may be required to close in person classes to allow the public health investigation to take place. The decision to send a cohort/class home or to close a school will be made in consultation with the local MOH.

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In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation

General Building Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A thorough cleaning of school facilities must be completed prior to re-entry.• Many school buildings have had reduced or no water flow through the plumbing water system during the pandemic, leading to the stagnation of water in the pipes. Prior to the launch of summer school, the physical setting must be checked to ensure fresh water replaces the stagnant water in the water lines. Guidance on flushing water systems can be accessed here.• HVAC systems must be checked to ensure good ventilation.• Area rugs and soft furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected must be removed. Increased frequency of cleaning of permanent carpets is recommended.• Schools must develop procedures that outline hand hygiene and cleaning requirements for schools and should address:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Placement of hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content (or a non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada) in entrances, exits, classroom entrances, high-touch equipment such as microwave ovens and vending machines and other high traffic areas. A list of Health Canada approved hand sanitizers is posted here.○ High contact surfaces (including water fountains);○ Washrooms;○ Shared equipment;○ Auxiliary spaces and common rooms; and○ Others areas that may apply.• Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas and equipment (e.g. microwave ovens and vending machines) inside and outside classrooms.<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Disinfectants used must have a Drug Information Number (DIN) with a virucidal claim. Alternatively, 1000 ppm bleach solution can be used. More information on cleaning and disinfection can be accessed here.• Students and staff are required to perform hand hygiene when entering and exiting the school as well as before entering the classroom.• Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be promoted.
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GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Fountains can remain open. Mouthpieces of drinking fountains are not a major source of virus transmission and require regular cleaning according to manufacturer recommendations. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Water fountain knobs and push buttons are considered high-touch surfaces, and must be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Consideration can be given to having students fill water bottles rather than having them drink directly from the mouthpiece of a fountain. • Additional Alberta Health Services resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AHS Infections Prevention & Control posters ○ Hand Washing Posters (AHS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poster 1 ▪ Poster 2 ○ How to Hand Wash (AHS) poster ○ How to use alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizer (AHS) poster
<p>Screening</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before leaving home, staff, children/students, visitors, and volunteers who will access the school for work or education, must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the attached tool (See Appendix C). • Parents and children/students must be provided a copy of the screening tool upon school registration with the expectation that it needs to be completed on a daily basis. • Schools should keep records of children’s known pre-existing conditions. If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the child should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to school. • Anyone that reports symptoms should be directed to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner, or 911 for emergency response), and fill out the AHS Online Self-Assessment tool to determine if they should be tested. • Signs must be posted reminding persons not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

<p>Cohorting</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The risk of transmission of COVID-19 is reduced by limiting exposure to others. • Contact tracing is also more feasible when groups (cohorts) are maintained. It is recommended, where possible, that students be cohorted by class. • A cohort is defined as a group of students and staff who remain together. The size of the cohort will depend on the physical space of the classroom or learning setting. At least 2 metres of physical space, where possible, should be maintained between desks. • Cohorting will decrease the number of close contacts a case of COVID-19 would have in a school and assist public health officials in their efforts to trace contacts and contain an outbreak. For the purposes of contact tracing, consider limiting capacity of rooms to a maximum 15 people, whenever possible or to a number that allows for physical distancing (i.e. less students in a smaller room and more students in a larger room).
<p>Physical Distancing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical distancing (2 metre spacing) is a useful public health measure to help prevent the spread of disease. Increasing the space between persons decreases the risk of transmission. Where 2 metres is not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If 2 metres cannot be arranged between desks/tables, students should be arranged so they are not facing each other (e.g. arranged in rows rather than in small groups of 4 or a semi circle). This way, if a student coughs or sneezes, they are not likely to cough or sneeze directly on the face of another student. • In situations where physical distancing is not possible (e.g., busses, classrooms and some sporting activities), extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, not participating when sick and cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis before and after activities is strongly recommended. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In circumstances where 2 metres of physical distance is not possible (especially if the circumstance requires prolonged close contact for longer than 15 minutes), teachers, staff and students may choose to wear a non-medical face mask to protect one another. Guidance on mask use is available here.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is still recommended to maintain physical distancing within a cohort whenever possible to minimize the risk for disease transmission (i.e., spacing between desks).
<p>Expectations for drop-off/pick-up and entry areas at schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must develop procedures for drop-off/pick-up that support physical distancing of 2 metres, where possible, between all persons (except household members). • Consider strategies to support physical distancing such as staggering drop-off and pick-up times and locations, or put in place other protocols to limit contact between staff/parents/guardians/children/students as much as possible.
<p>In-person learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools should develop procedures and plans for in-person learning that supports physical distancing (2 metres), where possible, and to separate cohorts to the greatest extent possible. • Consider how to best address traffic flow throughout the schools. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. Note that it is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure the fire code is adhered to. • If two or more people from different cohorts are required to come within 2 metres of one another for the purposes of instruction, practice or undertaking examinations, additional protections must be instituted such as engineering controls (such as plexiglas barriers or partitions) administrative controls (adapting the activity to minimize or eliminate close contacts) or use of masks. • For activity planning, staff should ask themselves the following questions to determine the risk of the activities and whether they are allowed to proceed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands? ○ Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing? ○ What is the frequency/possibility to clean high touch surfaces (e.g., electronic devices, instruments, equipment, toys)? • To align with physical distancing requirements, field trips and activities requiring group transportation should not occur at this time. • Stagger lunch/snack breaks to maintain physical distancing among children/students.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning experiences involving unprotected (without a mask or physical barrier) in-person singing, cheering or shouting or playing wind instruments should be postponed at this time. Consider alternatives such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Recording or live-streaming individual performers in separate locations; ○ Including more lessons focused on music appreciation or music theory; ○ Choose to play instruments that are lower risk (e.g., percussion or string instruments over wind instruments).
<p>Expectations for visitors and other service providers entering the school</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be no non-essential persons allowed into the school. • Parents/guardians can attend the school if they are required as part of the educational programming needs of the school (i.e. medical injections, learning supports, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When a school visit is essential, the school must screen visitors using the attached tool (see Appendix C) before they enter the school. ○ If a visitor answers YES to any of the questions, the individual must not be admitted into the school. • A record of all visitors must be kept. • The school must screen service providers, including delivery drivers and independent contractors using the attached tool (see Appendix C) before they enter the school. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If a service provider answers YES to any of the questions, the individual must not be admitted into the school. ○ In the case of a delivery driver answering Yes, the driver/school will make alternate delivery arrangements.
<p>Risk mitigation for high traffic areas in school facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must institute controls to promote physical distancing between all attendees in areas in and outside of the classroom, including hallways, washrooms, and common areas. This may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staggering start and end-times for classes to avoid crowded hallways. ○ Posting signs, using stanchions and marking floors. ○ Removing and restaging seating in public areas to prevent gathering. ○ Considering limiting bathroom occupancy at any one time.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

<p>Expectations for shared use equipment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of shared items or equipment is to be avoided where possible. • Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected after each use. • Arrangements for storage of personal items should be made. • Children/students should be provided with an area for storing personal items.
<p>Auxiliary Spaces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gymnasiums are open for use in Stage 2 and can be used to deliver physical education programming. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When possible physical education should be done outside instead of inside as the risk of transmission is more likely to occur indoors rather than outdoors. Follow the Guidance for Outdoor Activity as relaunch progresses. ○ Administrators and teachers should choose activities or sports that support physical distancing (e.g. badminton over wrestling). • Consider using auxiliary space such as gyms and libraries to deliver education program to aid in physical distancing. • Use of shared items or sports equipment should be discouraged. Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use, or users should perform hand hygiene before and after each use. • School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) must be avoided virtual options should be offered instead of in person gatherings.
<p>Food Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No activities that involve the sharing of food between students or staff should occur. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Classes that teach food preparation may occur as long as students do not share the food they prepare with other students or staff. • For classroom meals and snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No self-serve or family-style meal service. Instead, switch to pre-packaged meals or meals served by designated staff. ○ Food provided by the family should be stored with the student’s belongings. ○ Close the food preparation areas off that could be accessed by students/children, non-designated staff, or essential visitors.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure that food-handling staff practice meticulous hand hygiene and are excluded from work if they are symptomatic. ○ Students/children should practice physical distancing while eating. ○ There should be no common food items (e.g., salt and pepper shakers, ketchup). ○ Utensils should be used to serve food items (not fingers). ○ If a school is using a common lunchroom and staggering lunch times, ensure that cleaned and disinfected after each use all surfaces of the tables and chairs (including the underneath edge of the chair seat) are cleaned and disinfected after each use. <p>Food Service Programs (Cafeteria)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food service establishments should follow the Alberta Health restaurant guidance posted here. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ School Cafeterias must use alternate processes to reduce the numbers of people dining together at one time. ○ Remove/rearrange dining tables or place signs on tables/chairs that are not to be used to maintain physical distancing. ○ Place tape or other markings on floors to maintain a physical distancing of 2 metres. ○ Stagger meal service times to reduce the numbers of people present at any one time. ○ Adapt other areas to serve as additional dining space to increase spacing among persons in the same room. ○ Do not use buffets. Instead, switch to pre-packaged meals or meals served by staff. ○ Dispense cutlery, napkins and other items to students/children, rather than allowing them to pickup their own items.
<p>Responding to Illness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Staff members, parents, and children/students must not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19. ● Schools must develop procedures to address staff that become symptomatic during the school day to allow that staff member to isolate/leave the school for the time recommended by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Health Services. The staff member should be encouraged to access COVID-19 testing by accessing the AHS Online Testing tool.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a child/student develops symptoms while at the school, the child/student should be asked to wear a non-medical mask if they are able to, and be isolated in a separate room. The parent/guardian should be notified to come and pick up the student immediately. If a separate room is not available, the child/student must be kept at least 2 metres away from other children/students. The student should be encouraged to access COVID-19 testing by accessing the AHS Online Testing tool. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the child/student requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the child/student until the parent is able to pick up the child/student. The student and staff should wear a mask and close interactions with the student that may result in contact with the student’s respiratory secretions should be avoided. If very close contact is required and the child is young the staff member should also use a face shield or eye protection. ○ Staff/students must wash their hands before donning a mask and before and after removing the mask (as per Alberta Health mask guidance), and before and after touching any items used by the child/student. ○ All items the student touched/used while isolated must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the child/student has been picked up. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 10 days. • Schools must keep records of a student’s known pre-existing conditions. If a student develops symptoms in or outside of the program that could be caused by COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g. allergies), the student should be tested for COVID-19 at least once to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to the school. • If two or more staff/students within a cohort are identified as having symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the school should follow outbreak notification procedures as per routine zone protocols (under review for September 2020).
<p>Student Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and children/students must not be in the pick-up area or enter the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19. • Encourage private (e.g. parents or caregivers) vehicle use where possible to decrease transportation density.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must develop procedures for student pick-up and drop off that support physical distancing of 2 metres between all persons (except household members or cohorted children/students and staff), support respiratory etiquette and access to hand hygiene. • The driver should be provided with a protective zone, which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 metre physical distance; ○ Physical barrier; ○ Non-medical mask; or ○ Other • Students must be assigned seats and a record of this seating plan must be kept in order to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student being a case of COVID-19. Students who live in the same household should be seated together. • Schools must develop procedures for student loading, unloading and transfers that support physical distancing of 2 metres between all persons (except household members) and may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Children/students start loading from the back seats to the front of bus. ○ Where feasible, limit the number of students per bench unless from the same household. ○ Students from the same household may share seats. ○ Students start unloading from the front seats to the back of bus. • If a child becomes symptomatic during the bus trip, a mask may be made available. The driver will contact the school to make the appropriate arrangements to pick up the child/student (see Responding to Illness above). • Bus cleaning and records. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, such as door handles, window areas, rails, steering wheel, mobile devices and GPS prior to each run. ○ It is recommended that vehicle cleaning logs be kept.
<p>Work Experience and other Learning Experiences</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work experience may resume as long as the risk of infection is mitigated for all participants. • If the work experience placement is in a workplace, the child/student is expected to follow health rules set out by the workplace which must comply with the Workplace Guidance for Business Owners.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If two or more individuals outside of the same cohort are required to come within 2 metres of one another for the purpose of instruction, practice, or undertaking examinations, additional protections must be instituted such as engineering controls (barriers or partitions) or use of masks by all individuals in close contact. • The time that individuals are in close contact should be kept to a minimum. • Use of shared items or equipment should be avoided. Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use, AND users should perform hand hygiene before and after each use. • Learning experiences involving unprotected in-person singing or playing wind instruments may pose an increased risk of transmission and should be postponed at this time. Alternatives such as recording or live-streaming individual performers in separate locations should be pursued. • Sports practices and outdoor activities may proceed in accordance with sector specific guidance. • Guidelines for resuming indoor sport are under development and will be posted shortly. • For more guidance on outdoor sports and recreation, refer to the Guidance for Outdoor Recreation.
<p>International Students/Programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once Canada lifts travel restrictions and non-essential international travel resumes, international travel programs and international education programs in Alberta can resume if quarantine requirements and public health orders are followed.

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

Appendix A: Indigenous Services Canada – First Nations and Inuit Health Branch ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES Contacts

ISC-First Nations and Inuit Health Branch Environmental Public Health Services	REGULAR BUSINESS HOURS 8:00 am – 4:00 pm	
Edmonton Office	Environmental Public Health	780-495-4409
Tsuut'ina Office	Environmental Public Health	403-299-3939

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

Appendix B: AHS Zone Environmental Public Health Contacts

Portal link: <https://ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case/>

ZONE	CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBERS FOR MAIN OFFICE
Calgary Zone	calgaryzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Calgary 403-943-2288
Central Zone	centralzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Red Deer 403-356-6366
Edmonton Zone	edmontonzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Edmonton 780-735-1800
North Zone	northzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Grande Prairie 780-513-7517
South Zone	she.southzoneeph@ahs.ca	Lethbridge 403-388-6689

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 2

In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

Appendix C

Screening Questionnaire

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/STUDENTS MUST USE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE TO DECIDE IF THE STUDENT SHOULD ATTEND SCHOOL

Risk Assessment: Initial Screening Questions

		CIRCLE ONE	
1.	Do you, or your child attending the program, have any of the below symptoms:	YES	NO
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Chills	YES	NO
	• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
	• Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
	• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
	• Muscle/ Joint aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	YES	NO
2.	Have you, or anyone in your household, returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Have you or your children attending the program had close <u>unprotected</u> * contact (face-to-face contact within 2 metres) with someone who is ill with cough and/or fever?	YES	NO
4.	Have you or anyone in your household been in close <u>unprotected</u> contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	YES	NO

* “unprotected” means close contact without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

If you have answered “**Yes**” to any of the above questions, please **DO NOT** enter the school at this time. You should stay home and use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine whether you need to be tested for COVID-19.

If you have answered “**No**” to all the above questions, you may attend school.