


ÉCOLE ST-MALO SCHOOL
School Specific Planning for Reopening
2020- 2021 School Year





We want to assure everyone that ÉSMS's Reopening plan is based upon the Divisional expectations and in compliance with the recommendations from the province and Manitoba Health. We are planning for the return of students to the school with the priority remaining the safety and well-being of students and staff. We deeply appreciate the patience, co-operation, and support that families have provided as we navigate these changing conditions.

The following is a brief summary of the document details.

1. Transportation
 - a. Parents are responsible for transporting students within a 1.6km distance from school to and from school. Students should arrive at 8:45am and be picked up at 3:30pm by their assigned entrance.
 - b. Masks are mandatory on all busses for all students..
 - c. Assigned seating will be enforced on all bus runs.
 - d. If a parent desires to pick up a child who would normally be bussed, the office must be notified by 2:30pm at the latest.

2. School Access
 - a. Visitor access to the school will be limited as much as possible. All visitors must report to the main door. All entrance doors will be locked at all times.
 - b. Community use of schools is suspended until further notice.
 - c. Each cohort will have a designated door to use to enter and exit the school.
 - d. A "closed campus" model has been adopted across the division. This means once students are at school, they should remain there until the end of their day. If they leave part way through the day, they can not return that day.

3. All students are expected to attend school regularly. Provision for remote learning will be made for students with medically documented reasons to stay home. Cohorts will be established by grade level.
4. Mask wearing is mandatory for all grade 3 to 8 students
5. Staggered arrivals, recesses, lunch breaks and dismissals will be utilized to enable physical distancing guidelines.
6. The music program is suspended until further notice.
7. Physical education classes will be held outdoors until further notice.
8. Locker use is suspended until further notice.
9. Interschool athletic competitions as well as field trips requiring bussing are suspended until further notice.
10. Record keeping to enable contact tracing by Public Health will be diligently maintained.
11. Hygiene practises will be explicitly taught and reinforced often with students.
12. No sharing of personal items between staff and students will be permitted.
13. Cleaning and sanitizing schedules are being implemented and logs will be kept.
14. Water fountains will be closed off; bottle filling stations will remain open.
15. All staff and students will be trained for COVID procedures.



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1. Transportation

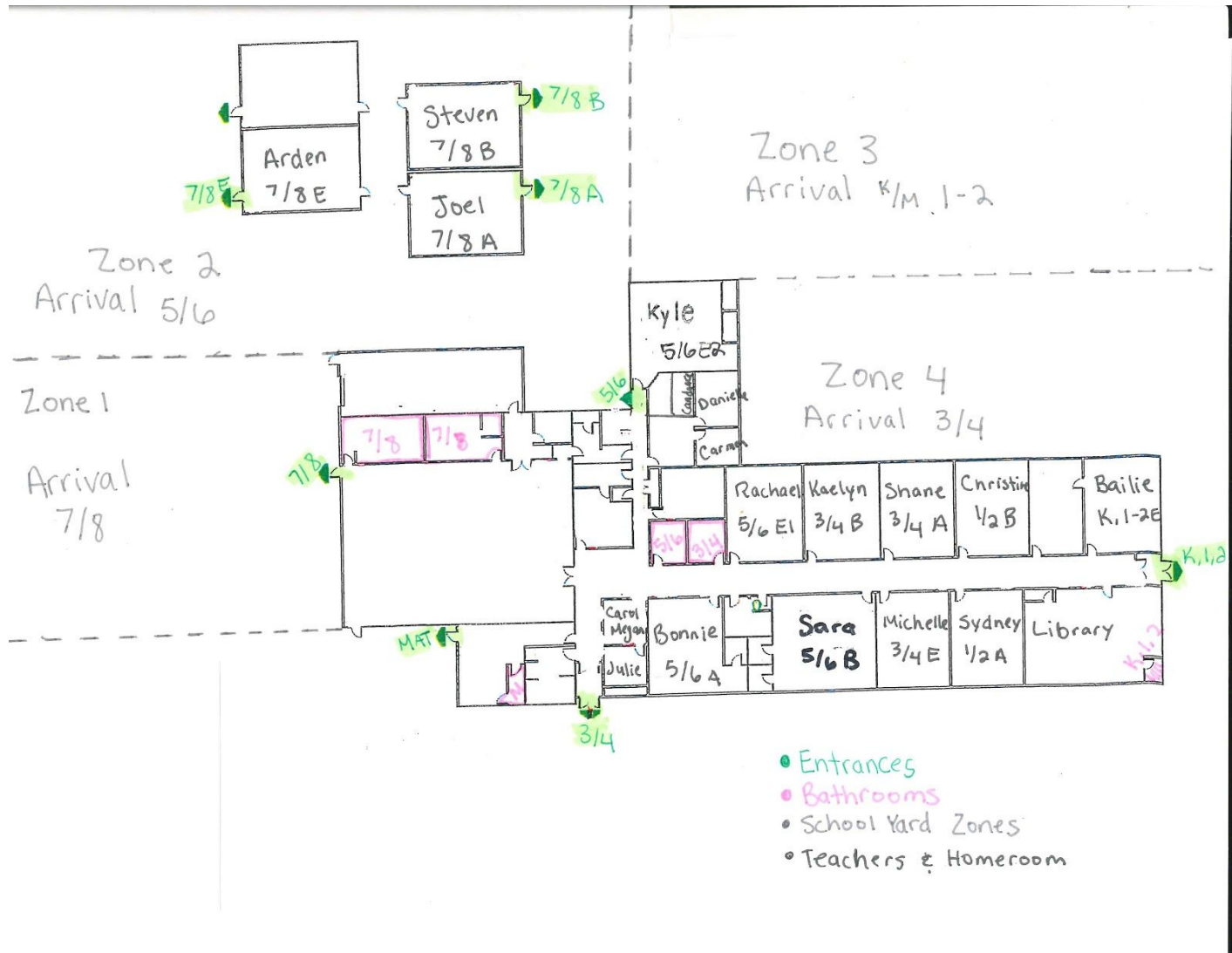
- Parents are responsible for the transportation of students within a 1.6 km radius of the school. For students walking to school, we encourage them to arrive as close to the bell (8:45) as possible. This is to maintain the social distancing requirements of cohorts in the schoolyard. Students who do arrive earlier will have limited supervision on the playground.
- In the short term, parents are encouraged to transport their own children if possible. When dropping off children at school, we ask that parents respect the following guidelines:
 - 8:45 AM Drop off: Parents can drop off their children near their designated entrance. We ask that parents refrain from entering the school or school grounds. The same screening for students applies to parents who are transporting their own children to school. We are encouraging non-bussed students to arrive as close to the bell (8:45) as possible. This is to maintain the social distancing requirements of cohorts in the schoolyard. Students who do arrive earlier will have limited supervision on the playground.
 - 3:30 PM Pick up: Parents will be required to call or email the office to notify them that they have arrived to pick up their child/children. Students will be picked up at their designated entrance under the supervision of a staff member. For families with multiple children, arrangements can be made for one spot pick up outside.
 - **ALL passengers (K to 12 students) are required to wear a mask while travelling on the bus to and from school.**
- If students arrive at the bus stop without a mask, the driver will offer them a mask. If a student refuses to wear a mask and a parent is home, the student will not be permitted on the bus. If a student refuses to wear a mask and parents are not home, the student will be picked up and dropped off at school where he/she will be isolated; parents will then be contacted to pick them up. The student will be permitted to return on the bus when he/she agrees to wear a mask.
- Some busses 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.) Busses will have staggered drop off times and pick up times at school to minimize congestion while unloading and loading students.
- Bus dismissal
 - The office will announce dismissal and call student cohorts (by bus color) to exit the school and line up outside (with appropriate social distancing measures).
 - Non-medical masks should be put on before loading. The province will provide masks for distribution to students and staff if they do not have personal PPE.
 - Non-medical masks will be worn by staff supervising the unloading and loading of the busses.
- The bus will continue to pick up and drop off students at the daycare.
- Extra-curricular (field trips/sports) bussing is suspended until further notice.
- If your child will not be taking the bus on a scheduled bussing day, it is important to notify the office prior to 2:30 pm. We will not be able to make accommodations for students not to take the bus after this time.

Note: Transportation services could be disrupted due to changing conditions




2. School Access

- All visitors must report to the main door of the school. Visitors and volunteers are required to wear non-medical masks in areas where physical distancing of two metres is not possible.
- Visitor access to schools will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Parents, caregivers, healthcare providers, volunteers and other non-staff adults (e.g., visitors) entering the school will 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.) Please contact the school prior to your requested visit.
- Where possible, electronic, video, and telephone communication will be used to interact and meet with families, rather than in person.
- Community use of schools is suspended until further notice. This includes parent councils, private music lessons, clubs, rec groups, church groups, etc.
- Anyone entering the school (staff, students, visitors), must adhere to self-screening, physical distancing, and recommended hygiene practices.
- School entrances will remain locked at all times.
- A record of all people entering the building will be kept by the office.
- Student entrances and exits for arrival, recess/lunch, and dismissal will be:
 - Maternelle private entrance: Maternelle students only
 - South entrance: English K & 1-2 , $\frac{1}{2}$ A , $\frac{1}{2}$ B
 - Main front entrance: $\frac{3}{4}$ E, $\frac{3}{4}$ A $\frac{3}{4}$ B
 - East Entrance: $\frac{5}{8}$ A , $\frac{5}{8}$ B , $\frac{5}{8}$ C , $\frac{5}{8}$ D
 - Direct pod entrance through "emergency door" : $\frac{7}{8}$ A , $\frac{7}{8}$ B , $\frac{7}{8}$ E (the ramp entrances will be closed to students). Access to the main building for bathrooms through the south gym door.
- A "closed campus" model has been adopted across the division until further notice. This means once students have self-screened and arrived, if they were to leave the school premises for any reason, they would not be able to return that day. This includes lunch. Students can arrive late to school following an appointment (1 arrival, 1 departure from school per day).
- If a student is arriving late at school, a parent/guardian is required to notify the office. Students can be dropped off closest to their designated entrance. A staff member will be notified and will greet the student at their designated door.



- Entrances
- Bathrooms
- School Yard Zones
- Teachers & Homeroom



3. 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 traveled 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>

4. Screening- Protocols for staff and students exhibiting symptoms

Screening for symptoms is critical to identify any potential cases of COVID-19 as quickly as possible before exposure to others. Symptoms and exposure screening must occur at the start of each day.

- Parents and caregivers need to monitor their children 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. School staff can also support children with self-screening upon arrival at school.
- If a student is being sent home due to him or her exhibiting symptoms, parents will be notified that their child will need to be picked up at school. Arrangements need to be made by parents if they themselves are not able to pick up their child.
- Parents are required to notify the school of their child's absence from school. This can be done with SchoolMessenger, by calling or emailing the school office.
- 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.
- Signage with exclusion criteria will 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 COVID-19, they can return 24 hours after symptoms resolve. If individuals do not get tested, they should isolate for 14 days from symptom onset; 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 requires 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 pick up their child and contact Health Links-Info Santé or their health-care provider.



5. Contact Tracing

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 worksite, sign-in on the Entry Log with the date, name, and entry time, and the location(s) being accessed in the building.

A record of school staff contact with students will be maintained daily.

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.


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.

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.

6. Physical distancing

- **Physical distancing:** Two meters or six feet physical distancing between all individuals will occur whenever reasonably possible.
- **Mandatory Masks:** Students in Grades 3 to 12 are required to wear masks at school.
- **Closed Campus:** In order to protect the integrity of the cohort groups, and for the safety of our students, RRVSD is adopting a Closed Campus model. Students are allowed to enter and exit the school division property once per day. As a result, if students leave school for whatever reason before dismissal time, they will not be allowed to return to the school that day. Staff are encouraged to stay at school for the day.
- **Recesses, lunch breaks, and dismissal time:** To protect the integrity of the cohort groups, and to minimize congestion of hallways, entrances, and the school ground, recesses, lunch breaks, and dismissal times will be staggered throughout the day by cohorts.
- **Visual markings:** Visual floor markers are in place to manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways, to minimize crowding and allow for the ease of people passing through. Visual cues will



be in place in the classrooms as needed (eg: picture of how many children should be in a specific area, such as two chairs next to an activity with markers or numbers taped to the floor).

- **Fire drills and lock-downs:** Modifications have been made to reflect the COVID-19 environment.
- **Seating plans:** Each classroom will maintain a documented seating plan. Students are expected to stay within their assigned space throughout the day.
- **Protocol 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 (quiet room in resource center) will then be disinfected before the next occupant enters the room.
- **Recesses & Lunch:**
 - Public health advises that playgrounds and play structures are low risk for transmission. Play structures will remain accessible for students.
 - Separate containers of equipment for each class or cohort will be kept and cleaned between recess periods. Contact sports will not be permitted.
 - Students must bring their own lunches, or provided lunches must be individually wrapped in disposable containers.
 - Sharing food or water bottles is not allowed.
- **The following are suspended until further notice:**
 - Sharing of learning materials and school supplies.
 - Hallway locker use. Students will be encouraged to bring their belongings to their individual space within the classroom.
 - School-wide assemblies.
 - Close greetings (e.g., hugs and handshakes) are to be avoided .
 - In-class instruction elementary singing, choir, and band
 - Interschool athletic competitions. The students can participate in team skill-building training within the school.
 - Field trips and extra curricular activities requiring a bus.
 - Swim lessons for grade 3 and 4 students are suspended until further notice.
 - The music program is suspended for the year. Anyone having purchased a recorder for their child will be reimbursed.

Movement/mask breaks will be embedded throughout the day.



7. Cohorts/Groups

It is recognized that strict physical distancing at all times—particularly with young children - is not practical in the school setting. Cohorts will be used at ÉSMS for all K to 8 students to limit exposure and facilitate contact tracing if a case is identified. Students may be a part of a school cohort and a separate bus cohort.

Cohort groups are as designated:

Kindergarten/Maternelle, Grade $\frac{1}{2}$ A, $\frac{1}{2}$ B, $\frac{1}{2}$ E

Grade $\frac{3}{4}$ A, $\frac{3}{4}$ B, $\frac{3}{4}$ E

Grade $\frac{5}{8}$ A, $\frac{5}{8}$ B, $\frac{5}{8}$ E1, $\frac{5}{8}$ E2


Grade $\frac{7}{8}$ A, $\frac{7}{8}$ B, $\frac{7}{8}$ E

- Physical distancing within the cohort is required to the greatest extent possible, including a minimum of one-meter separation between students in the cohort when seated at desks or tables.
- The maximum cohort size is approximately 75 people which includes both students and staff combined.
- Each cohort will arrive, depart, and participate in school activities without co-mingling with members from other cohorts as much as possible. Those within the same cohort can mingle.
- Entrances and bathrooms are cohort specific and cannot be shared between cohorts.
- Recesses and lunch will be staggered and specific playground zones will be assigned to cohorts.
- Teachers will move between classrooms instead of students for instructional purposes.
- Whenever possible, staff will remain with the same cohort throughout the day, including lunch breaks and recesses.
- Staggered schedules and movement of cohorts will be implemented to avoid being in shared spaces (e.g., foyers, hallways) at the same time.
- Different cohorts/groups will not be in shared spaces at the same time. Where this is not possible, physical distancing between groups will be at least four meters 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 meters of space is maintained between the two groups).
- Daily records will be kept that include the names of students, staff, and volunteers of cohorts.

8. Ventilation

Strategies to reduce the likelihood of transmission:

- Recirculation of air will be avoided to the greatest extent possible.
- Ventilating indoor environments with fresh air as much as possible or by opening windows.
- Minimizing the use of fans.



9. 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)

Hand sanitizer has been made available at every entrance and in every classroom.

Hygiene practices will be explicitly taught to all students.

Respiratory etiquette will 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.



10. PPE


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. Those wearing masks should not touch their mask and should comply with other personal preventive practices, such as frequent hand hygiene and physical distancing as much as possible. We strongly recommend that parents of students in grades 3 to 8 review with their child the guidelines for wearing a mask. Please see the attached information sheet on “Guidance for Mask use in School.”

Non-medical masks are required 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 3 to 8, staff, visitors and volunteers will be required to wear non-medical masks in areas where physical distancing of two metres is not possible. This includes wearing masks in the classrooms for staff and students,
- We are strongly encouraging students to bring 4-6 reusable masks to school daily, with a bag to store soiled masks. Masks will be removed at recesses and lunch time after which a new/clean mask will be needed.
- All school bus passengers and the driver are required to wear a non-medical mask. These should be put on before loading the bus. Masks will be provided to students and staff who need them.
- Because of our class combinations (Gr 3 & 4), Grade 3 students are also required to wear non-medical masks in the school. Students under grade 3 may also choose to wear a mask at school.
- Students and staff can bring their own masks from home.
- If a student has a medical note explaining why they cannot wear a mask, he/she must remain at a 2 meter distance from others at all times.
- 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) or has breathing difficulties.
- 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 below 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. Non Medical 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.
- Please see Appendix A “Guidelines for Mask Use in Schools”

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 disposable masks 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.



11. Cleaning and Disinfecting

To maintain the safety of staff and students, increased frequency of cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing, particularly on high-touch surfaces and in common/shared areas, has been implemented in the following ways:

- A 90 minute cleaning schedule for cleaning and disinfecting washrooms and of commonly touched surfaces.
- Closing of water fountains that are not touchless or cannot be cleaned between users.
- Enhanced cleaning of bus seats and other high-touch surfaces (e.g., windows and railings) before each new group of students attends the bus.
- Limiting the use of high-touch objects and surfaces by multiple individuals (e.g., providing children with their own arts and crafts materials that are not shared with others).


12. Staff COVID-19 Orientation

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

13. Supporting Students When Returning to School

We understand students will have been 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 stemming from loss, grief or trauma as well as uncertainty, insecurity, loss of connection, changed expectations, and changes in routines and structure). The ÉSMS staff is committed to doing our best to understand, have empathy and patience, and create a stable environment for all students.



14. Student Services, Supporting students with needs

Student Services and Clinical Services staff are also preparing for a 'new reality' in the 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.

ÉSMS will strive to support students with additional needs where and when possible. We are prioritizing the wellbeing of students, families and staff, focusing on equity for our most vulnerable students and maintaining connections between school and families. We will adopt a Growth Mindset as we are in a novel situation and we will learn and improve service delivery as we navigate through the COVID time.

We are planning for students unable to follow physical distancing requirements by:

- designing cohorts where students with greatest needs have the greatest access to necessary professional staff, support, and spaces
- reducing staff and student circulation between cohorts
- maintaining special needs transportation
- ensuring safe use of equipment and space sharing and cleaning
- appropriate understanding, use, care, and disposal of PPE Guidance for Schools

15. 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. Teachers are expected to provide remote learning opportunities to these students.

16. School Calendar

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. Maternelle and Kindergarten students will begin school on Wednesday, September 9th, 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.

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



17. Provincial Assessments

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.

18. Institutional Preparedness

Rethinking Learning and Teaching

To ensure all 3 schooling scenarios proposed by the province are successful, ÉSMS strives to create a K-8 learning journey that values essential learning with relevancy and creativity as much as rigor and accountability.

New Student Registrations

- 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.
- Families may register new students in-person at the school or by email.
- If a 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 in order to comply with distancing and cohort limitations. It may take longer to arrange the placement and start date of a new registered student.

Out-of-Province Student and Staff Travel

All out-of-province student travel is suspended for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year. 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 canceling trips with as much advance notice as possible.



19. Student and Family Preparedness

ÉSMS shall promote student and family preparedness by:

- maintaining the 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.
- providing information that in-class learning may be increased or suspended on short notice in response to changing public health advice.
- 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 through remote learning. Families choosing to educate their children at home will be required to register with the Home School Division.

[For more information on the provincial COVID 19 response in schools, please click here](#)

[For more information on provincial COVID-19 K12 Response Management, please click here.](#)

APPENDIX A



August 31, 2020

Guidance for Mask Use in Schools

Summary Highlights

- Wearing a mask is a tool that, in addition to practising public health fundamentals, may help prevent spreading COVID-19 to others, especially in indoor public spaces if physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- The evidence supporting the use of non-medical masks in the community continues to evolve.
- Wearing a mask alone will not stop the spread of COVID-19. People must continue to practise important public health fundamentals, including staying home when sick, practising proper hand-washing and cough etiquette, and practising physical distancing.
- At this time, non-medical masks are required in schools for students in Grades 4 to 12, as well as for staff and visitors, when physical distancing of two metres is not possible.
- Masks are required on school buses for bus drivers, students, and any other passenger on the bus.
- Parents/guardians/caregivers will choose whether students in Grade 3 and under will wear a mask while in school.
- In situations where there are split classrooms, such as a Grades 3/4 split classroom, all students in the classroom should wear a mask when physical distancing of two metres is not possible.
- Knowing how to wear a mask properly is critical to everyone's safety. An improperly worn mask will not protect others from respiratory droplets and can increase the wearer's risk of getting an infection.
- Schools will have masks available for those who do not have a mask or for those who have forgotten to bring a mask to school.

Why should one wear a non-medical mask?

Wearing a non-medical mask is a tool that, in addition to practising public health fundamentals, may help prevent spreading COVID-19 to others, especially in indoor public spaces such as schools, if physical distancing cannot be maintained. Wearing a non-medical mask does not protect the person wearing the mask, but it may help to protect the people around them.

People release respiratory droplets by sneezing, coughing, spitting, heavy breathing, singing, or talking. COVID-19 spreads mainly through close contact (within two metres or six feet) with an infected person's respiratory droplets. When worn properly, a person wearing a mask at school or on school buses may reduce the chance of their own respiratory droplets spreading to others or landing on surfaces. People may also get COVID-19 by touching a surface that has been contaminated by the virus and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

Are there limitations with non-medical masks?

The evidence supporting the use of non-medical masks in the community continues to evolve. Presently, wearing non-medical masks in settings where physical distancing is not consistently maintained is a reasonable measure that may help prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is important to remember that wearing a non-medical mask alone will not stop the spread of COVID-19. To be effective, wearing a mask must be combined with practising good public health fundamentals. This means staying at home when sick, practising frequent and proper hand washing, covering coughs, and physical distancing from people outside of one's immediate household.

Non-medical masks are not like personal protective equipment (PPE) used in health care. PPE used in health care, such as medical masks and respirators, must pass standards and regulations to be used. Non-medical masks may not provide protection from germs because of the materials used or because they are loose-fitting. As well, they can become damaged or the fabric can break down with time or with washing, which will reduce the effectiveness of a non-medical mask.

Who should wear a non-medical mask?

At this time, masks are required in schools for students in Grades 4 to 12 as well as for staff and visitors, when physical distancing of two metres is not possible or cannot be consistently maintained. Parents/guardians/caregivers will choose whether students in Grade 3 and under will wear a mask in school. However, in situations where there are split classrooms, such as a Grades 3/4 split classroom, all students in the classroom should wear a mask when physical distancing of two metres is not possible, for the benefit of the other students and staff in the classroom.

Masks are required on school buses for bus drivers, students, and any other passenger on the bus.

Students in any grade may, or may not, be wearing a mask at school or on school buses, depending on their personal circumstances. It is important that children understand that no one should be treated differently for wearing a mask or for not wearing a mask. We're all in this together.

What should parents/guardians/caregivers teach their children about wearing a mask?

When masks are not worn properly, they will not prevent the spread of COVID-19 to others and may also put the person wearing them at greater risk of infection. That is why parents/guardians/caregivers should practise proper mask usage at home with their children and teach their children the following:

- Do not touch your mask or face while wearing it.
- Practise good hand hygiene while wearing the mask.
- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately before putting your mask on and immediately after taking it off.
- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after touching or adjusting your mask.
- Do not share your mask with others.
- Do not dangle your mask from one ear, or pull it below your nose or mouth so it is only covering your chin.
- Change your mask as soon as it becomes damp or soiled.
- To remove the mask safely, remove it from behind using the ear loops. Do not touch the front of the mask. Note: Masks with ear loops rather than strings/ties should be used for students, especially younger ones, as strings/ties may be a choking hazard.
- Immediately after removing the mask, either throw it out (if a disposable mask) or place it directly into the washing machine or into a designated container/bag and then into the washing machine (if a reusable mask). Wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer immediately after removing the mask.
- Reusable masks must be washed after each use in the laundry machine's hot water cycle and then thoroughly dried.

To be effective, parents/guardians/caregivers must ensure their child's mask fits well and covers

the nose, mouth, and chin without any gaps. Masks can become contaminated by droplets in the air or when touched by the hands of the person wearing the mask. This is why avoiding touching one's face while wearing a mask, and proper hand hygiene before putting on a mask, after taking off a mask, and after touching a mask are so important. It is important for parents/guardians/caregivers to ensure that their child's mask is comfortable and does not require frequent adjustments.

Visit the Health Canada website (at www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html) for more information on how to wear a mask properly. The following Public Health Agency of Canada page provides a poster and guidelines for how to safely use a non-medical mask or face covering: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering.html. For information on how to talk to children about wearing masks, visit the following Canadian Paediatric Society website: www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/non-medical-masks-and-face-coverings-for-children-during-covid-19.

Who should *not* wear a mask?

Children who cannot wear a mask properly, as described above, should not wear one. However, this can depend on the situation and on how long the mask is worn. For example, a child may be able to properly wear a mask for a five-minute bus ride but not for a two-hour bus ride or a full morning in class. Like any new routine, practising the proper usage of a non-medical mask at home and slowly increasing the duration of wear will allow children to become more comfortable with it, and they will then be more likely to follow the guidance on proper mask use.

In addition, 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)
- is actively having breathing difficulties
- is under two years of age

In general, most people with underlying medical conditions can safely wear a mask. There is no evidence that wearing a mask will worsen an underlying medical condition. For example, in most situations, an individual with an underlying lung condition such as asthma or an underlying heart condition can safely wear a mask.

If a parent/guardian/caregiver is concerned about their child's ability to safely wear a mask, they should speak with their child's doctor. If the child is either unable to properly wear a mask or has a medical condition that does not allow them to wear a mask, the parent/ guardian/caregiver must provide written notification to the child's school outlining the child's limitations with wearing a mask. A note from a health-care provider is **not** required.

Some people would like to use a face shield instead of a mask, but a face shield is **not** a replacement for a non-medical mask.

What kind of non-medical mask should students wear?

Non-medical masks should be included in back-to-school supply lists for students and school staff this fall. To be effective, parents/guardians/caregivers should pay attention to the materials used. Not all masks are created equal. Homemade masks must be made of a minimum of two layers, use tightly woven material (e.g., cotton or linen), and fit securely with no gaps. Masks with ear loops are easier to put on and take off, and are recommended for younger students because ties/strings may be a choking hazard.

Further, reusable non-medical masks should not have any holes or valves that are open to the air. Holes or valves allow respiratory droplets to escape from the non-medical mask and decrease its ability to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is important for parents/guardians/caregivers to ensure their child's mask is comfortable and does not require frequent adjustments.

Lanyards that go around the child's neck and tie to the ear loops of the mask to keep the child from losing or misplacing it are not recommended because dangling a mask from one's neck contaminates the mask, and encourages the wearer to touch, adjust, and/or move the mask unnecessarily. Instead, students should use either a clearly labelled clean bag or a clean container to store their reusable mask when they need to remove them (e.g., at lunch time). Once a reusable mask has been removed, it should be washed before being worn again. See the next section for more details.

For students with a hearing impairment who need to see someone's mouth to communicate, there are also non-medical masks with clear fronts.

Follow the directions on any store-bought non-medical masks regarding how many times it can be reused. Remember to wash and thoroughly dry the non-medical mask after each use. Do not reuse homemade non-medical masks if any breakdown in the fabric, such as a hole or a tear, is noticed.

Should students wear the same mask all day long?

It is important to remember that masks can become contaminated when touched by the wearer's hands and that their usefulness is decreased when the masks become damp or soiled. It is therefore advised that children take off their mask midday, before lunchtime (or as needed), and place the used mask in a clearly labelled container or bag for cleaning at a later time. If it is a

disposable mask, it should go directly into the garbage. It is important to follow all guidance related to properly taking off the mask, including cleaning their hands before and after touching the mask. Thereafter, children should take out a clean, unused mask from a clearly labelled container or bag to wear for the remainder of the day.

Parents/guardians/caregivers should wash non-medical masks in the hot cycle of the washing machine, dry them thoroughly, and store them in a clean bag/container. Disposable masks, including medical masks, can be thrown in the garbage once they have been used. Immediate hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after mask removal is important.

Schools will have masks available for those who do not have a mask or for those who have forgotten to bring a mask to school.