

From: **EDC Minister** <[Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca](mailto:Education.Minister@gov.ab.ca)>

Date: Tue, Aug 4, 2020 at 11:04 AM

Subject: Updated Health Guidance for Return to School

To:

**To: Board Chairs and Superintendents of Public, Separate, Francophone and Charter School Authorities**

**First Nations Education Directors**

**Independent (Private) School Authorities**

**Early Childhood Services**

**Presidents and Executive Directors of Stakeholder Associations**

Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association (ACSTA)

Alberta Educational Facilities Administrators Association (AEFAA)

Alberta Home Education Association (AHEA)

Alberta Homeschooling Association (AHA)

Alberta School Boards Association (ASBA)

Alberta School Councils' Association (ASCA)

Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA)

Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta (ACFA)

Association of Independent Schools & Colleges in Alberta (AISCA)

Association of School Business Officials of Alberta (ASBOA)

College of Alberta School Superintendents (CASS)

Council of Catholic Superintendents of Alberta (CCSSA)

Fédération des conseils scolaires francophones de l'Alberta (FCSFA)

Fédération des parents francophones de l'Alberta (FPFA)

Public School Boards' Association of Alberta (PSBAA)

The Association of Alberta Public Charter Schools (TAAPCS)

Since cancelling in-person classes in March ensuring the safety of our staff and students has been paramount in any conversation we have had about school re-entry. Our education system came together to teach our students while they learned from home, to develop comprehensive guidelines for a return to school, and to support one another. From the bottom of my heart, and on behalf of Alberta's government, I want to thank each and every one of you for all that you have done, and all that you will continue to do.

Every single day we learn more about COVID-19. This is why we have committed to refining our guidelines to ensure they reflect current medical evidence. After continuing to work with Dr. Hinshaw's team and Alberta Health, emerging evidence has made it

clear that masks can play an important role in limiting the spread of COVID-19 in our schools.

As a result, mask use for students in grades 4 to 12, as well as all school staff, will be mandatory when school returns for the 2020-21 school year. Staff will be required to wear masks in all settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained, and students will be required to wear them in all shared and common areas, such as hallways and on buses. Mask use for kindergarten to grade 3 students will continue to be optional.

To assist with these new guidelines, Alberta's government will provide every single Kindergarten to Grade 12 student with two reusable masks. This will ensure that students who are required to wear masks will have them, and will allow for our Kindergarten to Grade 3 students to have masks should they wish to wear them. We will also provide all of our teachers, school staff, and bus drivers with two masks. In total, more than 1.6 million reusable masks will be provided to 740,000 students and 90,000 staff across the province. Additional single-use masks will be available at schools, if required.

Additionally, all teachers and staff will receive one reusable face shield for their use in schools. 53,000 of these face shields will be provided from a generous donation offered by the Canadian Shield, with the remaining provided by Alberta's government. The use of face shields will be at the discretion of the individual staff member. While face shields can help reduce exposure, they are not equivalent to masks. That is why staff who choose to wear a face shield will still be required to wear a mask.

As part of our school re-entry plan, we indicated that entrances to schools and classrooms will require hand sanitizing stations. To assist our schools with stocking up on sanitizer, Alberta's government will provide approximately 466,000 litres of hand sanitizer to our school authorities across Alberta. The specific volume provided to an individual school authority will be based on student population.

We will also be providing every single school two contactless thermometers to assist with managing student and staff health. Thermometer use will be at the discretion of the school authority.

Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services are working hard to expand testing capacity and reduce turnaround times for testing, including in-school staff, teachers and

students, so that anyone with symptoms or close contacts of cases can be rapidly tested and receive test results promptly.

All supplies will be shipped out through the Provincial Operations Centre. Alberta Education staff will be in contact soon with school authorities to discuss shipping details. We expect to be able to provide these supplies before the start of the year in order for you to distribute as necessary to individual schools.

Today's announcement is a direct result of Alberta's government continuing to listen to expert medical advice, as well as our commitment to working with our education system. Our guidelines for school re-entry will continue to evolve to ensure they reflect the most up-to-date medical advice. Once again, I want to thank all of you for your efforts to plan for a successful return to school.

Sincerely,

Adriana LaGrange  
Minister of Education

cc: Secretary Treasurers of Public, Separate, Francophone and Charter School  
Authorities  
Communications Contacts at School Divisions