



FAQs on Re-entry to School

BLACK GOLD SCHOOL DIVISION

DATE: August 5, 2020

We will continue to update this document in response to questions from parents/guardians.

In-school Classes

1. Are class sizes the same as last year?

- a. We anticipate that class sizes will be similar to those in past years; class sizes will be confirmed after we have received responses to the parent/guardian survey - which runs from August 5-11, 2020 - in which we ask them to decide what each of their children will do in the fall: whether in-class, distance education, or homeschooling.

2. How many classes/courses will be taught each day if children are attending school?

- a. Each school schedule will have the same number of classes each day as they have previously planned.

3. Is the same teacher teaching all of the courses to one class each day?

- a. This will vary, depending on the grade level of each student. Generally speaking, students will have the same number of teachers as they have had in the past.
- b. As much as possible, students will remain in their classrooms, with teachers moving between classes as needed.

4. What do we do with the daily health check/screening questions?

- a. Staff, children/students, visitors, and volunteers who will access the school for work or education, must self-screen for symptoms **each day before they leave for school** using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#). If they answer yes to any of the questions, they are required to stay at home and complete the Alberta Health Services screening tool. We trust parents to keep their children home if they have any symptoms and do not require that this information is submitted to the school.

5. Will barriers be installed on student desks?

- a. Barriers are not included in the recommendations of the Province's Chief Medical Officer of Health and we are not installing them.

6. Are students required to wear masks?

- a. Mask use is mandatory for students in Grades 4 - 12 and all staff in settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Students in Kindergarten - Grade 3 may choose to wear a mask. The Government of Alberta will provide two reusable masks for each student. Exemptions will be made for students and staff who are unable to wear a mask due to medical or other needs.
- b. Students will be required to wear face masks in all shared and common areas such as hallways and on buses.



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7. Are BGSD high school's following a quarter schedule?

- a. We did explore the quarter system and have chosen not to implement it. Many of our high school programs are in grades 7-12 schools and running a quarter system will not work in those schools.

8. How will students manage with their winter gear if they are keeping everything in a backpack?

- a. As we move into winter, we will have plans in place to accommodate winter gear that will examine safe storage options or a second backpack.

9. Will students get recess breaks?

- a. Yes, students will get recess breaks. When possible, the breaks will be staggered so the number of students on the playground at any one time is minimized.

10. Will the Learning Commons (Library) be open?

- a. The Learning Commons in each school can be open and will follow the [Guidance for Libraries](#) provided by the Government of Alberta.
- b. There will be a limited number of students in the Learning Commons at any given time and all returned materials will be stored for 72 hours prior to being checked in.

Distance Education

11. How will distance education work?

- a. Distance education in the fall will include all courses and will be taught by a teacher. While much of the program will be accessible online, there will also be some print materials that parents will pick up at their school and drop off when they are complete. Teachers will provide online classes and attendance will be taken each day.

12. Who is teaching distance education classes?

- a. The distance education teachers will come from our existing staff in school and decisions regarding which specific teachers will depend on student registrations.
- b. Students enrolled in distance education classes will remain connected to their community school, so if they choose to return to in-school classes it will be as easy as possible for them.

13. Is there Distance Education for French Immersion students?

- a. French immersion distance education will be provided in the same format as English distance education.

14. What is the cost of distance education?

- a. The costs are the same for distance education as they are for in-school classes. You can find specific information on your school's website. Please note that all field trips and extracurricular activities are currently cancelled, so those fees do not apply at this time.



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General

15. Why are you asking for a five month commitment?

- a. The five month commitment is needed to ensure that we have adequate staffing for both in-school and distance education. For example, if 10 percent of students choose distance education, that is approximately 1200 students. The school division does not have additional funding to hire new teachers, which means that we would have to move approximately 40 teachers out of school classrooms into distance education. This will impact school timetables and student class assignments.

Each time we have an entry/exit point, we will have to reassign teachers (either to in-school or distance education) and change student classroom assignments. This is extremely disruptive to student learning. To minimize disruptions, we will have only one entry/exit point on February 1, 2021.

- b. We are asking for a five month commitment based on COVID-19 conditions remaining the same. If the COVID-19 situation worsens, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Education may mandate that all schools move to Scenario 2 (part-time distance education and part time in-school with a maximum of 15 students in a classroom at one time) or Scenario 3 (distance education for all students).
- c. If your children's health requires they be absent from school, we will provide learning for them.

16. Is it possible for a student to pick a combination of in-school and distance education?

- a. We are providing the two options (in-school and distance education) at this time. If you wish to explore a blend of the two, we recommend that you speak with your school principal to see if that can be accommodated within the school schedule.

For the parent/guardian survey (open from August 5-11, 2020), we ask that you select the choice you prefer, if it is not possible to blend the two options.

17. If my child/children need to isolate or quarantine for a period (whether related or unrelated to a school case), would they be supported in remote learning during that time?

- a. BGSD teachers will support students to learn at home if they are required to self-isolate or quarantine to minimize interruption of student learning. Classroom teachers have always provided support for students who stay home because of illness or other health concerns. We know there is not a perfect solution; however, we will do our best to support student learning wherever students may be.

18. Is it possible for my Pre-K child to learn from home?

- a. Under special circumstances, specialized supports may be provided virtually for eligible Pre-K children who are unable to attend face-to-face programs.