

# BLACK GOLD SCHOOL DIVISION



## 2021-2022 **Easing Restrictions:** *Moving from Pandemic to Endemic*

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## Overview

On February 26, 2022, the provincial government [announced](#) that Alberta will lift almost all remaining health restrictions as we enter Step 2 of their *easing restrictions plan*.

### Step 2 (Effective March 1, 2022)

- Remaining provincial school requirements (including cohorting and physical distancing) will be removed.
- The mask mandate will be lifted in schools (Adults are no longer required to wear a mask).
- Screening prior to youth activities will no longer be required.
- Capacity limits will be lifted for all venues.
- Limits on social gatherings will be removed.
- NOTE\* **Isolation remains mandatory for anyone with COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test result.**

## Maintaining Best Health Practices

- Stay home when sick
- Use good respiratory hygiene
- Use good hand hygiene

Best health practices to reduce the risk of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to continue to keep everyone healthy. The most important health measures for students, staff, parents and visitors are to **stay home when sick** and practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Parents/guardians have always played a role in keeping students and staff healthy as they support these actions in the home. *No one should enter a BGSD building if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.*

Before leaving home, staff (including substitutes), children/students, visitors, and volunteers who will access the school for work or education, are expected to self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the applicable checklist for their age group [Alberta Health Daily Checklist updated January 7, 2022](#) and to **stay home when sick** use an at-home rapid antigen test if available, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner), and fill out the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) to determine if they should access a PCR test.

## Easing Restrictions

### Masks

Effective Tuesday, March 1, 2022, all masking requirements in schools have been removed. Masking during the school day remains a personal health choice for students, parents/guardians, visitors, and staff. Our schools will continue to provide a supportive environment for all whether they choose to wear a mask or not.

An exception to this that as part of mandatory isolation fully vaccinated students or staff recovering from COVID-19 who are completing their day 6-10 mandatory masking period at school must wear a mask at all times and must not share breaks where masks must be removed to consume food or beverages with non-COVID-19 infected individuals. If more than one individual is isolating, it is possible to cohort people with COVID-19 for breaks and lunch.

## Enhanced Cleaning

Black Gold School Division is committing to continue with enhanced cleaning protocols in schools and on school buses to the end of the school year, with continued emphasis on high-touch areas.

## Responding to Illness

*If students develops symptoms **at home**:*

- Students/children, staff and visitors must not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Use the applicable checklist for their age group [Alberta Health Daily Checklist updated January 7, 2022](#) and **stay home when sick**.
- The student, staff or visitor must stay home, use an at-home rapid antigen test if available, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g. call Health Link 811, or their primary care practitioner or, if needed, 911 for emergency response) and fill out the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) to determine if they should access a PCR test.

*If a student or staff member develops symptoms **at school**:*

- Students and staff who develop symptoms while at school should isolate immediately, go home and either complete a take home rapid test or the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) to book a PCR test if they meet the eligibility criteria.
- Students and staff with respiratory illness symptoms at school will be required to wear a medical-grade mask continuously while in school setting.
- They will be isolated in a separate room.
- The child/student's parent/guardian will be notified to pick up the student immediately.
- 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 child/student and staff are to wear masks. Interactions that may result in contact with the student's respiratory secretions should be avoided. If close contact is required, the staff member should also use a face shield or eye protection.
- Staff/students must perform hand hygiene before donning a mask, before and after removing the mask, and before and after touching any items used by the child/student.

## Isolation Requirements

Anyone with core symptoms that are not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition, or who has tested positive is legally required to isolate.

*Fully vaccinated students have 2 doses of mRNA vaccine.*

Fully vaccinated staff have received the complete vaccine series for COVID-19 and it has been 14 days after the second dose in a two dose series, or one dose in a one dose series (i.e. Janssen vaccine)

Symptoms	COVID-19 PCR or Rapid Test Results	Management of the Individual
Symptomatic (Person has symptom of COVID-19)	Positive PCR test or rapid take-home test	<p><b>Isolate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Fully vaccinated staff or student :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Isolate for a minimum of 5 days or until symptoms resolve, <b>whichever is longer</b>, starting the first day of symptoms or positive test.</li> <li>○ Following the home isolation period, if symptoms have resolved, fully vaccinated individuals may leave isolation and are required to wear masks whenever they are in a public place and/or in the company of another person (no exceptions permitted).</li> <li>○ This means they must eat or drink alone, away from others. If more than one individual is isolating, it is possible to cohort people with COVID-19 for breaks and lunch.</li> <li>○ The combination of time in isolation and constant mask wearing should be a total of 10 days.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Not fully vaccinated:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms or until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and other symptoms are improving, <b>whichever is longer</b> if symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Symptomatic (Person has symptom of COVID-19)	Negative PCR test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Fully vaccinated staff or student</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and other symptoms are improving, before cautiously resuming normal activities.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Not fully vaccinated staff or student:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stay home until symptoms resolve, if symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition, before cautiously resuming normal activities.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Symptomatic (Person has symptom of COVID-19)	Negative rapid take-home test	<p><b>NOTE:</b> A negative test result does not rule out infection. Continue monitoring your symptoms and following public health guidelines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Isolate immediately for 24 hours.</b></li> <li>● Take second rapid test in 24-48 hours: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>If negative</b>, continue isolating until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication and other symptoms are improving, before cautiously resuming normal activities.</li> <li>○ <b>If positive</b>, continue isolation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Fully vaccinated:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Following the home isolation period, if symptoms have resolved, fully vaccinated individuals may leave isolation and are required to wear masks whenever they are in a</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<p>public place and/or in the company of another person (no exceptions permitted).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This means they must eat or drink alone, away from others. If more than one individual is isolating, it is possible to cohort people with COVID-19 for breaks and lunch.</li> <li>• The combination of time in isolation and constant mask wearing should be a total of 10 days</li> </ul> <p>■ <b>Not fully vaccinated staff or student:</b> 10 days or until symptoms resolve, <b>whichever is longer</b></p>
Symptomatic (Person has symptom of COVID-19)	Not Tested	<p><b>Student:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath or loss of sense of taste/smell, follow instructions for symptomatic positive above.</li> <li>• If other symptoms (chills, sore throat/painful swallowing, runny nose/congestion, feeling unwell/fatigued, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, unexplained loss of appetite, muscle/joint aches, headache or conjunctivitis): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ONE symptom: stay home, monitor for 24h. If it improves, return when well enough to go (testing not necessary).</li> <li>○ TWO symptoms OR ONE symptom that persists or worsens: Stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication, and other symptoms are improving.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Adult:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of taste/smell or runny nose, follow instructions for symptomatic positive above.</li> <li>• If other symptoms (chills, sore throat/painful swallowing, runny nose/congestion, feeling unwell/fatigued, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, unexplained loss of appetite, muscle/joint aches, headache or conjunctivitis), stay home until they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication, and other symptoms are improving.</li> </ul>
Asymptomatic (does not have any symptoms of COVID-19)	Positive PCR or rapid take-home test result	<p><b>Isolate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fully vaccinated staff or student :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Isolate for 5 days from the date when the PCR test or Rapid Test was completed.</li> <li>○ Following the home isolation period, if symptoms have resolved, fully vaccinated individuals may leave isolation and are required to wear masks whenever they are in a public place and/or in the company of another person (no exceptions permitted).</li> <li>○ This means they must eat or drink alone, away from others. If more than one individual is isolating, it is possible to cohort people with COVID-19 for breaks and lunch.</li> <li>○ The combination of time in isolation and constant mask wearing should be a total of 10 days.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Not fully vaccinated:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Isolate for 10 days from the date when the PCR test or Rapid Test was completed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

		<b>NOTE**</b> If the Positive result was from a Rapid Test, individuals can conduct a second test in 24-48 hours, and if negative, and still no symptoms, they do not need to continue to isolate. If positive on repeat test, continue to isolate. If at any time, you develop symptoms, you need to follow isolation instructions for symptomatic individuals.
Asymptomatic (does not have any symptoms of COVID-19)	Negative test result	<b>No Isolation required</b>

**IMPORTANT NOTE\*** Vaccination is not mandatory for students and *school authorities may not deny students access to learning based on vaccination status*. If a student is required to isolate, the length of isolation (5 days or 10 days) will be at the discretion of the parent based on their knowledge of the student’s vaccination status.

Proof of a negative COVID-19 test result **is not necessary** for a student, teacher or staff member to return to school.

It is strongly recommended that **household contacts** (of COVID-19 cases) who are **NOT fully vaccinated**, stay home for 10 days from the date of last household exposure.

- In addition, they should monitor for symptoms for 10 days from the last day of household exposure, and if they develop any symptoms, should isolate and complete the AHS Self-Assessment tool to determine if they need to be tested for COVID-19. For more information on isolation requirements for people with symptoms, please visit [alberta.ca/isolation](https://www.alberta.ca/isolation).

For **household contacts** (of COVID-19 cases) **who ARE fully vaccinated**, and for **all close contacts** (of COVID-19 cases) **outside of your household**, monitor for symptoms for 10 days after the last exposure to the COVID-19 case and continue to do the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) updated January 7, 2022 and to **stay home when sick**, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner), and fill out the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) to determine if they should access a PCR test. If a PCR test is not recommended they may conduct an at-home rapid test.

For more information on isolation please visit <https://www.alberta.ca/isolation>.

### At-Home Rapid Testing Program

Rapid screening tests are another tool, along with health measures already in place at schools, to keep students and staff safe. AHS provided rapid testing kits for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students and staff and that were distributed to those students whose parents wanted them. A [how-to video for parents](#) and a [rapid test program fact sheet translated into multiple languages](#) offer tips on how to use the kits.

## Mental Health and Wellness

Black Gold School Division recognizes that some responses to the COVID-19 pandemic led to a deterioration in mental health and wellbeing of children and youth. We know that student mental health and wellness are very important for academic and personal success. Families and schools both play a role in supporting positive mental health.

Black Gold's [Mental Health at Home](#) site has a number of strategies and resources to support positive mental health for our students. Parents/guardians and students who are concerned about the well-being of a student can contact their school or access a number of community resources.

- [211 Alberta](#): Phone 211
  - An initial call to 211 is a great first step in navigating which resource or helpline may be best for you.
  - This is a helpline and online database of Alberta's community and social services and is answered and updated by highly-trained specialists.
- [Distress Line \(CMHA\) Edmonton Region](#):
  - Toll free Northern Alberta: 1-800-232-7288
  - Crisis 24 hours Edmonton: 780-482-HELP (4357)
- [Mental Health Helpline](#): Phone: 1-877-303-2642
  - This toll-free helpline provides confidential and anonymous services, crisis intervention, information about mental health services and referrals to other agencies.
- Mental Health Help Line (français): Phone: 1-800-567-9699
  - Same services as above
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868
  - [www.Kidshelphone.ca](http://www.Kidshelphone.ca)
  - Text CONNECT to 686868
- Kids Help line (français):
  - [www.jeunessejecoute.ca](http://www.jeunessejecoute.ca)
- Health Link: Phone: 811
- Alberta Health Services
  - [Help in Tough Times](#) offers mental health resources.
  - Healthy Together offers tips for staying healthy, active and safe.
- The federal First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness Help Line at 1-855-242-3310
  - 24-hour availability, 7 days a week, or chat online at Hope for Wellness
- [Crisis Text Line](#) Alberta (available 24/7)
  - text CONNECT to 741741
- [Crisis Services Canada Suicide Prevention Service](#): 1-833-456-4566
- [Child Advocacy Centres of Alberta](#)
  - Offers resources to help recognize signs of child abuse and support victims of abuse.

## Distance Learning Program

While Black Gold continues to offer Distance Learning in the 2021-2022 school year, **all classes in our Distance Learning program are all full, so *students can no longer move from in school classes to***

**distance learning this year.** If your child needs to stay home due to illness, quarantine, or isolation, if the student is able to work, the classroom teacher will provide work (i.e. Google Classroom or other method). The family will be responsible for guiding their child as they complete this work at home.

Students participating in our Distance Learning program remain enrolled at their community school. Distance learning students are able to participate in school activities such as extracurricular activities, work experience, ceremonies and celebrations.

## Contingency Plans

Alberta Health Services will continue to support schools to manage COVID-19. A medical officer of health or designate has the authority under the Public Health Act to recommend additional public health measures. When there are high levels of absences due to respiratory illness, there may be times when we will have to temporarily transition some classes, grades, or schools to at-home online learning for a period of time *due to staffing shortages, including substitute staff*. We thank you in advance for your patience and understanding. Any shifts to at-home online learning will be due to operational reasons only.

## Individual Classes or Grades Temporarily Move to At-home Online Learning

If required, BGSD may need to temporarily move a portion of a school (individual class or grade) to at-home online learning due to operational reasons such as staffing issues. In the event we must move a class or grade to temporary at-home online learning, parents will be immediately notified by the school regarding next steps.

## Next Steps

The Division will continue to update this plan based upon the direction of Alberta Health Services and recommendations of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Parents will be notified whenever this plan is updated.

### References:

- [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) - Alberta Health
- [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) - Alberta Health
- [At-home Rapid Test Video](#) - Alberta Health
- [Rapid Test Fact Sheet](#) - Alberta Health
- [CMOH Order 01-2022](#) - Chief Medical Officer of Health
- [Parents' Guide 2021-2022 School Year](#) - Government of Alberta