

PARENT FAQs

EIPS SCHOOL RE-ENTRY PLAN

LAST UPDATED: AUG. 19, 2020



FAQS – SCHOOL RE-ENTRY

Attending school

Q: Do students have to return to school full-time or can they attend a few days a week, and work at home the other days?

A: On July 21, Alberta Education announced that students would return to school based on Scenario 1—that is, in-class full-time attendance with health measures in place. There is no option for students to return part-time. For those families who are not, for various reasons, comfortable sending their children back to school in person, the Division is offering an out-of-school learning option.

Q: If my child is attending in-class learning but then we change our mind, can they register for the out-of-school option instead? Can they transfer from the out-of-school option back to in-class learning?

A: Families are asked to decide which option they prefer for the beginning of the school year—attending classes at school or continuing their learning out-of-school. This will allow schools to determine the number of students, to arrange classroom seating to accommodate those who are returning, and to make plans for those who will be pursuing the out-of-school learning option.

If at any point during the school year, parents feel they wish to switch to out-of-school learning they can—after consultation with school administration. If a student wishes to return to in-school learning from out-of-school learning, they can transition between [set entry dates](#) by advising the principal at least two week in advance. Out-of-school entry dates:

- **Elementary Schools:** after the November break, Christmas break and spring break
- **Elementary-Junior High Schools:** after the November break, Christmas break and spring break
- **Junior High Schools:** after the November break, Christmas break and spring break
- **Junior High-Senior High Schools:** the start of each quarter break
- **Senior high:** the start of each quarter break

Q: Could my child register with another school division for out-of-school learning and then return to their designated EIPS school if I want them to take attend in-class learning later?

A: No. If your child registers with another school division, they would remain a student of that division for the remainder of the school year.

Q: If my child attends school in a different division for 2020-21 school year, does that impact future funding for EIPS?

A: Yes. Because education funding is based on a three-year weighted average (past, current and projected enrolment), we would not receive the same amount of funding for the next two years even if your child returns in 2021-22.

Q: How are in-class learning and out-of-school learning different?

A: Students who choose the out-of-school learning option will be using a platform known as Brightspace. Elementary and junior high learning is led by parents, who can access standard lesson plans, instructional videos, written instructions, digital and print materials, and various learning resources. The content covered ensures students achieve core competencies and can progress in their learning. Teachers will be assessing and providing feedback on assignments submitted through the system, and some limited teacher support will be provided remotely through Central Services.

EIPS is using Calgary Board of Education Resources for students in senior high. These online packages will include videos to support learning, directed activities and assignments students will complete independently. The only difference with these resources is there is no parent resource and no videos of CBE teacher instruction.

Schools will be provided a scope and sequence document for the out of school learning and are encouraged to align their lessons in the in-school setting

Q: How many hours of work are students expected to complete in the out-of-school learning?

- Kindergarten to Grade 3: An average of five hours of work per week.
- Grades 4 to 6: An average of six to eight hours of work per week.
- Grades 7 to 9: An average of 12 to 16 hours of work per week.
- Grades 10-12: Five-credit courses average 12 hours of work per week. Three-credit courses average six hours of work per week.

Q: Why can't my child participate in class remotely using a Google meets or some other video platform while they are enrolled in the out-of-school program?

A: In order to protect the privacy of students as well as staff, we cannot broadcast either live or pre-recorded classes.

Q: If I'm leading my child's learning with the out-of-school option, what happens to the education funding provided by the Government of Alberta?

A: Education funding will pay for both learning options being offered.

Teachers are still responsible for all students registered in their class, whether they are taking in-class or out-of-school programming. As such, teachers are still required to mark all submitted assignments, provide feedback on what is submitted and assess overall achievement. Should parents have questions from time to time, some limited teacher support will be provided remotely through Central Services.

Q: Do I still have to pay school fees if my child is enrolled in out-of-school learning?

A: If your child isn't attending in-class learning, fees for lunch hour supervision, student union and any of the supplementary fees associated with school activities and events will not be assessed. Should your child return for in-class learning after one of the school reporting periods, fees would be charged accordingly.

Regular fees for student transportation apply if your child attends school. Families can withdraw from Student Transportation Services and receive a prorated refund if they choose out-of-school learning. The deadline to withdraw is September 30, 2020

Q: Will out-of-school care and preschool programs in EIPS buildings still operate?

A: Yes, if they are run entirely by staff as no volunteers are permitted in schools at this time. As well, the programs must adhere to Alberta Health Service's standards for childcare operations and EIPS protocols.

Q: For junior and senior high students, will there be options offered through out-of-school learning?

A: Limited complementary course options will be available for high school. Junior high students will not have access to option courses.

Preventative health measures

Q: The Government of Alberta mandated that students in grades 4 to 12 wear masks. Why does EIPS require that students in kindergarten to Grade 3 also wear masks?

A: EIPS is extending that requirement to all grades, kindergarten to Grade 12, because we cannot guarantee physical distancing will always be maintained by all individuals.

Masks are mandatory for all staff and students when physical distancing cannot be maintained. That means in common areas like hallways and bathrooms, on buses, when arriving and departing school, and whenever staff and students must work in close proximity to one another, masks must be worn. In situations where physical distancing can be easily maintained—during physical education in a large space, outside at recess and in the classroom where students remain in their desks and can maintain physical distancing, masks will be optional.

Q: How do you expect younger kids to wear a mask for so long?

A: The first week of school, we are bringing students to school on a staggered basis. Doing so will give us the chance to educate students about the new processes and practices around physical distancing, hand hygiene and the safe use of reusable masks. While we understand it may take some time to get used to the new rules, we are confident that with patience and positive reinforcement, students will get used to wearing their masks and know how to handle them safely. We also encourage parents to have their children practice putting on, wearing and taking off masks before the first day of school so they feel comfortable doing so. This [video](#) from Health Canada or this [guide](#) may be helpful.

There will be points during the day, when physical distancing is easily maintained, where masks will be optional—when students remain in their desks and aren't moving around the room; during physical education and recess; and during snack and lunch breaks.

We encourage you to [practice](#) mask wearing with your child in preparation for school start.

Q: Do I have to provide masks for my child?

A: The Government of Alberta is providing two reusable masks for each student. These can be taken home and washed nightly, and then returned with the student the following school day. If you prefer that your child wears a mask you provide, please ensure you are using a type [recommended by Alberta Health](#). Masks should be labelled or marked with your child's initials to prevent loss.

Facemasks should be fitted, without gaps at the side or bottom; for that reason, bandanas and scarves are not appropriate.

Q: What happens if my child forgets the masks?

A: A small number of disposable masks will be kept in stock at the school should this occur. If the child frequently forgets or doesn't bring masks, school administration will touch base with parents to request they ensure their child's masks are sent with them.

Q: Masks alone won't prevent the spread of COVID-19. What other measures are you taking?

A: Schools will use a combination of physical distancing, good hand hygiene, cohorting and mask use to help avoid potential spread. As well, there will be enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces, controlled movement of students in common areas like hallways and around lockers, and vigilant monitoring for potential symptoms among students and staff members. As well, recesses and lunch breaks will be staggered.

First and foremost, parents will be asked to sign a form indicating that if their child has symptoms attributed to COVID-19 or has come into close contact with someone who has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, they will not come to school. Parents should complete a verbal screening every morning before bringing the child to school, dropping them off at daycare or putting them on the school bus.

Any student exhibiting symptoms will be immediately isolated and the school will make arrangements for immediate pick-up.

Q: Could my child wear a face shield instead of a mask?

A: A face shield may provide additional protection for the person wearing it against droplets exhaled by another person, but droplets could still be inhaled from around or under the shield. As well, when someone wearing a face shield exhales, they can escape around the edge of the shield, which therefore provides less protection for others. Those who have a diagnosed medical condition preventing them from wearing a mask may consider using a face shield for some degree of protection, but masks will still be required for all other students and staff.

Q: How will my child learn properly if the teachers are all wearing masks? Children won't be able to read the teacher's expressions or see how to pronounce words properly, and they might be scared to see their teachers in a mask.

A: When physical distancing is possible—for instance, in a classroom where the teacher stands at the front of the room and the students remain in their seats—masking will be optional. Depending on the teacher's comfort level, they may choose to use a transparent mask or shield so students can clearly see their face as they speak. If physical distances cannot be maintained between teachers and students, however, the masks will be necessary for the health and safety of everyone.

Q: [What if my child has a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask?](#)

A: You will be required to provide documentation from a medical practitioner indicating your child is unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition. In these cases, its recommended students wear a face shield in order to provide some protection. Physical distancing requirements will be strictly enforced to prevent the potential spread of COVID-19.

Q: [What happens if a student repeatedly refuses to wear a mask?](#)

A: Unless a student has been exempted due to a medical condition, masks are mandatory when physical distancing isn't possible. If a student refuses to wear a mask despite attempts by administration to address the issue, the student will be required to move to out-of-school learning.

Q: [If one child in my house is sick but our other children are healthy, can the ones who feel fine still come to school? Question 4 on the Screening Questionnaire says they should not do so but if they have no symptoms, why not?](#)

A: We require that parents verbally review the [daily screening questionnaire](#) with each child before school every day. The decision about whether or not to send the other children would depend on the answers to this questionnaire, and more specifically, the advice given following your use of the [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) if you answer yes to any of the questions.

According to Alberta Health, if after using the tool you're told your sick child must legally self-isolate and testing is recommended, you could send your other children to school so long as they are asymptomatic. If you are told your sick child **must** be tested for COVID-19, then you should **not** send your other children to school. Here is [additional information](#) about isolation requirements.

As always, Alberta Health have the experts qualified to speak to this. If you have additional questions or require clarification, we recommend you contact Health Link (811).

Q: [Can I send hand sanitizer to school with my children?](#)

A: The Division has secured adequate amounts of safe, approved hand sanitizer—both with and without alcohol—for use by staff and students, and will have it available in classrooms and throughout the school. We would ask that students refrain from bringing their own as we have no way to confirm whether it's effective or safe.

Other questions

Q: Why aren't sports teams and intramurals being allowed?

A: While sports can provide both physical and emotional benefits for students, we cannot run school athletics in a way that respects current physical distancing and masking requirements. Athletes are often physically close to teammates, both on the playing surface and in change rooms. As well, the very nature of many sports results in athletes breathing heavily with no chance to keep physically distant from one another, their opponents and team staff.

Students may choose to take part in club sports outside of school. It's also true that these same children may potentially be exposed to COVID-19 while participating as part of sports cohorts in the community. That makes it even more important that when students are at school, we ensure they maintain physical distance from one another, use a mask when physical distancing isn't possible, minimize contact with multiple cohorts and practice proper hand hygiene.

Our priority for the start of the 2020-21 school year is to ensure we focus on the educational needs of students. We will re-evaluate our decision as the school year progresses.

Q: Will I be able to come into the school to volunteer, drop off items for my child or pick up my child if necessary? Can I walk my child to class if I want?

A: As limiting opportunities for contact is an important tool in preventing the spread of COVID-19, we are suspending volunteer opportunities and non-essential visits until further notice.

If you need to come to the school to drop off lunch, items or any other essential business for your child you will need to first call the school. Visitors who have called will first need to complete a COVID-19 screening questionnaire. Anyone answering "yes" to the questions cannot enter the building.

Essential visitors will be required to sanitize their hands, sign the visitor log in the office, practice social distancing and wear a mask. Items being dropped off can be left in the office. If you are picking up your child, you will be asked to wait in a designated area until your child arrives.

Except where necessary and confirmed ahead of time with school administration, parents cannot escort their children to and from their class.

Q: [What happens if there is a case of COVID-19 in my child's school?](#)

A: The Division, in consultation with Alberta Health Services, will deal with confirmed cases of COVID-19 confidentially and on a case-by-case basis. Those potentially impacted will be contacted and all affected areas will be cleaned and disinfected. Should Alberta Health Services direct us to do so, EIPS may decide to close the school or implement more stringent cohorting, physical distancing and personal protective equipment strategies.