



# 2021/22 Return to School Operational Plan

Last updated: Feb. 14, 2022

## Recent Updates of Note

- Feb. 14:
  - Masking moved to optional for students while in school (but required for students 13 and older when being spectators at extra-curricular events)
  - Proof of immunization / rapid testing (Administrative Procedure 173) eliminated

Rocky View Schools (RVS) continues to create safe, high-quality learning opportunities where all students learn, belong, and succeed. The purpose of this plan is to outline the protocols established for the 2021/22 school year. It is informed by the direction RVS receives from government and adjusted as direction and guidance evolves.

RVS thanks all families, students and staff for their understanding and cooperation with the health and safety measures in place to limit the spread of COVID-19. We are committed to measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses including promoting and facilitating hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick, maintaining ventilation, and ensuring regular cleaning and disinfection of high traffic/touch areas, and other measures as necessary.

Implementation of our plan is subject to change as the pandemic evolves. We will continue to seek direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Alberta Education as an important part of this process.

Recognizing the dynamic nature of the pandemic, RVS has two contingency plans based on guidance in government's 2021-2022 School Year Plan. Contingency 1: In-School with Enhanced Health Measures Plan outlines the protocols RVS will follow if students remain learning in-class at school, but enhanced health measures are required. Contingency 2: At-Home Learning Plan will be put in place if students are required to move to at-home learning.

We appreciate your continued support as we work together to keep our schools safe and positive learning environments. Elements of the plan and requirements are categorized below.

## School Operations

### Health Measures

All students, staff, teachers and visitors are required to follow health measures mandated by RVS, the Chief Medical Officer of Health and/or measures implemented by an AHS Zone Medical Officer of Health.

### Daily Health Checklist Usage

RVS will continue to require all students, staff and visitors to use the [Alberta Daily Health Checklist](#) prior to coming to school. Parents/guardians play an essential role as they support actions in the home (such as keeping children/students home when sick and testing if symptoms develop) that ultimately keep other children, students and staff safe.

### Hand Hygiene

Continue to promote routine washing of hands and/or use of sanitizer. Sanitizer will be available in schools with individuals encouraged to sanitize as they enter/exit the school or classroom, before eating or serving food, using shared equipment, etc.

### **Masking**

A non-medical face mask is required while inside RVS schools and sites for all adults. Students may choose to wear a mask.

- Teachers/staff may remove their mask if they are alone at their desk and/or separated by at least two metres from all other persons.

Anyone 13 years old and older (including students) must wear a mask while being a spectator at indoor extra-curricular events (e.g., concerts, sporting events).

All individuals (including students) returning from a five-day period of isolation because they are fully immunized, tested positive but now symptom free, must wear a mask at all times for the following five days.

As per the provincial requirements, masks continue to be required for all adults on school buses. Students may choose to wear a mask while on a school bus.

Masks are not required outdoors at RVS schools and sites. RVS will support individuals who choose to wear a mask when not required.

Information on the Government of Alberta's mask exception process requirements for adults is provided later in this plan.

### **Physical Distancing**

RVS will work to maximize physical distance between students and staff. Given the number of students in the building, it will not be possible to maintain two metres of physical separation between students and staff at all times. Students are not expected to sit at their desks for the duration of the day. We recognize learning can occur during various activities. Additional measures can be implemented when students are not seated in the classroom:

- Consider activities that can take place outdoors or in areas that allow for increased physical distancing and/or increased ventilation; and
- Consider limiting the number of students moving within the classroom or throughout the school at one time to promote physical distancing.

### **Cohorting**

Cohorting to reduce the interactions that Kindergarten - Grade 6 students have with other students is implemented.

### **Lunch Routines & School Cafeteria Program & Snack/Breakfast/Lunch Programs**

While addressing physical distancing to the best of the school's ability given their facilities and student population, lunch, school cafeteria programs and snack/breakfast/lunch programs can continue. Cohorts in Kindergarten - Grade 6 will be maintained in these settings. Schools are not to use buffet-style or self-serve. Instead, they are to use pre-packaged meals or meals served by staff/designated person.

### **Recess**

Recesses will be adjusted to maximize physical distancing for all grades and reduce cohort interactions in Kindergarten – Grade 6.

**Transportation**

- Masks are to be worn by all drivers and adult volunteers/guests at all times while riding the bus. Students may choose to wear a mask while riding the bus.
- Once a student takes a seat on the bus they cannot move about the bus or change seats until unloading.
- Seating plans may be implemented if the need arises.
- Sanitizing of the bus will occur between each group of riders.
- Should a child become symptomatic during the bus trip, the driver should contact the school to make the appropriate arrangements to pick up the student.

**Before and After School Programs**

Third-party providers will determine their own protocols and inform families using their services.

**Visitors/Parents/Volunteers**

Any visitors/parents/volunteers are required to use the [Alberta Daily Health Checklist](#) prior to entering the school and must check-in with the office. Masking is required for all adults throughout the duration of the visit.

**Illness While at School**

Students exhibiting signs of illness must be moved to the school’s infirmary room. Parents/guardians will be notified and advised to pick up their child within one hour of notification. If the parent is unable to pick up their child, they must designate an emergency contact for student pick up. It is the expectation that students are picked up by the family or emergency contact.

**Singing/Playing Instruments**

Singers and wind instrument musicians should be two metres away from other performers and individuals at all times. Wind instruments should be equipped with a cover intended to prevent droplet transmission. In indoor settings, groups should not sing or play wind instruments for more than 30 minutes at a time, with a 10-minute break afterwards to allow for air exchange in the room.

**Work Experience and Dual Credit programs**

Students participating in these programs will have to follow the specific institutions and/or employer’s requirements.

**School Facilities**

**Enhanced High-Touch Cleaning**

RVS will continue with regular cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces. Daily electrostatic spraying will occur at the end of each school day except in Kindergarten, where it will be performed between morning and afternoon cohorts. Shared spaces where lunches are consumed will be cleaned after eating is complete. Desks used by multiple people per day should be cleaned and disinfected by individuals as they leave the space.

**Ventilation**

RVS utilizes enhanced ventilation with high density filters, maximizes fresh air and air return systems to increase air flow, ensures systems are operating within manufacturers expectations, and replaces filters more often than manufacturers recommend.

**School Arrival/Departure/In-Building Traffic Flow**

Schools will implement measures to maximize physical distancing to the best of the school’s ability given their facilities and student population. Schools will utilize multiple doors for entry and exit. Cohorting in Kindergarten - Grade 6 will be considered in when entering/exiting/moving about the school.

**Classroom Setup**

Classrooms will maximize physical distancing within the classroom given their classroom space and class size. Desks should be arranged so they are not facing each other wherever possible. Furniture and equipment do not need to be removed. Staff need to be aware of [Administrative Procedure 5305 Non-Standard Items in RVS Facilities](#).

**Specialty Spaces (e.g., Learning Commons, Gymnasiums, Shared Classrooms, Fitness Facilities)**

Specialty spaces will maximize physical distancing within the setting given their space and number of students present. Furniture and equipment do not need to be removed. Desks used by multiple people per day should be cleaned and disinfected by individuals as they leave the space. Shared equipment should be cleaned in between uses where possible. Learning Commons books unable to be cleaned should be stored for 24 hours between different uses.

**Staffrooms**

Staffrooms should be used for grab and go service only unless two meters physical distancing can be maintained.

**Water Fountains**

May be used.

**Lockers**

Locker use continues to be permitted but measures should be considered in schools to reduce congestion at the lockers.

**Community Use of RVS Facilities**

Community use is available in our schools. Any users are required to use the [Alberta Daily Health Checklist](#) prior to entering the school. Users and events must follow all Government of Alberta guidelines.

**Community Use of RVS Grounds**

Community use is available in our outdoor spaces.

**Assessment**

**Grade 12 Diploma Exams**

January diploma exams have been cancelled. A decision by the province will be made later in 2022 regarding April and June diploma exams.

More information is available on [Alberta Education’s website](#). The [weighting of diploma exams](#) will be temporarily reduced to 10 per cent for the 2021/22 school year only.

**Grade 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)**

The administration of PATs will resume and are mandatory in the 2021/22 school year, as required by government. Portions of the January Grade 9 PATs have been delayed later into January.

## Activities

### Extracurricular Activities

These optional activities will be offered where teacher volunteers and community volunteers are available.

### Spectators at Extracurricular Activities

All individuals 13 years old and older (including students) attending extra-curricular events must be masked at all times. There is no physical distancing requirement between individuals attending these events. Capacity returns to pre-pandemic levels.

Spectator attendance at outdoor events is not restricted.

### Field Trips

All off-site field trips are paused at this time.

There will be no out-of-province or out-of-country field trips in the 2021/22 school year. Cancellation provisions will be important to review carefully.

### School Events (e.g., Assemblies, Guest Speakers, Celebratory Events, Graduation)

Indoor school events can only proceed where physical distancing (Kindergarten – Grade 12) and cohorting (Kindergarten – Grade 6) can be maintained. Virtual events are encouraged.

### School Councils

Can continue to meet in person with masking and physical distancing required at all times. Councils may want to consider online meetings if the council feels they were successful with that mode in 2020/21.

## COVID-19 Cases and Outbreaks

### Isolations

Those who test positive for COVID-19 must isolate as determined by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Please see [Alberta Daily Health Checklist](#) for specific direction on isolation requirements.

### Quarantining

Close contacts of a positive case are not required to quarantine if they do not have a symptom and/or have not tested positive. AHS strongly encourages household close contacts who are not fully immunized (for example, a sibling, parent, or grandparent who lives with the positive case) to stay home as per the current Alberta Daily Health Checklist.

### Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Alberta Health Services (AHS) no longer supports COVID-19 and respiratory illness outbreak management in schools including notifying schools of positive cases. AHS has directed school divisions to stop reporting positive COVID-19 cases in staff or students or increased absenteeism related to respiratory illness to AHS.

Given the high number of positive cases in our communities, without this AHS support, school staff are no longer able to dedicate time on performing case investigations to determine if the individual was at school while communicable. At this time, RVS staff are asked to focus efforts on supporting the learning of students in school and those required to isolate and will not be providing case notifications to school families.

RVS will be monitoring student and staff attendance as a means of identifying challenging situations where a temporary shift to at-home learning may be warranted.

### Vaccinations

It is important for Albertans to get vaccinated to protect yourself and others. Everyone five years of age and older is eligible to get their first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. Some individuals are now eligible for a third or booster dose. The COVID-19 vaccine has been shown to be very protective against infection. As Alberta has no specific provincial legislation that requires Pre-K to Grade 12 students to have specific vaccinations to attend in school, school divisions cannot deny students access to education due to their immunization status.

### Vaccination Clinics

Vaccination clinics may be held in schools for students five years of age or older and staff. Should vaccination clinics occur in RVS schools, students must have returned the signed consent form by a parent/legal guardian to the school prior to the vaccination date to receive the vaccination.

### Rapid Testing

Effective Jan. 10, 2022, the government will provide routine access to rapid testing to all staff and students engaging with in-person learning across the province. Participating in such rapid testing is completely voluntary and to be completed at home. No student will be required to take a rapid test or to share their results with an RVS staff member if they take a test. That said, families are requested to inform the school if a child tests positive. Schools will communicate to their families when these items arrive, and provide to students to take home unless the family tells the school otherwise. Please address any questions you have to your school directly.

The province has produced materials related to the rapid tests.

- Video: [Having a safe and healthy school year: At-home rapid testing](#)
- Fact sheet: [At-Home Rapid Testing Program Information for parents, students and school staff \(translations also available\)](#)

### Travel

Individuals must follow out-of-country travel direction established by government prior to returning to an RVS site.

### Temporary Shifts to At-Home Learning for Kindergarten – Grade 12 classes

With changing testing available across the province, AHS will not be providing specific case data to schools and RVS. As such, the former process used this fall about shifting a K-6 class to at-home learning when there are three AHS confirmed cases in a class in five calendar days will need to be eliminated. School divisions are now required to look at data such as availability of staff to maintain instruction, student absenteeism, operational challenges and local data if available. The Superintendent can shift a class or a grade in a school to temporary at-home learning for up to 10 calendar days. The decision to move an entire school or all of RVS to temporary at-home learning is a decision of Alberta Education. Should RVS believe this is necessary we will need to provide data to government related to staffing challenges, student absenteeism, operational challenges, current classes and grades moved to at-home learning already, and other relevant local data.

Temporary at-home learning guides:

- [Kindergarten – Grade 6](#)
- [Grade 7 – 12](#)

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <p><b>Supporting Learning While Self-Isolating or Ill</b></p> <p>Consistent with what happens during non-pandemic times, if a child needs to stay home due to illness, classroom teachers will provide key work for the student to work on while at home. Homework bundles or tasks will be provided to the student by the regular teacher, but they will not be engaging in at-home learning.</p>  |
| <p><b>Mask Exceptions for Adults</b></p> | <p><b>Exception for a Medical Condition – Government Requirements</b></p> <p>Mask exceptions for adults can only be granted by a nurse practitioner, physician, or a psychologist using this provincial form: <a href="#">Medical Note for Mask Exception</a>. Medical conditions eligible for an exception are listed in the appendix of the Chief Medical Officer of Health's Health Order: <a href="#">CMOH order 22-2021: 2021 COVID-19 response</a>.</p> |