

# 2020 MHPSD Re-Entry Plan

## Scenario 1: In-school classes resume

Near normal operations with additional health  
measures.

---

**Last updated June 1, 2021**

**Published August 1, 2020**

---

This document will be updated based on  
orders from the Chief Medical Officer of Health



**We are MHPSDfamilySTRONG**

## To Our Families and Community,

The circumstances that required the development of this plan are unprecedented in our lifetime. Not since the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918 has the world been faced with a public health challenge of this scope. While we are yet to fully understand the impact of the COVID-19 virus on the people who contract it, we do know that the impact on the global economy and on the nature of life in communities across the globe has been significant. Sadly, COVID-19 has had a dramatic impact on schools across the globe; Medicine Hat Public School Division is not immune to these impacts.

Scenario 1 is described by Alberta Education as a **return to near normal operations and routines in schools, with additional health restrictions implemented.**

This plan is written in direct response to the direction received from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Minister of Education. It will guide our operations as we re-enter school for the 2020-2021 school year. The expectation is that we do all we can to mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This requires significant changes to the way our school's function. While we are working to ensure that our students, and the staff that serve them, do not experience undue stress at school, you will note that the public health imperative requires a level of rigidity in some areas that is unfamiliar in schools.

The [Alberta government k-12 school re-entry plan](#) forms the framework for our plan for the upcoming school year which allows schools and parents to prepare for learning while putting student and staff safety first. Every individual will have to actively engage, in a developmentally appropriate manner, in applying the protocols in this plan, in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and keep our MHPSD family strong.

It is important that readers of this document are aware that the plans for Scenario 1 are based on **MITIGATION** and not on PREVENTION. The language within the Alberta Education documentation for Scenario 1 is clear that physical distancing cannot be the only strategy used to slow the spread of COVID-19 and that, while it is an important strategy, it is one that schools can only **strive** to achieve when all students are welcomed back to schools.

Our planning and implementation are to adhere to 'Guiding Principles' at every level of the organization: from the classroom to the board room.

### Guiding Principles for Re-entry:

- The safety and well-being of students and staff is **the** priority.
- The School Division will attend to the protocols established by Alberta Health Services in all aspects of schooling including structuring face-to-face instructional delivery and extra-curricular activities.
- Parents are the primary decision-makers and determine what is in the best interest of their children.
- Children and staff who are vulnerable require attention to accommodations.
- Students will have quality learning opportunities that are guided by Alberta Education mandates and the provincial Programs of Study in all potential methods of delivery.
- Staff will have access to the professional learning, collaboration, and support they need to grow instructional practice in all potential methods of delivery.
- Consistency of program delivery over time is important for sound allocation of staffing and resources.
- Provide opportunity for our youngest learners (kindergarten to grade 2) and students in congregated specialized programs to attend in-class learning everyday.

While Alberta Education describes Scenario 1 as “near normal”, Medicine Hat Public School Division acknowledges that the circumstances of the 2020-2021 school year are anything but “normal”. While there are differing thoughts on how best to proceed with school re-entry and opening the economy, there can be no debate about the fact that many in our community are concerned (even scared) about what COVID-19 could do to them and people they love. It will be mandatory for students from Grade 4–12 and for all staff in settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained to wear a non-medical mask. Individuals who are physically, psychologically or developmentally unable to wear a mask, or any protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, may be excused from this health protocol.

For this reason, Medicine Hat Public School Division is preparing to provide service to students in either in-class or at-home environments. Both will be served by dedicated teachers whose assignments are built to ensure they are able to focus on meeting the needs of the students assigned to them.

Programming in both contexts will be more robust than in the emergent circumstances of the spring and, while students will need a device to access Google Classroom, they will not require all-day engagement with a device. You will see some description of both in-class and at-home learning in the plan that follows. As always, the specifics of a class’ function are all about the planning of the teacher and the culture of the class. Your child’s teacher will share their planning and thinking when they return to school.

Our thinking is this. Providing an at-home option that is well supported and rigorous provides families that are able, and so inclined, the opportunity to keep their children home, knowing that Medicine Hat Public School Division is still there for them. It will make it simpler for school staff to approach true physical distancing and to supervise the other mitigation measures for those children who attend in-class learning. No parent or guardian should feel pressure to choose one option over the other. Our goal is to provide care and learning and not to complicate or challenge the decisions you make for your children.

Near normal operations will require that we all work together. Dr. Deena Hinshaw has advised that this is a collective responsibility and that we all..

- must take measures to protect others,
- must maintain high levels of hygiene, and
- must follow provincial health guidance to the best of our ability.

While we will be starting the 2020-2021 school year in scenario 1, school authorities are asked to prepare to implement any other scenario during the upcoming year, including on short notice, to respond to the current public health situation. You may find these plans posted to the [MHPSD.ca](https://www.mhpsd.ca) website.

Know that the plan described here, and the plans that emerge at each of our schools, are built from a place of care by members of our community. We want to do great work for your children while keeping everyone who comes to our buildings as safe as possible. We thank you for the great care and support you provide your children and the staff that serve them.

Be Well,

Mark Davidson  
Superintendent

Catherine Wilson  
Board Chair

## Contents

STUDENT AND FAMILY SECTION .....	6
HEALTH MEASURES .....	6
DAILY SCREENING PRACTICES.....	6
AHS EXPECTATION OF STUDENT/TEACHER COVID-19 TESTING.....	6
SICKNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL.....	6
CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19.....	7
STUDENTS WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS .....	7
TESTING AND DEMONSTRATING CLEARANCE TO RETURN .....	7
SCHOOL OPERATIONS.....	8
PHYSICAL DISTANCING .....	8
STUDENT FLOW INSIDE THE BUILDING .....	8
STUDENTS ENTERING/EXITING THE SCHOOL .....	11
CLASSROOM SETUP .....	12
STUDENT GROUPINGS/COHORTS.....	12
QUARTERED SYSTEM.....	13
PROHIBITED EVENTS.....	13
WATER FOUNTAINS, WATER BOTTLES .....	13
SHARED SCHOOL SPACES .....	13
VISITORS/PARENT/VOLUNTEERS/SERVICE PROVIDERS .....	13
EATING LUNCH .....	14
RECESS .....	14
CLASS TRANSITIONS/BREAKS .....	14
EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITES .....	15
PERFORMANCE ARTS.....	16
EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS (OFF SITE ACTIVITIES) .....	16
SCHOOL COUNCILS .....	17
BREAKFAST/LUNCH/SNACK PROGRAMS .....	17
FOOD IN SCHOOLS.....	17
LOCKERS.....	18
WASHROOMS .....	18
SOFT/POROUS SURFACES AND ITEMS NOT EASILY CLEANED .....	18
SHARED SCHOOL RESOURCES .....	18

SHARED USE CLOTHING ITEMS.....	19
PAPER HANDLING .....	19
STUDENT OWNED DEVICES – CHROMEBOOKS, LAPTOPS, TABLETS, ETC. ....	19
BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE .....	20
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES.....	20
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS .....	20
LEARNING .....	20
COURSES/SUBJECTS.....	20
OPTIONS CLASSES.....	20
IN-CLASS LEARNING.....	21
SUPPORTING LEARNING .....	22
AT-HOME LEARNING .....	22
PROVINCIAL ASSESSMENTS.....	24
SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE INDIVIDUAL/SPECIALIZED SUPPORT & MEDICALLY FRAGILE STUDENTS.....	24
COVID-19 SPECIFIC PROTOCOL TEACHING.....	24
MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS .....	24
TRANSPORATION SECTION.....	26
SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION .....	26
BUILDINGS AND CLEANING SECTION .....	27
GENERAL BUILDING SAFETY .....	27
CLEANING .....	27
COMMUNITY USE OF MHPSD SPACES.....	27
Appendix A – Definitions for commonly used words.....	28

## STUDENT AND FAMILY SECTION

### HEALTH MEASURES

---

#### DAILY SCREENING PRACTICES

Each day, before leaving home, staff, students, visitors, and volunteers who will access the school for work or education, must **self-screen** for symptoms using the applicable checklist for their age group by completing the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) before leaving the home, members of the school community are committing to working to ensure that no one attends to a school building with COVID-19 symptoms.

- Schools must keep records of children’s known pre-existing conditions. If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the child should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to school. If the nature of the pre-existing condition changes (e.g., a cough worsens) a repeat test is encouraged.
- Anyone that reports symptoms should be directed to stay home and seek health care advice as appropriate.
- Signs must be posted reminding persons not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.

#### STUDENT/TEACHER COVID-19 TESTING

Work is being done to speed turn-around time to results for all tests for students and teachers. As of October 1, 2020, parents/guardians can use their [MyHealth Records](#)’ account to access their children's COVID-19 test results online.

#### SICKNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL

No person should enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Schools will develop procedures to address staff that become symptomatic during the school day; anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms at school will be sent home. A student that has other symptoms may be sent home, at the discretion of the school principal.

- [MHPSD Stay at Home Guide](#)
- [Guidance for Parents of Children Attending School and/or Childcare](#)
- [How long to stay home from school – AHS guidance](#)

Anyone that is sent home due to the onset of COVID-19 symptoms will be permitted to return to school/work once they have self-isolated for 10 days from the start of symptoms or until symptoms have resolved, whichever is longer. If they test negative and **have no known exposure** to the virus, they are not legally required to quarantine, however AHS and MHPSD ask that students and staff who have tested negative stay home until their symptoms resolve so that they do not infect others.

If tested negative and **have a known** exposure (close contact) to COVID-19, you are legally required to quarantine as directed by AHS. Any child that develops COVID-19 symptoms while on the school bus or while at school will be required to wear a mask immediately. They will be, as directed by Alberta’s Chief Medical Officer of Health, directed to an isolation space and their parents/guardians will be contacted for immediate pick-up. If your child has a known, pre-existing condition, see “Students with Known Pre-existing Conditions” below.

Students with symptoms must not attend school. If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies, chronic cough), the child should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms. If two or more staff/students within a cohort are identified as having symptoms consistent with COVID-19, the school will follow COVID-19 in School guide (below).

\*AHS Note: As of October 1, 2020, parents/guardians can use their [MyHealth Records](#) account to access their children's COVID-19 test results online.

### CONFIRMED CASES OF COVID-19

If a child or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, school authorities will work with Alberta Health Service using the following guidance:

- [Resource guide for COVID-19 Cases in School \(K-12\) Settings.](#)
- [Implementing School Re-entry Guidance: Additional Considerations \(Updated October 8, 2020\)](#)

Students or staff that have tested positive for COVID-19 are not permitted on any MHPD property as per AHS guidelines referenced above. A COVID-19 case will not automatically lead to school closure. If this were to occur, the school will support students and staff to learn or work at-home until they are permitted to return to the school. We will support students and staff to learn or work at-home if they are required to self-isolate or quarantine.

If an individual who has tested positive intentionally comes to school (or was sent to school) MHPD is obligated to notify Alberta Health Services and they may pursue consequences as supported by regulation.

### STUDENTS WITH PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS

Schools collect records of children's known pre-existing conditions at the time of registration. Parents are asked to contact the school's admin assistant and ensure that this information is current.

If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the child should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms and to establish a baseline for staff. Parents can review their child's information held at school by contacting the school's admin assistant. If the nature of the pre-existing condition changes (e.g., a cough worsens) a repeat test is encouraged.

### TESTING AND DEMONSTRATING CLEARANCE TO RETURN

For a successful school re-entry, all students, families and staff must work together to minimize the risks. One of the critical strategies is testing in order to determine if self-isolation needs to occur. If you have any COVID-19 symptoms on the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) you are legally required to isolate for 10 days from the start of your symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer. Use the [assessment tool](#) to determine if a COVID-19 test is necessary. If you tested negative and have no known exposure to the virus, you are not legally required to isolate, however AHS and MHPD ask that you stay home until your symptoms resolve so that you do not infect others. If you tested negative and have a known exposure (close contact) to COVID-19, you are legally required to quarantine, as directed by AHS. If you exhibit any other symptoms please see the [MHPD Stay at Home Guide](#) for specific guidance on student and staff illness.

- [Government of Alberta – Student Illness](#)
- [How long to stay home from school – AHS](#)
- [Guidance for Parents of Children Attending School and/or Childcare](#)

## SCHOOL OPERATIONS

---

### PHYSICAL DISTANCING

While Scenario 1 does not allow for strict adherence to 2 meters distancing, every effort will be made to attempt to prevent direct physical contact and reduce the length of time that students and staff spend near one another.

- Where 2 metres is not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended.
- In situations where physical distancing is not possible (and/or prolonged close contact greater than 15 minutes):
  - extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, not attending when sick and cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis before and after activities is strongly recommended.
  - teachers, staff and students are required to wear a non-medical face mask.
- It is still recommended to maintain physical distancing within a cohort whenever possible
- Schools will institute controls to promote physical distancing between all attendees in areas in and outside of the classroom.
- Capacity will be reduced in common spaces (cafeterias, bathrooms, etc.)
- Consider removing additional items or pieces of equipment from classrooms that are not in use to allow more floor space to spread out.

### STUDENT FLOW INSIDE THE BUILDING

To reduce the opportunity for contact outside one's cohort, plans will be made to time and direct traffic.

- Schools will establish movement patterns, such as directional arrows and distancing markers will be posted in common spaces (hallways, cafeterias and so on).
- Routines for movement will be taught and enforced by school staff.
- Breaks like lunch and recess will be staggered to limit the number of students accessing common spaces.

### MASKS

The Government of Alberta has mandated mask use in schools according to the following direction. The Government of Alberta has provided two, reusable masks to each student and staff member. School staff will receive one reusable face shield for their use in the schools. Shield use is at the discretion of the individual staff member. If someone forgets their mask, schools will ensure there are supplies available for students and staff.

To be acceptable, a mask should fit securely over the nose and mouth and not have large gaps between the mask and your chin, cheeks or nose where droplets can escape\*. Transparent masks should have these same features. While masks are important, there are only one of the many public health measures in place to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health of students, staff and families. Alberta's government will continue to adjust the school re-entry guidelines based on current medical advice. Individuals who are physically, psychologically or developmentally unable to wear a mask, or any protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act, may be excused from this health protocol. Families will work with the school principal to discuss this relative to their child. **Note: All students and staff will be required to wear a mask if they become symptomatic at school.**

#### Mask Storage

- Educate students on how to properly put on and remove a reusable mask, emphasizing:
  - Washing hands or applying hand sanitizer before handling

- Handling masks by the ties/ear loops/elastics
- Avoid touching the mask once it is on
- Changing masks when they become wet or soiled
- Reusable masks that are not damp or dirty that will be re-worn prior to washing should be stored in a clean, breathable bag or container.
- See [mask guidance](#) for more information.

### **Mask Use for teachers when at the front of the room**

If students are all seated, and the teacher is in a designated area at the front of the class with at least two metres of physical distance from the closest student, they may remove their mask to teach. The teacher should be open with students about why they are able to remove the mask to reinforce/model behaviors.

### **Exceptions from Mask Wearing**

A very small number of individuals may be exempted from wearing masks in MHPSD schools and while riding on school buses due to a medical condition.

In such cases, alternative measures such as face shields, greater physical distancing, barriers, strict cohorting, frequent hand hygiene, and other infection prevention and control measures will need to be considered.

We expect all staff and students to be respectful of those who wear masks and those who cannot wear a mask.

When assessing accommodations for a mask exception, principals/managers will consider the needs of the person that requires a mask exception, as well as the medical/health and safety needs of students, families and staff who are at high risk for COVID-19. It is expected that all reasonable steps and considerations will be taken before a student is not permitted to attend school in person, or an employee is not permitted to attend work in person.

### **Exception Process**

Anyone unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition must inform the school principal/manager as soon as possible so that feasible alternative accommodations or arrangements can be considered. All exceptions require a medical exception letter from an authorized health professional (Appendix A). The medical exception letter will only be recognized if provided by a nurse practitioner, physician, or psychologist. The letter must confirm that the individual has been assessed and is confirmed to have one of the Qualifying Health Conditions for Exceptions to Masking as detailed below.

- [Medical Mask Exception Letter Template](#)

Student mask exception requests can be managed at the school level. Mask exception requests for staff must be addressed in consultation with HR. All mask exceptions and accommodation measures must be documented.

### **Principals/managers should follow these guidelines when considering accommodating a mask exception:**

- The request for exception may be granted where a medical exception letter has been provided by an authorized health professional.
- Principals/managers should make reasonable inquiries. Could a different type of mask be suitable (disposable vs. non disposable, cloth masks or homemade masks)?
- Consider the configuration of the room. Can a student/staff member physically distance and participate fully in learning and classroom activities?

- Assess the risks of a person without a mask attending at the school or building. Identify any actual or potential health and safety risks to be considered in making reasonable accommodation measures such as students or staff who are medically vulnerable.
- Consider the needs, limitations, and restrictions (what the person can and cannot do) in relation to wearing various types of masks, and alternatives to a mask including a physical barrier, single-layer mask, or other alternatives. Although not a substitute for a mask, a face shield may be an option. Face shields provide limited protection but may be better than no mask at all.
- Students who are deaf, hard of hearing, communicating with a person who is hearing impaired, or whose ability to see the mouth is essential for communication, should use masks designed for these circumstances.
- Individuals who are unable to put on or remove a mask without assistance may be able to do so with guidance or assistance.
- The accommodation process should be carried out in a transparent, communicative, flexible, respectful, and cooperative manner.

As singing is a high-risk activity, children who have an exception to masking can be provided with another musical part (e.g., percussion) or if the child will be singing, they should be alone in a dedicated space or room (e.g., a constructed acrylic plastic room). See the [guidance for singing & vocal performance](#) for additional information.

### **Qualifying Health Conditions for Exceptions to Masking**

- Sensory processing disorders
- Developmental delay.
- Cognitive impairment.
- Mental illnesses including:
  - anxiety disorders.
  - psychotic disorders.
  - dissociative identity disorder.
  - depressive disorders.
- Facial trauma or recent oral maxillofacial surgery.
- Contact dermatitis or allergic reactions to mask components.
- Clinically significant acute respiratory distress.

### **\*Non-medical face coverings**

Alternatives to non-medical face masks (e.g., neck gaiters, buffs or bandanas) offer lesser protection than other non-medical face masks, and as such are not recommended in these settings. Although some alternatives may provide similar levels of protection, it will be difficult to assess on a case-by-case basis and therefore are not recommended. Neck gaiters may pose the risk of improper storage and contamination by pulling on and off over the head.

### **Plastic Face shield use**

A plastic face shield can help reduce exposure but it is not a substitute for a face mask from a safety perspective. A mask must still be worn while wearing a face shield.

- School administrators should develop a plan to ensure that students who are hearing impaired or may rely on facial cues are able to communicate with others in areas where non-medical face masks are being worn, or have their educational needs met when teachers are wearing non-medical face masks in the classroom. This may include the use of transparent masks. As with other non-medical face

masks, it is important that transparent masks cover the nose and mouth, as well as fit securely against the face.

- Face shields may be worn in addition to a mask, at the discretion of the individual.

### Early Learning Program to Grade 3

- Mask use for ELP to Grade 3 students will continue to be optional. Mask use for younger children is a challenge due to difficulties with proper fit and compliance.
- Mask use will be mandatory for staff and teachers, regardless of the grade being taught, in all settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- As singing is a high-risk activity, any student, regardless of age will be required to wear a mask while singing. Children who have an exception to masking can be provided with another musical part (e.g., percussion) or if the child will be singing, they should be alone in a dedicated space or room (e.g., a constructed acrylic plastic room).

### Grades 4 to 12

- **Mask use for Grade 4 to 12 students will be mandatory in most circumstances for the 2020-2021 school year.** (Exceptions will be made for students and staff who are unable to wear a mask due to documented medical or other needs.)
- Grade 4 to 12 students will be required to wear masks in all shared and common areas such as hallways and on school buses. Students will be required to wear masks in classrooms if they are standing and moving about and when engaged in activities that require close interactions.
- When seated and distanced from their teacher and other students, a student is not required to wear a mask.
- The guidance that may be found at by following the link below will form the basis of classroom protocols regarding mask use.
  - [Alberta Health Services guidance for the use of non-medical masks](#)

### STUDENTS ENTERING/EXITING THE SCHOOL

- There will be designated entrances and exits for students

**Parent Pickup/Drop Off:** Schools have developed procedures for drop-off/pick-up that support physical distancing where possible between all persons (except for members of the same household).

- Families are encouraged to transport their children to and from school whenever possible (as opposed to relying on school bus transportation).
  - Parents are permitted to walk their children to the entry/exit door if they can safely maintain a physical distance. Parents should not enter the school during drop off and pick up times unless they are attending an appointment or are participating as an adult volunteer as approved by the principal.
- Where appropriate, students are encouraged to ride their bikes or walk to school to avoid bus transport and alleviate vehicle congestion at schools.

**End of day procedure:** Teachers will ensure all students use hand sanitizer prior to leaving their last class. Schools have communicated plans to address students exiting the school in an orderly manner with appropriate supervision, maximizing the number of exit doors, while adhering to physical distancing guidelines. Some classes/learning spaces require staggered dismissal times while ensuring school bus schedules are maintained. Students waiting for pick up are to wait outside in a supervised designated area

while following physical distancing guidelines. During inclement weather, the principal will make alternate arrangements for the waiting area.

### CLASSROOM SETUP

Classrooms at all levels will be set up to limit physical interaction and to place as much space between students. Of course, in “near normal” circumstances 2 meter spacing is not possible. Our ability to maintain spacing as close as possible to 2 meters may be enhanced by the number of families who choose to access at-home learning.

### STUDENT GROUPINGS/COHORTS

For the purposes of contact tracing, in Scenario 1, elementary and middle schools will develop plans to keep the same groups of students together as often as possible. Within these groups ([cohorts](#)), they will try to maintain as much physical distancing as possible.

- In any scenario, students may be required to change cohorts depending on public health orders and attendance rates.
- While schools cannot control what happens outside school hours, cohorting or other control measures within a school will still help lessen the risk of spread of COVID-19.
- Schools should consider limiting the total potential number of cohort groups that a student may be permitted to be part of in the school setting (e.g., limit school-based extracurricular activities and clubs). Cohorts only need to be formed if 2 metres of distancing cannot be maintained. For example, a cross country running group that could always keep 2 metres apart while training would not be considered a cohort.
- Whenever possible teachers and support staff will move between classrooms as opposed to moving groups of students.
- If teachers cannot physically distance from students, they would be considered part of the class cohort.
- If teachers interact with more than one group of students without distancing, they would be part of multiple cohorts.
- Teachers who regularly interact within 2 metres with the students in their class would be considered as part of the cohort. If there was a case of COVID-19 in the classroom cohort, the teacher would be considered a close contact and required to quarantine as they are part of the classroom cohort.
- Staff are not cohorted. Staff are only in a cohort with each other when it is required for operational purposes (i.e., a teacher and a teacher’s assistant who work with exclusively with the same classroom cohort). If one teacher/staff tests positive for COVID-19 and is in a cohort with other teachers/staff, every teacher/staff in that cohort will be required to quarantine, which may have a significant negative impact on the ability for the school to remain operational for in-person learning. Masks should be worn in all indoor settings except for personal spaces (such as private offices), where a physical barrier is in place, or where staff can maintain distance between other staff and students.

**Note:** Our plan for [Scenario 2](#) includes students from Kindergarten to Grade 2 attending daily.

Cohorts in high school students are far too complex due to the level of choice and specialization that students have at that level. In order to limit the number of transitions and opportunities for interaction during the school day, we have shifted to a quartered system at MHHS and CHHS. This change reduces the number of students that an individual will spend time with during the school day by half from the normal semester system, limiting the number of contacts per day and making contact tracing faster and simpler.

Where cohorting is not achievable, there is an increased focus on other measures, such as physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and the use of non-medical masks.

## QUARTERED SYSTEM

A full-time student will attend two classes for roughly ten weeks. These classes will be very long, so scheduled breaks will be provided within these classes to avoid crowding hallways. Students in 30 level courses will be able to write diploma exams in November, January, April and June. For the November sitting, diploma exams will be optional, and students can choose an exemption up to the day of the test. Students and families are encouraged to review the [Alberta Education question and answer](#) document before making decisions about diploma exams. Quarter start dates: August 31, November 12, February 1 and April 21.

The added benefit of the “quartered” system is that both teachers and students will have fewer classes to track and attend to if transitioned to either scenario 1 or 3.

## PROHIBITED EVENTS

To reduce interactions between cohorts, multi-classroom/cohort gatherings such as assemblies, whole grade, or whole school groupings are prohibited.

## WATER FOUNTAINS, WATER BOTTLES

Water fountains remain open. Knobs and push buttons are considered high-touch surfaces and will be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles.

## SHARED SCHOOL SPACES

Learning commons, gymnasiums, and foyers remain available for instructional use while maximizing physical distancing. Fitness centres and gymnasiums are only to be used for educational purposes, with an emphasis on maintaining 3 metres physical distancing for inside spaces (2m physical distancing for outside).

Playgrounds remain open for student use. Protocols about visiting the school office for parents, students or staff have been established and shared. Schools with common lunchroom areas have ensured physical distancing guidelines are followed and that they are cleaned and disinfected after each use.

## ISOLATION SPACE

All schools have created an isolation space dedicated to students that develop, or arrive with, symptoms of COVID-19. The isolation space is stocked with appropriate supplies and PPE. Any items that cannot be cleaned, disinfected or disposed of need to be removed from the space.

## VISITORS/PARENT/VOLUNTEERS/SERVICE PROVIDERS

**Authorized visitors include** delivery personnel, MHPSD itinerant staff and contractors, substitute staff, service providers, adult volunteers, Medicine Hat Police Service, educational guest presenters, emergency response personnel and Alberta Health Services. Adult volunteers are permitted during school hours, to support instruction at the discretion of the school principal. In addition, educational guest presenters may also be considered at the discretion of the principal.

Parents/guardians are not permitted in schools to pick up and drop off students until further notice. We understand that this will be a challenge for parents and children in younger grades. However, our commitment to limiting the number of people that enter our buildings is critical to our efforts to limit the spread of the virus and to our role in supporting contact tracing and secure our environments so in class learning can continue.

If attending an appointment at the school, parents are asked to call the school on arrival, wait in their vehicle and they will be admitted by a member of the staff. All authorized visitors will be required to complete a COVID-19 [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#), applicable for their age group, immediately upon arrival. If a visitor answers yes to any of the questions on the self assessment, they will not be admitted into the building. All visitors that will be inside the building for more than five minutes are required to sign in on the visitor

logbook. Parents have been informed by the school of the process to book a meeting time with school staff or teachers. While parent meetings may be held in person, keeping physically distant, preference should be given to virtual meetings wherever possible.

It is required all MHPSD facilities keep a visitor log for contact tracing purposes.

- The school is required to screen volunteers using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) before they enter the school.
- If a volunteer answers YES to any of the questions, the individual must not be admitted into the school.
- All visitor movement in the school will be limited to only necessary areas.
- Any visitor that enters an MHPSD building will be required to wear a mask.

### EATING LUNCH

Staff and students will, to the best of their ability, practice physical distancing guidelines while eating lunch. Common lunchroom areas may be utilized but must be cleaned and disinfected after each use. No food sharing or self-serve/family style meals are permitted for staff or students. Students must not share utensils, dishes, and water bottles or drink containers. Students will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating.

Students in grades k-9 should eat in their classrooms to mitigate cleaning requirements and to avoid breaking cohorts. If a school uses a common lunchroom with staggered lunch times, they will ensure that all surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Lunch breaks for high school students will be staggered. Access to common spaces such as cafeterias will be permitted. Physical distancing is expected, and seating is limited to encourage as much separation as possible. High school students will be permitted to leave campus at lunch. However, breaks have been shortened in order to limit opportunities for students to congregate, therefore limiting the opportunity to get lunch elsewhere.

### RECESS

Schools will develop a coordinated exit/entry schedule utilizing as many exit/entry doors as possible for grades/cohorts to leave their class/learning space to go outside for recess and to return to class/learning space. Students and staff will be expected to sanitize before exiting and prior to re-entering the building. Recess breaks may be staggered by the schools to reduce the number of students exiting/playing/entering the school. Low contact games and activities that support reasonable distancing will be encouraged. Schools will ensure each cohort has an area outside that supports physical distancing and promotes play and physical activity so that masks will not be required.

- Playgrounds will remain open as long as the [Alberta Guidance Playgrounds](#) is followed.

### CLASS TRANSITIONS/BREAKS

Middle and high schools have class transition breaks in their daily schedule. This is challenging due to the volume of students moving throughout the building at the same time. In most cases middle school teachers will move to students rather than students moving classrooms. In high school this is not possible and so students will need to adhere to the directional guidance on hallway floors and will not be permitted to congregate. These breaks are for moving to the student's next class, using the washroom or refilling water bottles. Schools may consider staggering the end of various classes to reduce the volume of students moving around the school at once. Students will be encouraged to practice physical distancing and to follow posted traffic flow protocols during class changes.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

**Sports:** Athletic practices will be permitted with the following considerations:

- [Guidance for Sports, Physical Activities and Recreation](#) is followed.

Currently, both indoor and outdoor group physical activity is subject to newer, stronger restrictions set out in CMOH Order 02-2021. Key restrictions set out for Step 1 of the Path Forward include, but are not limited to:

Children and youth will be allowed to participate in limited group activities. Lessons, practices and physical conditioning activities are allowed for indoor and outdoor minor sports/activities and school athletics (for example, school sport activities that are outside of a physical education class or related part of the school curriculum). Games are not allowed.

- participants must be masked at all times, except during the training activity. Coaches and trainers must remain masked at all times
- a playing surface (for example, arena, field, court or swimming pool) may be occupied by more than one youth group, as long as 3-metres of physical distancing can be maintained between groups of 10 and the groups do not intermingle
- access to change rooms must be limited, including accelerated arrival and departure, emergencies (for example, first aid) and washroom use

### **Indoor group physical activity is currently available:**

- to people 18 years of age or younger with a coach, trainer or instructor in groups of 10 or less while maintaining physical distancing
- maximum of 10 individuals includes all coaches trainers, instructors and participants.
- as part of school or post-secondary educational program
- for people older than 18 engaging in one-on-one instruction with a coach, trainer or instructor

### **Outdoor group physical activity is currently available for:**

- people 18 years of age or younger with a coach, trainer or instructor in groups of 10 or less with physical distancing
- as part of school or post-secondary educational programs

### **Physical distancing must be maintained between participants at all times**

- 3-metres physical distance for indoor activities
- 2-metres physical distance for outdoor activities
- coaches or trainers may enter physical distancing space for brief interactions with participants (for example, to correct form or technique)

### **Offsite activities**

K-12 schools are allowed to use off-site facilities to support curriculum related educational activities.

- General safety protocols being employed in schools should always be observed, such as hand sanitizer, masks, physical distancing, etc.
- Stricter cleaning guidelines
- Spectators are not currently permitted.
  - If parents/chaperones/volunteers are required to be in a facility for the purposes of assuring that clients/minors are safe, this number must be kept to the lowest amount

possible. Spectators should be kept out of participant spaces (e.g., fields of play, courts, ice surfaces).

- Provincial championships are postponed until AB Gov announces stage 3 re-entry
- [ASAA February 19, 2021: Updated SPAR Guidance](#)

**Clubs:** School clubs are permitted if they follow the guidelines as identified within this scenario 1 document. Schools should consider limiting the total potential number of cohort groups that a student may be permitted to be part of in the school setting (e.g., limit school-based extracurricular activities and clubs). Cohorts only need to be formed if 2 metres of distancing cannot be maintained. For example, a cross country running group that could always keep 2 metres apart while training would not be considered a cohort.

**Performance Activities:** Rehearsals and practices are permitted outdoors up to a maximum of ten participants, following physical distancing and other safety protocols.

## PERFORMANCE ARTS

Singing & vocal performance, dance and live instrumental music is permitted if related to school activities such as music class and when the measures/limitations mentioned in the following documents are adhered to:

- [Guidance for Singing and Vocal Performance](#)
  - In addition, all singers including students in ELP through grade 3 are required to wear masks when singing indoors and outdoors. Although certain children may have a mask exception during regular school activities, as singing is a high-risk activity, everyone participating in singing is required to wear a mask. Children who have an exception to masking can be provided with another musical part (e.g., percussion) or if the child will be singing, they should be alone in a dedicated space or room (e.g., a constructed acrylic plastic room).
- [Guidance for Dance](#)
- [Guidance for Live Instrumental Music:](#) In a space where band students could be physically distanced on all sides (e.g., gymnasium, outside), band classes may be considered at the discretion of the principal. Chairs and music stands should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.

## EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS (OFF SITE ACTIVITIES)

Educational off-site activities will be permitted based on the following criteria. Off-site activities must follow the school guidance, as well as any sector-specific guidance relevant to the location of the field trip, including physical distancing, use of non-medical face masks, cohorting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and enhanced cleaning and disinfection. All off-site activities will be for educational purposes and at the discretion of the school principal.

- Individual classroom cohorts must be maintained during transportation to and from any external field trip site, as well as at the location of the field trip site.
- MHPSD expects that the organizations providing the off-site activity will comply with the general relaunch guidance and sector-specific guidance and will implement the same measures in the school guidance.
- An organization or facility should only host one classroom cohort at a time or should take clear steps to separate multiple groups to ensure they do not use shared areas (e.g., washrooms, lunchrooms, etc.).
- Staff at the off-site activity must maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres from the students and staff in the classroom cohort.

- Limited facility access: The facility where the off-site activity occurs must ensure that only one class cohort uses that space at a time.
- Hold activities outdoors as much as possible.
- Organizations providing off-site activities must develop procedures to address staff that become symptomatic during the field trip.
- Schools must develop procedures to address students or staff developing symptoms during the field trip; plans should include a designated area to isolate the ill individual, what extra supplies may be needed (e.g., mask for the child, mask/face shield for the individual attending to the child, etc.), how to notify a parent/guardian and how the ill child will be transported home from the off-site activity.

## SCHOOL COUNCILS

School council members and the principal may choose to meet virtually or in person. If meetings occur in person, they must be outside of regular school hours and follow school and AHS guidelines and protocols, such as hand sanitizer use, meeting size, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting surfaces, etc. The space used for the meeting is to be sanitized before and after.

## BREAKFAST/LUNCH/SNACK PROGRAMS

Only programs that are serving pre-packaged food in individual bags are permitted to operate. Schools will need to ensure all food handling protocols from AHS are followed by anyone who is packaging, delivering or serving pre-packaged foods. Food handling protocols include:

- Wear gloves and masks
- Proper hand and respiratory hygiene

Hot lunch programs are permitted if they are commercially prepared and delivered to cohort classrooms.

## FOOD IN SCHOOLS

The following direction applies to all food services in schools, inclusive of curricular programs, hot lunches and nutrition programs:

### *Limitations and procedures:*

- No activities that involve food sharing between students and staff
- Providing shared treats for the classroom will be allowed if there is a designated server serving the food, appropriate hand hygiene, and physical distancing. Please follow school policy for parent provided food.
- Classes that teach food preparation may occur. Sharing food between students would be allowed if there was a designated server serving the food, appropriate hand hygiene, and physical distancing.
- Not permitted:
  - Buffet style (self-serve) or family-style meal service
  - Common food items
- Close food preparation areas that could be accessed by students/children, non-designated staff, visitors
- Ensure that food-handling staff practice proper hand hygiene
- Utensils should be used to serve food items
- If a school is using a common lunchroom and staggering lunch times, schools will ensure that all surfaces are cleaned and disinfected after each use
- Hot lunch programs are permitted if they are commercially prepared and delivered to cohort classrooms.

### ***School cafeteria curricular programs:***

Schools with full cafeteria, concessions, cafes, stores, and/or programs that handle and prepare foods, must follow the [Guidance For Restaurants, Cafes, Pubs, and Bars](#). There is no restriction on students working in food establishments within schools; workplace control measures must be in place. School **culinary arts programs are permitted**.

Meal service times will be staggered to reduce the number of people eating together at one time. Common lunchroom areas may be utilized but must be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Tables will be removed or rearranged to maintain physical distancing. Other areas of the school can be adapted to serve as additional eating space. Staff and students will practice physical distancing guidelines while eating lunch to the best of their ability. All the limitations above apply to cafeteria services. Students will be asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after eating.

### **LOCKERS**

Lockers will remain available for student use. Schools will establish protocols to avoid congregating and congestion in hallways.

### **WASHROOMS**

Students and staff will have regular access to washrooms; however, schools will put measures in place to attempt to reduce the number of students using the washroom at one time. Washroom capacity signs will be posted, and students will be expected to wait, while practicing physical distancing from each other, if the washroom capacity is exceeded. Washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected regularly. Students and staff are expected to practice proper hand hygiene after using the washroom. Signage will be posted about good hand washing practices and physical distancing.

### **SOFT/POROUS SURFACES AND ITEMS NOT EASILY CLEANED**

Soft furnishings and carpets are required to be removed from classrooms and learning spaces.

### **SHARED SCHOOL RESOURCES**

In order to limit multiple students accessing the same device in a day, our plan will require all students in grades 3-12 to have their own device that they can bring back and forth to school with them. To this end, MHPSD ordered several thousand Chromebooks in early July that families will be able to purchase at a significantly reduced price. Barring significant supply chain issues, we expect that we should have a device that each student can access by the end of September. This measure is taken for several reasons:

- a) In order to reduce confusion for our staff, all planning will occur in Google Classroom and that, as much as possible, work will be submitted digitally. This allows teachers to plan once for the students in front of them and those at home.
- b) If any student must self-isolate, quarantine or be absent for any reason, they will need access to the lessons, assignments, supports and avenue for submission at home.
- c) We have been directed to limit the passing of any materials between people (student to student, teacher to student and so on) in order to limit the possibility of transfer of the virus on shared materials. This has a significant impact on our use of paper (see section on paper handling). This includes how we will utilize our school libraries and other paper-based resources. Providing an avenue for all students to complete their work and submit it without the need to pass materials is the safest option available to us.

**Note: Our move toward increased technology use does not mean that students will be expected to work on their device all day. Both at home and in class learners will have opportunities to engage in other ways.**

## SHARED USE CLOTHING ITEMS

Clothing items can only be assigned to one student at a time (safety vest, apron, lab coat, piny, play clothes, costumes, etc.). Clothing will be laundered or stored for 24 hours between users.

## PAPER HANDLING

All paper handling will be addressed in accordance with procedures and guidance from Alberta Health Services. Critical to handling all shared items, including paper, is proper hand hygiene. As always, individuals should avoid touching their face.

Out of an abundance of caution, where COVID-19 is concerned, paper use is to be minimized as much as is reasonable. It is worth noting that, prior to the onset of the pandemic, our system was preparing to dramatically reduce the use of paper and move toward leveraging digital for pedagogical, environmental and financial reasons. The Print Centre, while referenced below, will be closed once our copier fleet has been replaced in all schools and we have more completely embedded the use of cloud computing as a teaching and learning tool.

We are NOT committed to a “paper-free” future. We understand that there is a time and place for the appropriate use of paper resources chosen to meet the needs of an individual learner or class.

**Non-library:** The Print Centre will remain open and available to teachers and all printing and delivery of paper will occur in accordance with the updated procedure from Alberta Health Services. Printing brought into the school from the Print Centre or any other outside source, must be stored for 24 hours prior to use. When distributed to classrooms or copiers, proper hand hygiene should be conducted immediately prior to, and after, handling the paper.

Items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected must be stored separately for 24 hours. Strict adherence to the hand hygiene direction above is to be maintained. For clarity, immediately before and after handling paper proper hand hygiene practices should be followed. All individuals should be very careful not to touch their faces while handling paper.

**Learning Commons/Libraries:** Access to learning commons and libraries and the use of Learning Commons/Libraries is to follow the stricter of the direction provided by government; all returned or handled books (regardless of hand hygiene) are to be isolated for 24 hours prior to being re-shelved. Staff must follow proper hand hygiene when re-shelving books. Refer to [Guidance for Libraries](#).

- Items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected can be stored in a sealed container for 24 hours.
- If handling paper tests and assignments, ensure good hand hygiene before and after touching the paper and avoid touching the face prior to performing hand hygiene. Out of an abundance of caution, paper tests and assignments can be stored for 24 hours prior to handling.
- Hard covers of books can be cleaned and disinfected between uses if it does not ruin the books

## STUDENT OWNED DEVICES – CHROMEBOOKS, LAPTOPS, TABLETS, ETC.

- Families are welcome to send any device to school with their child as long as it will allow them to access Google Classroom (this means having Google Chrome installed on the device) and complete their work. Students do not require expensive laptops or tablets to access online learning tools.
- Our intent is to shift to as much digital access as possible and will require students to have access to devices. And student that does not have access to a device will be provided with a loaner Chromebook

## BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL CARE

The YMCA and Crayon Academy is operating Before and After School Care in our schools.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

We will work with the City of Medicine Hat Fire and Rescue and Medicine Hat Police Service to ensure that emergency drills (such as fire and hour zero drills) reflect COVID-19 safe protocols.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students must be quarantined for 14 days in a host home, a hotel or in a dormitory. Cohorts of students may be able to quarantine together when arrive at the same time, although this increases the risk of spread within this groups and it not a preferred option. The host family does not have to isolate unless the student exhibits COVID-like symptoms during this 14-day period and test positive for COVID-19.

## LEARNING

---

### COURSES/SUBJECTS

In this scenario, students are expected to cover all of the curricular areas with no significant change to hours of instruction. Optional courses will proceed but may require some adjustments to support physical distancing and other measures to reduce risks.

- a) Music/band will be altered to comply with GOA guidance. Music/Band programs will need to consider how to achieve the learning outcomes while reducing risks.
- b) When possible, physical education should be done outside instead of inside and with activities that support physical distancing. Where there is shared equipment, those pieces of equipment need to be disinfected after the cohort is finished using them.
  - o For additional ideas for physical education, please see [Physical Activity at School during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
- c) Career and Technology Studies/Career and Technology Foundations courses will follow industry guidance provided by Alberta Health Services (cosmetology, foods, shops, etc.). Student prepared food should not be shared outside of the group that prepared it.
- d) Work experience learning opportunities for students may proceed but minimize close contact and students may want to wear a mask where physical distancing is not possible.
- e) Where a learning activity requires the use of shared items like learning stations, manipulatives and science equipment, teachers will work with students to wipe down devices after each individual's use.

### OPTIONS CLASSES

MHPSD's Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator will work with teachers of classes such as, but not limited to, foods, fashion, physical education and music, in order to safely continue these programs for students. Most programs will be able to fully function with limited modifications. Following provincial direction, Physical Education and Music are classes that require attention. Teachers are aware of measures that will need to be taken to mitigate potential spread of the virus and activities will be modified to meet the direction/guidance of the chief medical officer of health.

- a) **LIVE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC:** Playing musical instruments may proceed where students are facing the same direction and 2 metre physical distancing is possible on all sides. The length of the instrument should be considered as an extension of the individual and included when determining spacing. Sharing of mouthed instruments is not allowed. Sharing of instruments, equipment, and other items should be avoided. Items that must be shared, must be cleaned and disinfected between users.
  - o All safety measures/limitations in the [Guidance for Live Instrumental Music](#) must be followed.

- b) **SINGING & VOCAL PERFORMANCE:** Singing will be permitted at all ages; teachers and all singers must wear masks (indoors and outdoors) and maintain 2 metre physical distancing both when singing and when not singing. Singers should be staggered so they are not directly behind one another and should not directly face other performers while singing. Wherever possible, instruction and practice sessions should be conducted remotely.
  - All safety measures/limitations in [Guidance for Singing and Vocal Performance](#) must be followed.
- c) **DANCE:** Choreography should limit face to face situations and touching between dancers using formations where dancers are not facing each other and can stay 2 metres apart. If not high intensity, consider having the dancers wear masks. Ensure instructors can be heard without yelling and students have hair tied back/off the face to reduce hands touching the face.
  - All safety measures/limitations in the [Guidance for Dance](#) must be followed.
- d) **PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** Preference for participation in physical education will be for those activities that allow students to use their own equipment and those that do not encourage physical contact (yoga, running, individual skills). Alberta Education is working with Alberta Health Services and education partners, including the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association, to explore future possibilities for athletic activities and events within the context of health measures being in place.
  - Teachers are to wear non-medical face masks during the class if unable to maintain 2 metres if physical distance from any students or other staff.
- e) **ACADEMY SPORT PROGRAMS** will be permitted to function if all [Guidance for Sports, Physical Activities and Recreation](#) is followed.

## IN-CLASS LEARNING

When it is safe to do so, in person learning is almost always better for students. To maintain a safe learning environment, we are engaged in the following measures:

- a) Schools will address traffic flow throughout the building and in the classroom.
- b) Activity/Lesson planning - staff should ask themselves the following questions to determine the risk of the activities and whether they can proceed:
  - Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands?
  - Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing?
  - What is the frequency/possibility to clean high touch surfaces?
- c) Stagger breaks to maintain physical distancing.
- d) Learning experiences involving cheering or shouting will not be permitted at this time.
- e) Use of shared items or equipment is to be avoided where possible.
- f) Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
  - Assign outfits to a single student at a time. (safety vest, apron, lab coat, pinny, play clothes, costumes, etc.) Clothing will be laundered or stored for 24 hours between users.
- g) Gymnasiums can be used to deliver physical education programming:
  - Consider using auxiliary space such as gyms and libraries to deliver education program to aid in physical distancing.
  - Use of shared items or sports equipment will be discouraged.
- h) School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) will not be permitted at this time.
- i) Provincial Achievement Tests (Math, ELA & FLA only) will occur (if majority of year in Scenario 1 or 2).

- j) Diploma Exams are optional for the 2020-2021 school year and students can choose an exemption up to the day of the test. Students and families are encouraged to review the [Alberta Education question and answer](#) document before making decisions about diploma exams.
- k) Work experience may resume if the risk of infection is mitigated for all participants:
  - If the work experience placement is in a workplace, the student is expected to follow health rules and comply with the [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#)
- l) International students that have stayed in Canada may re-enroll/remain.

There may be a need to shift students from one teacher's class to another. For example, if enough students in a grade stay home it may be reasonable to shift them to a teacher whose sole focus is supporting at-home learning. In fact, this is likely, if a considerable number of students remain at-home for school. Teachers will work to align their planning so that outcomes are covered in the same order (if in different ways) so that students can transition back and forth when needed without falling behind.

### SUPPORTING LEARNING

Teachers have considered the disruption to learning that occurred in the prior school year and have developed their plans accordingly. Teachers have been provided with the essential outcomes and it is our expectation that planning, and programming will ensure that students achieve the essential outcomes for this year and will be supported in addressing outcomes missed in the prior year.

### AT-HOME LEARNING

At-home learning will be supported by The Hub; a school created to respond to the needs of the community. The primary purpose of **The Hub** is to provide high quality programming to at-home learners from ELP through Grade 9 for the remainder of the COVID-19 pandemic. This programming will support the fullness of the programs of study and will function as a school, complete with schedules, grade level teachers, a classroom support teacher, support staff and an administrative team. Families with children between ELP and Grade 9 may choose to have their children educated through at-home learning while remaining registered at their home school. Through **The Hub** they will be assured that there is a dedicated teacher who is committed to building community, fostering learning and supporting the wellness of at-home students.

**Programming:** What will your child and your family receive from **The Hub**?

- A dedicated “homeroom teacher” whose only work is to support the at-home learning class
- Scheduled classes throughout a “normal” school day (9-3)
- Recorded lessons for when you can’t be “present” for class
- A full range of courses at every grade level
- Subject specialists at the middle school level
- The support of educational assistants when needed
- Frequent communication opportunities with your child’s teacher(s)
- Social/Emotional supports accessed at your designated school will remain available while at The Hub
- Regular reporting and progress monitoring
- An administrative team that is there to help you and your child find success in school
- Support and advice regarding how to help your child be successful in an online environment

Due to health concerns and parental choice related to the pandemic, families may choose to access The Hub. In this case, parents must inform their designated school that they wish to participate in at-home learning. While students may register at The Hub at any time. Students who wish to return to their designated school will require 2 weeks notice prior to the beginning of the next quarter. Families in the Hub will be sent a link to a return to designated school form prior to the end of each quarter. Notice is required, and transitions must

happen according to the school calendar, so that we are able to move staff from The Hub back out to schools if student enrolment shifts that way.

**Administration:** The administrative team of The Hub is made up of **Mrs. Tricia Unreiner and Mr. Warren Buckler**. They will serve as the principals of the school and will share in the duties of supporting student learning and managing all operations of the school. If you have any questions about registering your ELP to Grade 9 child at The Hub, feel free to email [tricia.unreiner@sd76.ab.ca](mailto:tricia.unreiner@sd76.ab.ca) or [warren.buckler@sd76.ab.ca](mailto:warren.buckler@sd76.ab.ca). or call 403.526.3793

**Blended at-home/in-class learning:** Many students require a blend between at-home and in-class learning to accommodate sickness and self-isolation and teachers are accommodating this.

**Students transitioning between at-home and in-class learning:** Making the determination to choose at-home learning with your child does not mean that they must remain at home for the duration of the school year. However, in order to assist with planning for the reassignment of staff and other resources, we will need to follow a specific process for moving between at-home and in-class learning. **Elementary and middle school** parents may choose to have their children attend school at-home via The Hub at any time. **High School** students will be supported in at-home learning by their designated home school. If **any family (regardless of grade) wishes to transition back to in-class learning**, they will need to provide notice to the school two weeks in advance of the beginning of the next quarter. Readmittance to in-class education will occur at the beginning of each quarter.

Beginning Dates for Each Quarter:

- High School Students whose families choose the at-home learning option, will be permitted to move to in-class learning at the change in quarter. High school students can choose to engage in at-home learning for one or both courses in a quarter.
  - **Quarter 1:** August 31, 2020
  - **Quarter 2:** November 12, 2020
  - **Quarter 3:** February 1, 2021
  - **Quarter 4:** April 21, 2021
- High School students may elect to move to at-home learning at any time during a quarter.
- Elementary and middle school families who elect to engage in at-home learning will be permitted to move to in-class learning at the beginning of the next quarter.
- Elementary and middle school students may elect to move from in-class learning to at-home learning at any time during the school year.

We encourage families to keep open communication with teachers throughout the year, so the transition between at-home and in-class learning occurs in a planned and thoughtful manner. Note: Students who stay home due to sickness or while awaiting the result of a COVID-19 test are simply home sick and are not considered to have elected for at-home learning. They may return immediately upon feeling better or receiving a negative test. They have access to class work via Google Classroom.

- [Alternative education options to at-home and in-class learning with MHPSD](#)

**Students that do not complete the at-home work:** Unlike when COVID-19 first emerged, we are not approaching at-home learning as an emergency. We are moving into a stage of schooling that is different. It requires creativity, wisdom and care, but it is not an emergency. Students and families will need to commit to engaging with school to achieve success.

- **High School:** High school students who do not engage in a course of study will fail that course. While the principal may assign credits (known as “unassigned credit”) to help a student to get the required number (100) of credits for graduation, they will not permit passing grades in required courses for students who do not do the work. Failure to engage at school, or from home, **will** have an impact on grade progression and graduation.
- **K-9:** Failing (or retention) is more complicated for younger children. Being retained and then attending school with younger students who are, largely, less mature physically and emotionally often has a negative impact on the child who is retained. If students fail to engage in school and fall far behind their peers in literacy and numeracy (Language Arts and Math) retention may be necessary. This is a decision made by the principal of the school with input from teachers and families.

**Devices:** Every student (except in kindergarten, grade one and grade two) will need a device of their own that can come to school and go home with them. Children in k-2 will have access to a Chromebook in the classroom but will not take it home with them at the end of the day. If at any point, we are directed to scenario 2 or 3 all students in K-2 will have access to a loaner device that can go home with them.

### PROVINCIAL ASSESSMENTS

In scenario 1, MHPSD will participate in Provincial Achievement Tests (Math, ELA & FLA only) if scenario 1 & 2 continues for most of the year.

### DIPLOMA EXAMS

Diploma Exams are optional for the 2020-2021 schoolyear and students can choose an exemption up to the day of the test. Students and families are encouraged to review the [Alberta Education question and answer](#) document before making decisions about diploma exams.

### SUPPORTING STUDENTS WHO REQUIRE INDIVIDUAL/SPECIALIZED SUPPORT & MEDICALLY FRAGILE STUDENTS

MHPSD will maintain learning opportunities for students specific to their Individualized Support Plan (ISP) using a variety of approaches. Students with complex or differing learning needs will continue to be intentionally included in the learning of the whole classroom with support from Learning Supports. Divisional supports, such as occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, psychologists, physical therapists, will provide service following their professional association guidelines. Some of these services will be in person but physically distanced where possible. Some of the services will be provided online. It is expected that contracted professionals will wear various personal protective equipment in order to minimize risks.

### COVID-19 SPECIFIC PROTOCOL TEACHING

Staff will utilize many different resources available to teach and support how the school is operating during the pandemic. Various tools from AHS will be introduced to teach students hand washing, proper physical distancing protocols, etc. Ways to support one’s mental health and social-emotional supports also will be explicitly taught by the school.

### MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

**“IT IS POSSIBLE TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT WILL BE. THE PRIMARY WAY TO PREPARE FOR THE UNKNOWN IS TO ATTEND TO THE QUALITY OF OUR RELATIONSHIPS, TO HOW WELL WE KNOW AND TRUST ONE ANOTHER.” Margaret Wheatley – 2004**

Social and emotional learning will be critical to re-engaging students, supporting adults, rebuilding relationships, and creating a foundation for academic learning. This shift to a new type of learning experience may have a lasting and profound impact on young people’s academic, social, emotional, and life outcomes.

School leaders will engage with teachers, school staff, families, youth, and community partners to develop supportive learning environments where students and adults can enhance their social and emotional skills, feel a sense of belonging, heal, and thrive. AB Education has also incorporated wellness outcomes for K- gr 9 curriculum with a focus on physical and mental health. High school students continue to be required to take physical education and CALM (which includes information about mental health) as part of their graduation requirements. We encourage families to visit the [MHPSD Family Resources](#) page.

## TRANSPORTATION SECTION

MHPSD encourages families, where possible, to drive their children to school or have them walk or ride their bike.

### SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION

- Students in Grades 4–12 who are physically, psychologically or developmentally able to wear a mask will be required to do so.
- Parents and children/students should not be in the pick-up area or enter the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Our service provider, Southland Transportation, will provide clear expectations to families around school bus behavior.
- Drivers will be provided with a protective zone.
- Students will be assigned seats and a record of this seating plan will be kept to assist with contact tracing. Students who live in the same household may be seated together. Student rider attendance will be record to assist with contract tracing.
  - A close contact on a school bus includes three rows in front and three rows behind an individual that has tested positive for COVID-19. If there is a positive case of COVID-19 identified on a school bus, AHS will include all students within three rows (2 metres) as close contacts.
- Schools will develop procedures for student loading, unloading and transfers that support physical distancing when possible.
- If en route to school, upon arrival, the student will move directly to the isolation space and arrangements will be made for parents to pick up the child/student. If a driver becomes aware of a child that is symptomatic after school, they will communicate with the school to get the child home as safely and as quickly as possible.
- En route to school, unless the parent is present, no student will be denied access onto the bus if they are symptomatic. However, after school, any child that is symptomatic will not be permitted access on the school bus.
- Buses will be sanitized after every trip to prepare for the next cohort.
- being within two metres distance for the purposes of being classified as a close contact in most school buses includes three rows in front and three rows behind a positive case of COVID-19. In light of this clarification of school bus seat spacing, AHS will begin including all students within three rows of a confirmed case as close contacts,

## BUILDINGS AND CLEANING SECTION

### GENERAL BUILDING SAFETY

- Area rugs and soft furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected will be removed.
- Procedures are in place that outline hand hygiene and cleaning requirements for schools and address placement of hand sanitizer.
- The frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas and equipment (e.g. microwave ovens and vending machines) inside and outside classrooms has been increased.
- Students and staff are required to hand sanitize when entering and exiting the school as well as before entering the classroom. Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will always be promoted.
- Water Fountains will remain open. Knobs and push buttons are considered high-touch surfaces and will be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Students will be encouraged to bring their own water bottles.
- Playgrounds will remain open as long as the [Alberta Guidance Playgrounds](#) is followed.

### CLEANING

Custodial staff are engaged in more frequent cleaning. Daytime custodians regularly clean high touch surfaces (doorknobs and so on) and common spaces (washrooms).

Cohorts are established in elementary and, for the most part, in middle school. This coupled with strictly limiting the sharing of space and materials will reduce the need for frequent cleaning of student workspaces. Students (where age appropriate) and staff will all have to do their part to clean personal workspaces.

The division has provided cleaning kits for each school that include spray bottles with approved and properly mixed disinfectant, paper towels, and safety data sheets. School staff will clean and disinfect shared equipment and surfaces between uses and as needed during the school day. Cleaning by staff, other than custodians and select support staff, will be limited to their own workspace or shared equipment that they have, or are going to, access.

**Hand hygiene and disinfecting in schools:** Teachers will educate students on appropriate hand and respiratory hygiene. In addition to classroom sinks, hand sanitizer will be available at every building and classroom entrance throughout the school and hand hygiene will be performed regularly including when entering and exiting the school and classrooms, and before and after eating. Students will be continually reminded of respiratory etiquette by staff and age appropriate school signage.

### COMMUNITY USE OF MHPSD SPACES

Joint Use Agreements have been cancelled for the 2020-2021 school year. Principals are not authorized to provide community access to these spaces.

## Appendix A – Definitions for commonly used words

**Cohort:** A group of students that are grouped together and have contact with one another.

**Disinfecting:** Chemical disinfectant that has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and a virucidal claim to kill germs on surfaces. It is most effective after surfaces are cleaned; both steps are important to reduce spread of infection.

**At-home learning:** Students are engaged in learning at home through google classroom

**In-class learning:** Students are in the building learning in a classroom.

**Symptoms:** Physical features which indicate possible sickness.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Equipment worn to minimize equipment work to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and sickness.

**Physical distancing:** Proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce the spread of illness during an outbreak. Public health suggests keeping 2m distance between individuals that are not from the same household.