

September 29, 2021

To: Staff and Parents/Guardians at **MEDICINE HAT HIGH SCHOOL, MEDICINE HAT**

Re: Notice of Respiratory Illness Outbreak in School Setting – COVID-19 Identified

The Medical Officer of Health has declared a respiratory illness outbreak at the school named above. Outbreak control measures to limit further spread will be implemented in the school.

COVID-19 is passed from person to person through tiny droplets of liquid, spread by coughing, sneezing, talking, laughing and singing. This means that a person would need to have direct contact with droplets from a sick person or contaminated surfaces to be exposed to the virus.

There is no longer a legal requirement for quarantine of close contacts of cases of COVID-19. As a result, AHS Public Health is no longer identifying or notifying close contacts of cases of COVID-19.

- Household contacts of a case of COVID-19 are strongly recommended to stay home for at least 14 days from the last exposure to the person with COVID-19, if they are not fully immunized.
- All staff and students must use the [COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) daily to determine if they may attend school.
 - If staff or students develop symptoms as listed on the [COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) please isolate at home immediately. Complete the AHS [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) tool or call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible to arrange for COVID-19 testing.
- If staff or students require medical attention, please call ahead to your health care provider or call Health Link at 811 so that safe care can be provided.
- If staff or students need emergency medical care, call 911 and tell them that the ill person may have been in contact with COVID-19 so that they can provide safe care.

To help minimize spread of any respiratory illness including COVID-19, we always recommend the following:

- Get immunized against vaccine-preventable respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 and influenza. Immunization protects the individual and those who are not immunized. The best way to protect children too young for COVID-19 vaccine is to ensure all adults and older children around them are immunized.
 - If eligible for COVID-19 vaccine and not fully immunized with 2 doses, please schedule an appointment at [COVID-19 Immunization Booking | Alberta Health Services](#) or by calling 811.
- Ensure your child's routine immunizations are up to date, including annual influenza vaccine.
- All household members should wash hands often with soap and water thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty.
- Encourage household members to not touch their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Stay home if you are sick. If your kids are sick, keep them home from childcare or school.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often and shared by everyone in your home such as doorknobs, light switches and bathroom taps.
- Wear a mask and keep your distance from others when in public places.

For further information, please call HealthLINK Alberta toll-free (811) if you have any further questions or for further information refer to the Alberta Health Services website: [Home | Alberta Health Services](#)

Sincerely,

Public Health,
Communicable Disease Control