



RED RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DIVISION

DIVISION SCOLAIRE VALLÉE de la RIVIÈRE-ROUGE

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Date: January 14, 2022

To: RRVSD Community
From: Brad Curtis, Superintendent & CEO
Re: COVID-19 UPDATE #28

All resources and further updates for the RRVSD Community will be posted on our website: www.rrvsd.ca

Today, we are providing an update regarding the return to in-class learning, contact tracing and case management in schools, mask enhancement guidance, self-isolation requirements, extra-curricular activities, transportation and community use of schools. Thanks in advance to students, staff and parents for your continued support and understanding, for yet another change.

Return to In-Class Learning

With the return to in-class learning on Monday, Jan.17, all schools will be operating at the Restricted (Orange) level of the MB provincial pandemic response system. All students K to 12 will be attending every day for in class learning. Learn more about the measures for [Kindergarten to Grade 12 schools at the Restricted \(Orange\) level](#).

Schools may need to reorganize classes or cohorts when required due to staff illness, isolation, and absenteeism. All efforts will be made to group students with their existing cohorts (K to 6). If you have specific questions about programming for your child/children, please contact your school directly.

We need to do all we can to maintain a healthy student population and workforce for the foreseeable future. This is critical as we anticipate staffing shortages and student absenteeism due to the highly contagious nature of the virus.

In the unfortunate event that sufficient staff coverage is unavailable, classes may need to be closed or moved to remote temporarily. The length of time will depend on staff illness and the availability of substitute staff. We will do our very best to communicate this to parents/caregivers the day prior, if possible. We will prioritize to have K to 6 programming continue with in class learning.

Parents are also reminded that depending on the extent of staff illness, it is plausible the whole school could be impacted, resulting in a move to remote learning. Public Health or the school division may direct this shift.

Transportation

In terms of COVID protocols, it would be safer for parents to drive their children to school, however we will be continuing to offer regular busing routes and winter town pick-ups. In much the same way staffing shortages could impact our schools, our transportation department may also be affected. If staffing shortages result in the temporary cancellation of bus routes, or changes in pick-up/drop-off times, we will notify parents as soon as possible.

COVID-19 Contact Tracing and Case Management in Schools

As announced yesterday, public health officials are updating guidance for COVID-19 contact tracing and case management in Manitoba schools. [View the provincial news release](#).

Moving forward, schools will no longer provide close contact notification and notification letters on individual cases but will provide reports of absenteeism through their regular notification channels to their school community.

That each of us will be lifelong learners

Schools will monitor staff and student absenteeism rates and self-reported COVID-19 cases. In addition, public health will continue to report confirmed cases through the online dashboard and monitor confirmed cases in schools for evidence of increased transmission above levels expected in the community. When there is increased COVID-19 activity based on absenteeism, case counts or operational concerns, public health will investigate and provide recommendations to school officials.

In situations where public health determines increased transmission may be occurring in a school, they may recommend the implementation of a period of rapid antigen testing or other preventive measures in school, such as reducing higher-risk activities. Where transmission continues to increase or where COVID-19 cases are affecting school operations, a seven-day period of remote learning for the class, cohort, or school may be recommended by public health.

Students or staff who test positive on a PCR test or rapid antigen test, or suspect they have COVID-19, are required to follow [public health isolation protocols](#) and are strongly encouraged to notify the school. School staff and students should attend a test site if they have signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Students and staff who are exposed at school can continue to attend as long as they are asymptomatic. Household close contacts who are exempt from isolation but have a case in their household are encouraged to use rapid tests to monitor for asymptomatic transmission, as household contact remains the highest-risk setting for transmission.

Mask Enhancement Guidance

The province has issued mask enhancement guidance for schools. Please review the following protocols in effect at your child's school while in the Restricted (Orange) level:

- Non-medical masks are required indoors for all K to 12 students. This requirement includes wearing masks in the classroom and while riding the bus. Masks may be removed indoors for the purpose of eating, drinking and short, infrequent mask breaks where there is physical distancing of two metres or (six feet). Where possible, the focus should be on wearing a mask that fits the face well and has multiple layers, including at least three layers. 3 layered masking can be accomplished by using multiple masks or disposable medical masks. Masks can be provided by schools to students if forgotten/needed, but there is a limited supply.
- Students must also wear a mask while in the gym, even while participating in athletic activity.
- All teachers and staff, including substitute staff, are required to wear medical-grade masks. Medical-grade disposable masks have been issued to all schools. N95 masks are not required as these masks are to be reserved for medical personnel and KN95 masks are not medical-grade masks.

For more information on masks, please visit [Mask Guidance for Manitobans](#).

Extra-curricular Activities

Extra-curricular activities may be offered in code orange following the current return to sport guidelines. The decision to offer these activities will be dependent on the availability of facilities and staff.

Community use of schools

Community use of schools may continue to occur in code orange depending on the availability of the facility and scheduling of the maintenance/cleaning staff.

The following links have been provided for information:

Testing eligibility:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing/testing-eligibility.html>

Video for COVID-19 Rapid Antigen test kits available for students in Grades K-6

<https://www.mbschoolboards.ca/covidTesting.php>