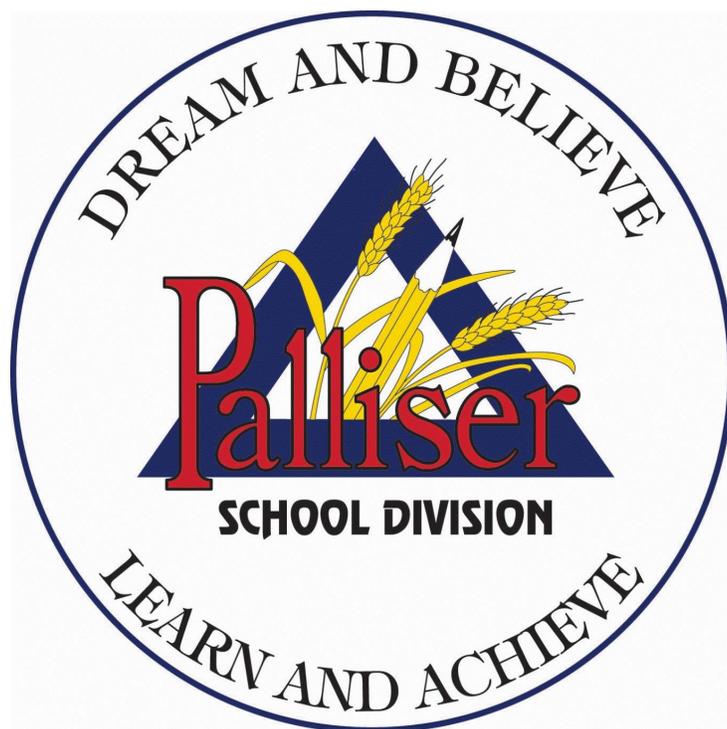


# Palliser School Division COVID-19 School Guidance



Updated: October 30, 2020

# Updates

- We have included updated information on essential guidance from the Alberta Government available from [Alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19) and [Alberta.ca/returntoschool](https://alberta.ca/returntoschool).

## October 30th

- A new Alberta Health daily checklist for students enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 12 will take effect on November 2nd. Symptoms of runny nose and sore throat have been removed from the mandatory isolation checklist for students enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 12. All others who are 18 and over, including staff, will continue to use the existing Alberta Health daily checklist. The links for the checklists are available below.

## October 22nd

- Paper and library books that cannot be cleaned or disinfected can be stored in a sealed container for 24 hours. This includes paper tests and assignments.
- Additional clarification on cohorts and who may be considered a close contact within a cohort is updated. This includes that the entire classroom is considered to be close contacts of a confirmed case. Teachers and staff should take caution to ensure they are not in a cohort together unless required for operational periods. This applies to gatherings of staff during breaks and in common areas.
- Information on individuals who experience side effects as a result of influenza immunizations are included in the FAQs.

## Palliser School Division Three Key Strategies

Palliser School Division will emphasize three key strategies to minimize the risk of transmitting COVID-19 within our school communities and division. The three key strategies are:

- **Follow Expert Advice** – It is an expectation that we all become knowledgeable about the protocols, guidelines and directives for school re-entry from Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services
- **Keep The Virus Out** – The first and most important action we can take is to prevent anyone that is ill, has COVID-19 symptoms or is at a higher risk for getting the virus (e.g. \*close contact of someone with COVID-19, international travel etc). from entering schools, division owned facilities or getting on our division busses.
- **Prevent The Spread** – The first and most important action we can take is to prevent anyone that is ill or has COVID-19 symptoms from entering our schools, division-owned facilities, or division busses. In addition we must take steps to reduce the possibility of transmission if someone who is ill, has COVID-19 symptoms or is asymptomatic but able to spread the virus.

If we can follow these three basic strategies and apply sound professional judgement we will greatly decrease the likelihood of transmitting the virus within our schools and throughout the division. ***These basic strategies apply to all three potential scenarios Alberta Education has provided and may be modified depending on the scenario.***

## ***Follow Expert Advice***

The first step in minimizing the transmission of COVID-19 is to become knowledgeable about, and follow directives and guidance from Alberta Education, Alberta Health Services, and Chief Medical Officer of Health. This document is intended to provide Palliser schools and staff with guidance on our COVID-19 response. It will provide an overview of key practices and approaches when planning at the school and classroom levels. It is the expectation that all division employees will review and follow guidelines and directives provided by Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services.

The contents within this document and our COVID-19 response may change based on guidance from the government or the school division. Schools leaders and employees must use sound professional judgement when applying these protocols to their unique context. Ultimately, we must act reasonably and prudently to ensure the safety of all stakeholders in the division.

Information from the Government of Alberta is continually updated on the webpages in the links below.

[Alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19): Current information related to COVID-19

[Alberta.ca/returntoschool](https://alberta.ca/returntoschool): Information related to school re-entry

The Alberta government released an updated [2020-21 School Re-Entry Plan](#) for Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 as part of the relaunch strategy. If you have not already done so, please review the relevant documents that are guiding our COVID-19 response in the links below:

[Guidance for School Re-Entry Plan: Scenario 1](#)

[Implementing School Re-Entry Guidance](#)

[Resource Guide for Schools Before, During, and After a COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

Please note, as these essential documents change, updated versions will show the date it was updated, and previous versions of the document will be marked as superseded.

## ***Keep The Virus Out***

The next step (and likely the most important) is preventing the virus from getting into our schools, division facilities or on a division operated bus. Therefore, anyone that is ill, has COVID-19 symptoms or fits into higher risk for COVID-19 categories will not be permitted to enter schools, division owned facilities or get on a division operated bus.

Please note, the items listed below are not comprehensive and may change from time to time based on guidance from the government or the school division. Schools leaders and employees must use sound professional judgement when applying these protocols to their unique context. Ultimately, we must act reasonably and prudently to ensure the safety of all stakeholders in the division.

## Screening protocols

Before entering any Palliser school or site, staff, children/students, visitors, and volunteers must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter our facilities using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#). The following information is designed to help everyone in Palliser School Division minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19. We will never be able to guarantee that our schools and division will be COVID-19 free. However, we believe that if the division, schools, individual employees, individual students, parents and school communities work together we can minimize the possibility of exposure and continue to ensure our schools and facilities are safe for everyone. We all have a part to play and we all must take responsibility for reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

## Symptoms

[Alberta Health Daily checklists](#) are intended to assess students, staff, and visitors who may be symptomatic or who may have been exposed to someone who is ill or has confirmed COVID-19. Specific information can be found at the Alberta webpage for [Symptoms and Testing](#). We have two Paliser documents to help understand the requirements for symptoms.

[Stay at Home Guide](#) for Students who attend Kindergarten to Grade 12

[Responding to Illness](#) for Adults 18 Years and Older

Any individual who has any of the core symptoms below are legally required to isolate for at least 10 days from the start of symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath or difficulty breathing (new or worsening)
- Runny nose\*
- Sore throat\*

Any individual who has any of these other symptoms must stay home and minimize contact with others until symptoms resolve:

- Chills
- Painful swallowing
- Stuffy nose
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell, fatigue or severe exhaustion
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite)
- Unexplained loss of appetite
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye)

*\* Children under 18 are exempt from mandatory isolation for runny nose or sore throat but should stay home until symptoms are gone. More information is available on [Student Illness](#).*

If an individual has traveled outside of Canada within the last 14 days, they must not enter a Palliser facility.

- If an individual has had close contact with a confirmed case of a COVID-19 case in the last 14 days, they must not enter a Palliser facility.
- If an individual has had close contact with a symptomatic close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days, they must not enter a Palliser facility.

### **Entering and Exiting Schools**

- Schools will develop protocols to reduce contact and increase physical distancing when students, staff or others enter and exit the school
- Schools will ensure signage is present on designated entrances and exits detailing distancing instructions and public health information. Signs can be found under the poster section at [Alberta.ca/returntoschool](https://www.alberta.ca/returntoschool).
- Hand washing/sanitizer stations will be provided at designated points of entry for use on arrival.
- Division staff, including maintenance, and Board Office Staff, must access schools through designated entry points identified at each site and follow school sign in procedures
- Schools will put in place protocols to limit access times and days for staff or students to be in the building (e.g. Monday to Friday, 7:00am to 6:00pm access only).

### **Expectations for visitors entering the school**

- Visitor access to schools should be limited. Non-essential visitors should not be allowed to enter the school.
- Schools will put in place protocols to ensure that any visitors are approved by the school administration (e.g. visitors must phone the office to make an appointment prior to visiting)
- Approved visitors must complete the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#).
- Approved visitors must wear a mask when in the school unless they are given permission from the school administration not to wear a mask in exceptional circumstances.
- A record of all visitors must be kept, including contact information.
- Parents/caregivers will typically not be permitted to attend classrooms, or walk throughout the school without approval from school administration.
- The office waiting area must be configured to ensure proper physical distancing.

## Reinforcing COVID-19 Safety Protocols

Schools will be expected to continuously teach, reinforce, and monitor student compliance regarding age-appropriate COVID-19 safety protocols. This includes, but is not limited to:

- [The symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- [The importance of not attending school when sick](#)
- [The importance of frequently washing and/or sanitizing hands](#)
- [The importance of good respiratory etiquette](#)
- [The importance of maintaining physical distance](#)
- [The proper use of masks](#)

## Communication with Families

It will be critical to communicate up to date information on screening and isolation requirements to families. In addition to signs (see poster section at [Alberta.ca/returntoschool](https://alberta.ca/returntoschool)), information for parents and guardians is available from the Alberta Government in the [Parent's Guide for 2020-21 School Year](#). We have shared a [Stay at Home Guide](#) with parents and guardians that outlines when children should be kept home for certain symptoms and how long they need to stay home for.

Some additional information is available for parents and guardians about [staying home when sick](#) and [how long students are required to stay home from school when they have different symptoms](#). [Guidance for Parents or Children Attending School and/or Childcare](#) has information for parents and guardians when children or are a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

## *Prevent the Spread*

### Cleaning

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Schools will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with Alberta Health Services' COVID Public Health.

#### *General Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidelines*

- Clean and disinfect shared high-touch surfaces regularly:
  - Door handles and door edges;
  - Front desk counter;
  - Shared spaces such as kitchens and bathrooms should also be cleaned more often.
- Clean or disinfect areas where students and staff are/were present.
- Clean or disinfect high-touch electronic devices (e.g. keyboards, tablets, smartboards).
- Cleaning to remove debris/soil (e.g. floor care and dusting will be done as time permits).

### *Cleaning Disinfecting Supplies/Equipment*

- Disinfectants used must have a Drug Information Number (DIN) with a virucidal claim. These are the preferred type of cleaner disinfectants by the division due to the broad kill spectrum and they are tolerated by most persons.
  - As a last resort, diluted household bleach may be used. Add 9 ml of bleach to 1 litre of water. Please note that bleach is not generally recommended in school environments due to its instability and corrosive nature.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfecting products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well-ventilated areas, allow enough contact time for the disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).
- Reusable cleaning and disinfecting items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60- 90 degrees Celsius).

### *Cleaning and Disinfecting of Tools/Equipment and Desks/Workstations*

- Staff will follow the directions provided by the division and/or manufacturer to clean or disinfect.
- Staff are responsible for disinfecting their tools/equipment and desk/workstation throughout the workday. This will ensure limiting the risk of infection from staff to staff
- If any tools/equipment cannot be cleaned or disinfected, please contact your supervisor for further direction.
- Limit sharing of any tools/equipment with other staff while on shift.
- If tools/equipment must be shared, it must be cleaned or disinfected prior to sharing

### *Cleaning and Disinfecting of High Touch Surfaces*

- Regular, enhanced, and as needed cleaning will be performed by caretaking staff:
  - Daytime caretakers will clean and disinfect contact surfaces and high contact areas.
  - Caretakers will ensure ongoing inspection and filling of handwashing supplies, including alcohol-based sanitizer dispensers.
  - Caretakers will monitor supplies to ensure all necessary supplies are available.
  - Evening caretaking staff will thoroughly clean all areas.
  - The Facility Services Supervisor will provide cleaning kits with approved disinfectants, PPE, and materials.
  - Caretakers will monitor people who have been in the building. All areas in the school that have been accessed must be cleaned.
- Other staff may also be required to disinfect areas as needed in order to maintain a safe environment:
  - Division approved disinfecting supplies are provided;

- Do not bring cleaners or disinfectants from home;
  - Do not take school materials home to clean or disinfect.
- If cleaning is required, staff should notify the principal or school office. The principal or school office will request cleaning, per their protocol with caretaking staff.
- Employees using division vehicles must disinfect vehicles after use. When cleaning or disinfecting a vehicle, make sure to clean or disinfect outside in a well-ventilated area with the vehicle windows down.

## **Cohorting**

Cohorting is a small group whose members are always the same people, and who may not always keep 2 metres apart. Cohorting will decrease the potential for spread if a person is diagnosed with COVID-19 and assist public health officials in their efforts to trace contacts and contain an outbreak. Where possible, schools are encouraged to keep students in cohorts and/or limit the total number of contacts students have with other students. Teachers and staff should not be in a cohort with each other unless required for operational purposes (i.e. a teacher and teacher's assistant who work with the same classroom cohort). This means that teachers and staff need to be careful of gatherings during breaks or in common areas of the school. Specific considerations on cohorts can be found below and in [Implementing School Re-Entry Guidance](#).

### *Cohorting in Schools where Students are in Homerooms*

This type of cohorting will occur where students do not move from class to class and the same students are in each class, more typically for elementary-aged students. Please note:

- Each student in this cohort should remain together throughout the day to minimize the number of different staff and students mixing with the students. Keeping the same students together, rather than mixing and mingling, helps prevent illness and makes it easier to track exposure if someone does get ill.
- Interactions with people outside of the cohorts should be limited. In instances where there are interactions, such as shared areas of the school, schools will need to consider reducing the traffic flow in busy areas, emphasizing hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and ensuring mask use for students Grade 4 and up.
- Preventative measures such as physical distancing and mask use should still be priorities where possible, even within a cohort.
- Assigned seating is a strategy to limit the spread of illness within a cohort and will also support health contact tracing should that be required.

### *Cohorting during Breaks and Outdoors*

This type of cohorting will apply during recess and lunch breaks and any outdoor activities, more typically for elementary-aged students.

- Students need to remain in their assigned learning cohort for recess activities.
- Based on the varied school contexts, school spaces may be shared with another cohorts. In these spaces, cohorts should be managed in a way to ensure physical distancing.
- Schools may stagger break times or assign cohorts to specific areas of the

school yard.

- Junior high and high schools will work with their school community to decide if students will be allowed to leave campus during lunch break. If students are permitted to leave, they must enter and exit through assigned doors and respect physical distancing and other COVID-19 health protocols when off campus.

*Preventative Measures in Schools where Students move from Class to Class.*

The measures below will occur where some cohorting is limited, such as schools where students move from class to class and are different students in each class, more typically for middle and high school-aged students. Please note:

- Where cohorting is not achievable, physical distancing and non-medical face masks are emphasized for older grades.
- Schools may consider class scheduling options that reduce the number of classes in a day/week for each student and assist with traffic flow in busy areas (e.g. one-way hallways).
- Schools may adjust some nonacademic classes to minimize activities that encourage face-to-face interaction and common touch surfaces.
- Assigned seating is a strategy to limit the spread of illness within a cohort and will also support health contact tracing should that be required.

### **Physical distancing**

Physical distancing is an effective measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and should still be applied even within a cohort group. If two metres of physical distancing is not possible within a cohort, additional strategies need to be used, such as arranging desks and tables so students do not face each other.

No in-person school assemblies or large gatherings will occur. In-person staff meetings may occur so long as physical distancing requirements are adhered to. Google Meet or other electronic means should be used when possible.

Students are not expected to sit in their desks for the duration of the school day, and additional measures should be implemented when students are not seated in the classroom.

### **Non-medical Face Masks**

Under the order of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, all students attending grades 4 through 12, staff members and visitors must wear a non- medical face mask that covers their mouth and nose while attending an indoor location within a school. Please note:

- A face shield is not a substitute for a face mask from a safety perspective. 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.
- 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.

- Students should be instructed on how to properly put on and remove a reusable mask. See [mask guidance](#) for more information.

Staff and students from Grades 4 to 12 are not required to wear a mask when seated at a desk or table within a classroom or place where instruction is taking place and where the desks, tables, and chairs are arranged in a manner to prevent persons from face each other, and to allow the greatest distance possible between seated persons. See [CMOH order 33-2020](#) for further information on mask use.

- 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.
- Teachers should continue to physically distance as much as possible even when wearing a mask.

### **Risk Mitigation for High Traffic Areas in School Facilities**

Schools should institute controls to promote physical distancing between all attendees in areas in and outside of the classroom, including hallways, washrooms, and common areas. This may include:

- Staggering start and end-times for classes to avoid crowded hallways.
- Posting signs, using stanchions and marking floors.
- Removing and restaging seating in public areas to prevent gathering.
- Considering limiting bathroom occupancy at any one time.
- Use of non-medical face masks for all staff and students in grades 4- 12 in high traffic areas.

### **Expectations for Shared Use Equipment**

Shared equipment should not be used unless they can be fully cleaned and disinfected between students:

- Provide individual bags/containers for pencils/coloring tools for younger students.
- Avoid shared books when possible
- Encourage hand hygiene before and after the use of shared equipment/books.
- Disinfect touchpoints of equipment between users (e.g. keyboards, printer touchpads)
- For electronic devices, refer to the manufacturer's instructions for specific recommendations.

### **Student Transportation**

Each bus will have hand sanitizer available for drivers and students. Students will be offered a squirt of hand sanitizer when they board the buses and we encourage that they use it unless they have sensitivities to the sanitizer.

Students will be assigned seats and a record of this seating plan will be kept in order to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student being a case of COVID-19. Students will not be permitted to eat while on the school bus in an effort to limit food sharing and sustain appropriate levels of hygiene.

Drivers must wear masks while on the bus with other people present. Students from grades 4-12 must wear a mask while on the bus. Masks are optional for students from Kindergarten to grade 3.

### **Common areas**

School administration will designate the use of common area spaces such as libraries and gymnasiums to best deliver education programs and to aid in physical distancing. We have included specific guidance for common areas and auxiliary spaces and activities available below. Schools will need measures in place to promote physical distancing, including:

- limiting the number of students allowed in certain areas at certain times.
- ensuring students do not crowd together in high traffic areas and remind students to adhere to physical distancing protocols.

### *Playgrounds*

- See [Guidance for Playgrounds](#)
- Playgrounds are not restricted to student or public use. Schools will need to develop a plan for recess and lunch and other times that allows for staggered use. Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after the use of equipment. Educational signage could be considered, particularly if the playground is accessible to the public.

### *Gymnasiums*

- When possible physical education should be done outside instead of inside as the risk of transmission is more likely to occur indoors rather than outdoors.
- See [Guidance for Outdoor Fitness](#)

### *Libraries*

- See [Guidance for Libraries](#).

### *School Cafeterias*

- Schools with full cafeterias or programs that handle and prepare food must follow the [Guidance for Restaurants, Cafes, Pubs, and Bars](#).

### **Food Services**

Activities that involve the sharing of food between students or staff should not occur. Classes that teach food preparation may occur as long as students do not share the food they prepare with other students or staff. For specific information on classes that

teach food preparation and serving of food in nutritional programs, refer to [Implementing School Re-Entry Guidance](#).

- Students/children should practice physical distancing while eating.
- There should be no common food items (e.g., salt and pepper shakers, ketchup).
- If a school is using a common lunchroom and when possible staggering lunchtimes, ensure that all surfaces of the tables and chairs (including the underneath edge of the chair seat) are cleaned and disinfected after each use. Food Service Programs (e.g., Cafeterias)
- There should be no self-serve or family-style meal service. Instead, food should be distributed as pre-packaged meals or meals served by designated staff.
- Foodservice establishments should follow the Alberta Health restaurant guidance posted in [Guidance for Restaurants, Cafes, Pubs, and Bars](#).
- Use alternate processes to reduce the number of people dining together at one time.

### **Extracurricular activities**

Schools should consider limiting the total potential number of cohort groups (e.g., limit school-based extracurricular activities and clubs). School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) must be avoided. Virtual options should be offered instead of in-person gatherings. For more guidance on sport, physical activity, and recreation, refer to the [Guidance for Sport, Physical Activity and Recreation](#).

### **Field Trips**

To align with physical distancing, field trips and activities requiring group transportation should be postponed at this time.

### **Music, Dance, and Theatre Programs**

Practice, rehearsals, and instruction of dance, music, and theatre may proceed so long as the updated guidance provided by the Alberta government is followed ensuring special considerations for each activity. For any plans that involve the use of singing or wind instruments, please confirm these plans with Adam Browning prior to initiating the activity.

- Activities involving use of live instrumental music will require special consideration as outlined in [Guidance for Live Instrumental Music](#).
- Shared instruments should not be used unless they can be fully cleaned and disinfected between students. Chairs and music stands should be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Singing may occur in limited instances as outlined in the [Guidance For Singing and Vocal Performance](#).
- Dancing may occur in limited instances as outlined in the [Guidance for Dance](#).

## CTF and CTS Programs

Work experience may resume as long as the risk of infection is mitigated for all participants. If the work experience placement is in a workplace, the child/student is expected to follow health rules set out by the workplace which should comply with the Workplace Guidance for Business Owners. The time that individuals are in close contact should be kept to a minimum. Use of shared items or equipment should be avoided. Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use, AND users should perform hand hygiene before and after each use.

## Responding to Illness

Any time there is a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19, school administration will inform senior administration as soon as possible. In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, staff will be expected to provide information on cohorting, such as the daily attendance of students, seating plan, and information on close contacts.

The [Implementing School Re-Entry Guidance](#) and [Resource Guide for Schools Before, During, and After a COVID-19 Outbreak](#) outline the school response should students or staff members develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at school. The Table below contains the specific actions that need to be taken if a student, staff member, or visitor develops symptoms ([See all COVID-19 symptoms](#)).

<b><i>If a Student develops one or more symptoms of COVID-19</i></b>	<b><i>If a Staff member or Visitor develops one or more symptoms of COVID-19</i></b>
<i>If students develop symptoms at home:</i>	<i>If staff members develop symptoms at home:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students must not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19. More information is available on <a href="#">Student Illness</a>.</li> <li>• Direct the student to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g. call Health Link 811, or their primary care practitioner or, if needed, 911 for emergency response, and fill out the <a href="#">AHS Online COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool</a> to determine if they should be tested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff members must not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID19</li> <li>• Direct the staff member to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g. call Health Link 811, or their primary care practitioner or, if needed, 911 for emergency response, and fill out the <a href="#">AHS Online COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool</a> to determine if they should be tested</li> </ul>
<i>If students develop symptoms at school:</i>	<i>If staff members develop symptoms at work:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student should be asked to wear a non-medical mask if they are able.</li> <li>• The student should be isolated in a separate room. If a separate room is not available, the child/student must be kept at least 2 metres away from other students.</li> <li>• The student’s parent/guardian should be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The staff member should be asked to wear a non-medical mask if they are able. The staff member should go home as soon as possible.</li> <li>• If the staff member is unable to leave immediately, they should be isolated in a separate and empty room or maintain a 2 metre distance from others.</li> </ul>

<p>notified to pick up the student immediately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If the student requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the student until the parent is able to pick up the child/student. The student and staff should wear a mask and close interactions with the student that may result in contact with the student's respiratory secretions should be avoided. If very close contact is required, the staff member should also use a face shield or eye protection.</li> <li>● Staff/students must perform hand hygiene before donning a mask and before and after removing the mask and before and after touching any items used by the student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Staff must wash their hands before donning a mask and before and after removing the mask and before and after touching any items used by the staff member.</li> <li>● All items the staff member touched/used while isolated must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the staff member leaves. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g. paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 72 hours.</li> </ul>
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The period of time that students and staff must remain home and isolate is dependent on symptoms and COVID-19 test results. See [Symptoms and Testing](#) for more information.

Please note, Alberta Health Services will notify the school of any confirmed case of COVID-19 and will contact all confirmed cases and their close contacts and provide them clear direction.

### **Students or Staff Returning to School After Illness or COVID-19 Diagnosis**

The Chief Medical Officer of Health Order 05-2020 legally obligates individuals who have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose\*, or sore throat\* (that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition) to be in isolation for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer ([See information on Isolation Requirements](#) and Palliser guidance on [Responding to Illness](#) for Adults 18 years and Older and [Stay at Home Guide](#) for student enrolled in Kindergarten to Grade 12).

COVID-19 cases are legally required to isolate for 10 days from the start of their symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. Individuals must follow Alberta Health Services guidelines and may have to self-isolate even if they do not have symptoms (i.e. they are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19).

Proof of a negative test result will not be necessary. Email or written confirmation of test results is not currently part of the notification process with Alberta Health Services. Employees are not required to disclose any self-isolation directed by Alberta Health

Services to their supervisors; however, disclosure would support with preparing and implementing our processes, such as arranging additional cleaning. If a staff member receives a positive diagnosis for COVID-19 it is requested that they voluntarily inform their supervisor so they can be supported and allow for thorough cleaning and appropriate communication.

## ***Other Information***

For any general inquiries regarding where to find specific information that may not be in our Palliser COVID-19 Guidance, please contact Joanne Siljak: [joanne.siljak@pallisersd.ab.ca](mailto:joanne.siljak@pallisersd.ab.ca). You can also find some additional information and resources in the links below.

### **Palliser Staff**

[Human Resources FAQ](#)

### **Mental Health and Supports for Staff**

- [Alberta School Employee Benefit Plan](#)
- [Homewood Health Employee & Family Assistance](#)

### **Alberta Government Health and Supports for Staff and Students**

(See [Alberta Re-Entry Plan](#) for a full list of supports)

- *Mental Health Helpline: phone 1-877-303-2642*
- *Health Link - phone 811*
- *Alberta Health Services*
  - [Help in Tough Times](#)
  - [Healthy Together](#)

## **Appendix A: Important Definitions**

### **Alert**

A COVID-19 alert in a school setting is defined as one confirmed case of COVID-19 in either a student or staff member in the school setting.

### **Cohort**

A COVID-19 cohort, also referred to as a bubble, circle, or safe squad, is a small group whose members are always the same people, and who do not always keep 2 metres apart. Cohorts in schools will generally be the size of one class.

### **Close Contact**

In a school setting, the entire classroom is generally considered to be close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19. Close contacts are individuals that:

- a) Provide direct care for an individual with COVID-19 or who had similar close physical contact OR
- b) Had close prolonged contact (i.e., for more than 15 minutes cumulative and within two metres) with a case OR
- c) Had direct contact with infectious body fluids of an individual with COVID-19 (i.e., was coughed or sneezed on)

### **Outbreak**

A COVID-19 outbreak within a school setting is defined as “two or more confirmed cases (staff and/or student) within a 14 day period (one incubation period) OR two or more confirmed cases (staff/child) that are epidemiologically linked.”

## Appendix B: Frequently Asked Questions

### *Hygiene*

**Q:** Can a cohort of students share common items?

A: Yes. However, there are some critical considerations for teachers such as ensuring hand-hygiene for students and that hands are cleaned before and after use. Items will also need to be disinfected between uses.

**Q:** Should submitted paper-based assignments be quarantined?

A: At this time, items only need to be quarantined if it was in contact with an individual who was presenting symptoms. In the instance that an individual was ill, the area they were present should be cleaned and disinfected, and items they were in contact with should be quarantined for at least **24 hours**.

### *Confirmed Illness*

**Q:** Does everyone in the class need to be quarantined if there is one symptomatic child/staff/visitor/volunteer?

A: No, everyone in the class does not need to be quarantined. If a child/staff/visitor/volunteer has one of the core symptoms of fever, cough (new cough or worsening chronic cough), shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (new or worsening), runny nose or sore throat, they must stay home and isolate for 10 days. If they have any other symptoms of illness, they should stay home until their symptoms resolve. Any individual with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested as soon as possible, which can be arranged through the [AHS online self-assessment tool](#).

**Q:** Do we need to send the whole class home if the teacher becomes a confirmed case of COVID-19?

A: If a teacher or staff member becomes a confirmed case of COVID-19, Alberta Health Services Public Health will work with the school community to identify close contacts and ensure that they follow the appropriate quarantine restrictions. Generally, the entire classroom will be considered close contacts of a case, and the specific details of the case will determine who is considered to be a close contact.

**Q:** How many confirmed cases in a single school will result in closure of the school?

A: Any one confirmed case will result in an investigation by Alberta Health Services Public Health. It is likely with a single case that exposure is limited to a single class or group. Closures of specific classes, cohorts or schools may occur dependent on the

outcome of an investigation. Public health measures for outbreak management are at the discretion of the Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH); decisions on the need for alternate instructional delivery plans or school closures will be made by the Government in conjunction with local officials.

**Q:** What does the school administration do if a staff member or parent/guardian of a student/child calls the school to say they/the student or child are COVID-19 positive and the school has not been previously notified by AHS?

**A:** Alberta Health Services (AHS) receives all of the case notifications directly from the lab. If there is a confirmed case in a school, the school will be contacted by AHS. It is not necessary to contact AHS to confirm. The appropriate individuals and schools will be notified. Parents and staff with general inquiries can be directed to call Health Link at 811 or can visit the [Alberta Health website](#).

### **Immunizations**

**Q:** A staff or student receives a standard flu vaccine and now has COVID-19 symptoms? What is expected?

**A:** The side effects to immunizations can be similar to symptoms of COVID-19. If a student or staff has side effects that are the same as COVID-19 symptoms, they must stay home away from others even if the symptoms are thought to be from a vaccine.

If the side events resolve within 48 hours, individuals are not required to isolate and can return to school and normal activities. However, if symptoms last longer than 48 hours, individuals must continue to stay home and should arrange for a COVID-19 test. If individuals are not tested, they are required to stay home for 10 days from the start of their symptoms or until they no longer have symptoms, whichever is longer. More information on immunization and symptoms is available in the [Alberta Immunization Policy](#) and [FAQs for parents on immunizations and symptoms](#).

### *Quarantine and Isolation*

**Q:** What are the different quarantine and isolation requirements?

**A:** The table below helps describe some of the basic differences. Detailed requirements are available at the [Alberta Isolation Requirements webpage](#).

Quarantine	Isolation
Required when people are not sick, but have been exposed	Required when people are sick, to keep them from infecting others.
The quarantine period for COVID-19 is 14	The isolation period for core COVID-19

days. This is because it can take up to 14 days for an individual to develop symptoms.	symptoms is 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
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**Q:** What are the isolation requirements if an immediate family member of a staff member or student has travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days?

**A:** The staff member or student is not required to isolate. In terms of international travel, they are only required to isolate themselves if they travelled outside of Canada within the last 14 days.