

Northern Gateway Public Schools

2021-22 Return to Normal Plan

COVID-19

March 1, 2022



Northern Gateway
Public Schools

Table of Contents

Message from the Superintendent	4
Ongoing Communication with NGPS families	5
Section 1 - What to expect in 2021-22	5
Section 2 - Safety and well-being	5
Daily health screening for illness	6
Staying home when sick	6
Showing signs of illness while at school	6
Government isolation requirements - symptoms or testing positive	6
If there is a case of COVID-19 at school	6
Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of schools and school buses	6
Masks	7
Handwashing and sanitizing	7
Cohorts	7
Personal protective equipment (PPE)	7
Section 3 - What school will look like	7
Arriving and leaving school	7
Lockers	8
Student supplies and learning materials	8
Washrooms and water fountains	8
Common areas	8
Recess and playground equipment	8
Open- or closed-campus school communities	8
Lunch	9
Food in schools	9
School nutrition programs	9
Volunteers and visitors	9
NGPS staff entering school buildings	9
Family and school communication	10
Community use of schools and joint use agreements	10
School bus transportation	10
School council meetings	10
Social emotional supports	10
Shared leadership	10
Positive Behaviour Supports	10
Mental health and wellness supports	11
COVID-19 signage on entrances	11
COVID-19 visitor log	11

Section 4 - Teaching and Learning	12
Online learning	12
Home education	12
Supporting students with special needs	12
Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)	12
Diploma examinations	12
Section 5: School based activities	12
Section 6: Appendices	13
Alberta Plan for Returning to Normal	13
Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools	13
CMOH Order 31-2021	13

Message from the Superintendent

Dear Parents and Families,

On February 8, the Government of Alberta announced a [three-step plan to reduce and eliminate public health measures](#), including how we approach COVID-19 in our schools.

We know there is shared excitement for the ending of pandemic restrictions, as well as varying levels of concern when it comes to ongoing risk management. Our Back to School Plan has been updated to reflect the province's new Return to Normal Plan:

Step 1: Masks in Schools

- Starting Tuesday, March 1, masks will be optional for staff and students in schools or on school buses.
- If a student becomes ill at school they will be required to wear a mask and isolate until they can leave the school.
- Any student who chooses to continue to wear a mask may do so and will be supported in their choice.
- Vaccinated students who test positive for COVID are required to isolate for 5 days and mask in school for a period of 10 days from onset of symptoms. Unvaccinated students are to isolate for 10 days. Please refer to the [Daily Health Checklist](#).

Continuing Safety Measure

Current safety measures:

- [Daily health screening](#) for students, staff and visitors before coming to school
- Staying home when sick
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting in schools and on yellow buses
- Handwashing and sanitizing
- Moving individual classes online if needed
- Additional planning and measures for medically fragile students

We will continue to monitor updates from the province and share information as it becomes available. We remain committed to providing safe, caring and inspiring learning environments for our students and staff. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to safety, learning and cooperation.

Kevin Bird
Superintendent of Schools

Section 1 - Safety and well-being

NGPS is committed to providing safe and caring learning environments for our students and staff. We all have a role to play in following safety protocols set out by the province and the Division.

Our 2021-22 Return to Normal Plan focuses on familiar safety strategies that support a safe learning environment within our school communities:

Daily health screening for illness

Families and staff are encouraged to continue using the [Alberta Health daily checklist](#), updated on February 9, 2022, before coming to school each day. Families and staff are not required to submit the checklist to the school. It is a tool to assess wellness.

Students and staff who feel ill or have any symptoms of COVID-19 should not come to the school. All isolation requirements for students who are close contacts or test positive for COVID-19 remain in place at this time.

Please contact the school office if your child is staying home due to illness.

Staying home when sick

Following provincial health protocols around illness is a key strategy to slow down or stop the spread of COVID-19, as well as to keep our school communities and individual classes healthy and in school. Please stay home when sick.

Showing signs of illness while at school

If a student becomes ill while at school, they will be asked to wear a mask while they wait in a designated area to be picked up. School staff who supervise the student will also wear a mask and will:

- bring the student to the school sickroom
Contact parents or guardians to pick up their child immediately, and
- follow Division safety strategies around cleaning and disinfecting the area and school sickroom.

Government isolation requirements - symptoms or testing positive

I have symptoms and I am fully immunized	Isolate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Isolate for 5 days from the day of onset of symptoms or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.• After this isolation period, up to a total of 10 days from the day of symptom onset, you are required to wear a mask at all times when in a public place or otherwise in the company of other persons, with no exceptions.
I have symptoms and I am not fully immunized	Isolate: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You must isolate for 10 days from the day of onset of symptoms or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.• Whether you are fully immunized or not, even if you have a negative molecular (e.g. PCR) COVID-19 test or two negative rapid antigen tests, taken not less than 24 hours of each other, you still must isolate until symptoms resolve.• If you are within 3 weeks of the initial positive test of a previous infection you do not need to test again, and you can leave isolation when symptoms resolve.
I have symptoms and a negative test result	Stay home and away from others until symptoms resolve.

Updated February 9, 2022. Chart Information from albertahealthservices.ca, [Isolation & Quarantine Information](#).

If there is a case of COVID-19 at school

Due to the changing nature of the virus, an increase in asymptomatic cases and the reliance on non-reported rapid testing schools have limited information about COVID cases and so are unable to send home individual notifications. Parents will receive notification if there is a sudden rise in illness absenteeism or if there is a substantial level of illness absenteeism in a classroom or group.

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of schools and school buses

Schools and school buses will receive extra cleaning.

Masks

- Masks are optional for all unless they are returning from a COVID isolation (see below) or are required as part of an individual student safety plan.

Students who are vaccinated, have symptoms and receive a positive COVID test are required to isolate for 5 days and wear a mask at all times in public (including school) for a period of 10 days from symptom onset. Students who have symptoms and a positive test and are not vaccinated are required to isolate for 10 days.

Students who are vaccinated, have no symptoms and receive a positive test should isolate and re-test 24 hours later. If the second test is positive the student is required to not attend school for 5 days and to mask in school for a period of 10 days from the initial positive test. Students who receive a positive test and are not vaccinated should isolate and re-test 24 hours later. If the second test is positive the student may not attend school for the required 10 day isolation period.

Health and safety measures will continue to be evaluated continuously in response to changing public health information and in the event circumstances and required health measures for schools across the province, schools in a particular region, or individual schools and classrooms, change, based on provincial direction and the COVID-19 situation in Alberta.

Handwashing and sanitizing

Schools will promote and facilitate frequent and proper hand hygiene for all students, staff and visitors, including before and after activities i.e. before and after using shared equipment, eating/serving food, entering/leaving school/classroom.

Schools will provide hand sanitizer throughout the building to support these requirements. Families are also encouraged to send their children to school with personal hand sanitizer.

Personal protective equipment (PPE)

PPE is not required for all staff, but additional PPE is important in different scenarios and will be utilized as needed to support students with different needs.

Section 2 - What school will look like

Volunteers and visitors

NGPS looks forward to having parents, visitors and volunteers back in schools. This will look different from school to school based on the unique circumstances of each school community.

All individuals are required to:

- Make an appointment by contacting the school office by phone or email
- [Screen for illness](#)
- Sign in at the school's visitor log
- There is additional planning in schools for medically fragile students, staff and close contacts. Because of these plans it may not be possible for a parent volunteer to engage with certain cohorts or rapid testing might be required.

Community use of schools and joint use agreements

Community use of school spaces will be opening throughout March. Contact your school for information.

School bus transportation

Students with COVID-19 symptoms or who are experiencing illness will not be permitted on the bus. Families are encouraged to consider getting their children to and from school if they are not comfortable with their child riding with other children on the yellow bus.

School council meetings

School council meetings may resume in person following all health regulations.

Social emotional supports

In supporting resilience within this environment, the existing wellness structures will continue to focus on shared leadership and Positive Behaviour Supports.

Shared leadership

Shared leadership across schools and sites is focused on creating the conditions for the following:

- **Collaboration:** student and staff engagement, school based collaboration, division based collaboration, parent engagement and outside partner collaboration
- **Assessment:** determine student mental health and well-being status. We are currently working with our community partners to review the process to ensure early identification for those in need of further support.
- **Continuum of Supports:** an inclusive learning environment where students can access integrated and/or specialized supports and services as required.

Positive Behaviour Supports

Positive Behaviour Supports is a well-rounded approach to support the mental health and wellness of students, staff and families. Positive Behaviour Supports include:

- A trauma informed lens focusing on voice and choice, predictability and consistency, and positive relationships
- Psychological First Aid, and the Traumatic Event Systems (TES) principles considered in addressing challenges during and following a challenging event, e.g., COVID-19
- [Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic](#) from North American Center for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response and,

- A focus on fostering the conditions that support mental health and wellness. The following resources may be of support for leaders in this regard:
 - [Working Together to Support Mental Health in Alberta Schools](#)
 - [The Heart of Recovery: Creating Supportive School Environments Following a Natural Disaster](#)

Mental health and wellness supports

The following resources contain evidence-based approaches that support mental health and wellness.

- [Working Together to Support Mental Health in Alberta Schools](#)
- [Government of Alberta K–12 Instructional Supports](#)
- [Government of Alberta: Children’s Mental Health](#)
- [Alberta Health Services: Information for Teachers](#)
- [Alberta Health Services: Healthy Together](#)
- [Mental Health Online Resources for Educators \(MORE\)](#)
- [Mental Health Literacy](#)
- [Mental Health Promotion and Illness Prevention: Self Care in Disaster Times and Beyond Toolkit](#)
- [Joint Consortium for School Health](#)
- [Schools Healthier Together](#)
- [Alberta COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#)
- [Alberta Student Learning Hub Mental Health Supports for Parents, Guardians and Families](#)
- Alberta Education: [Positive Behaviour Supports](#)
- Alberta Education: [Trauma Informed Practices](#)
- [Métis Nation of Alberta COVID-19 Mental Health Information](#)
- [Alberta Community and Social Services](#)
- [Supporting Learning at Home \(Mental Health\)](#)
- [Resilience - Tipping the Balance Towards Good Health](#) (article): Alberta Family Wellness
- [Brains Journey to Resilience](#) (video): Alberta Family Wellness
- [Everyday Mental Health Classroom Resource](#)
- [ATA Creating a Compassionate Classroom](#)
- [ASEBP: The Sandbox, a regular publication promotes a healthy school workplace](#)

COVID-19 signage on entrances

Appropriate school procedures will be posted.

COVID-19 visitor log

Authorized visitors and family members attending the school must fill out the school’s COVID-19 visitor log to:

- confirm they are not ill and do not have COVID-19 symptoms
- provide their name
- indicate with whom they are meeting
- note the time they arrived at the school
- note the time they left the school
- provide a signature confirming that the information is true and accurate

Section 3 - Teaching and Learning

We look forward to welcoming students and staff back into our classrooms. While we will do everything to keep students learning in class, parents are advised to be prepared and flexible to

adapt to short-term shifts to at-home learning, should student and/or staff illness require it.

Online learning

Northern Gateway Public Schools will not be providing an online learning format; however, online learning options are available. Please see the provincial [Online Learning Directory](#) and speak with your local school principal.

Home education

As per Alberta's [Education Act](#), Section 20(1), *a parent of a student may provide, at home or elsewhere, a home education program for the student...* For further information, please see the [Home Education Regulation, September 2019](#). Students who are registered in a home education program for the current school year must remain in that program for the entire school year.

Supporting students with special needs

Specific strategies related to COVID-19 will be added as required to meet the student's needs.

The dispensing of medication will follow *Administrative Procedure 714 Medical Assistance for Students* and any applicable COVID-19 guidelines.

Division contract service supports (occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, and/or psychologists) will provide service following their professional association guidelines and will wear personal protective equipment as needed/required.

Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs)

Grade 6 and 9 provincial achievement tests will resume and participation is mandatory for all schools not piloting the new draft Kindergarten to Grade 6 curriculum

Diploma examinations

Grade 12 diploma exams are mandatory in the 2021-22 school year; however, as per the Government's December 30, 2021 announcement, all January Diploma exams have been cancelled. At this time, Diploma exams are scheduled to be offered for every diploma exam course in April and June.

Section 4: School based activities

There are no specific restrictions or requirements for school activities and services. Schools may continue with activities with consideration given to safety factors. These activities may include:

- Field trips
- Music, singing, dancing, theatre
- Sports
- Visitors to the school
- Food services
- Student transportation
- Work experience
- Ceremonies
- Graduations

Section 6: Appendices

[Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)

[Alberta Plan for Returning to Normal](#)

[Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools](#)

[CMOH Order 31-2021](#)