



RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL
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RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL

2021-22 Return to School Guide

Implementation of this School Re-Entry Plan is subject to change based on direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health. It is based on the best available information and conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan will evolve and be adjusted when information becomes available as the status of the COVID-19 pandemic changes.

Updated August 23 2021



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HEAD OF SCHOOL MESSAGE

Dear River Valley School Parents and Guardians,

Even during the most adverse of times, River Valley School continues to be an innovative and inclusive school that endeavours to harness the innate curiosity in children and ensure that every one of our students will flourish academically, socially and emotionally. Within the current challenging context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school's mission and values remain at the heart of all that we do to ensure that every student is capable of achieving their personal best.

Continuing to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in our school will require the dedication and support of our entire community. Such measures as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting, the diligent and daily completion of the health screening questionnaire by every student and staff member, and, of course, having staff and students stay home when sick or exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19, are all important to the health and wellbeing of our entire RVS community. The school remains dedicated to the additional measures of mask use, staggered drop-off and pick-up, the implementation of an adjusted timetable, the procurement of additional resources and equipment to reduce the sharing of materials, and the continued employment of additional custodial and cleaning staff. Alberta Health Services (AHS) has advised and trusted schools to create protocols that reflect their own school contexts, and, at River Valley School, we continue to go above and beyond expectations whenever possible.

The main objective of this document is to outline our commencement plans for school reopening in September 2021, following the health protocols outlined in the [Government of Alberta's 2021-22 School Year Plan](#). While we are looking forward to being back together again soon, all possible measures are being put in place to maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students and staff upon their return. This document outlines exactly what health protocols will look like for all of us. Knowing that the context of this pandemic can change quickly, we will continually review and evaluate our protocols to ensure the health and safety of our community. As such, this document is subject to change at any time. Our school community will be notified if and when changes are made.

We thank our community members for working with us through this turbulent time. It will require a collective effort to keep our young learners at school, safe and benefiting from the rich learning experience that River Valley School has to offer.

Warm regards,

Carolyn Breland

River Valley School, Head of School



HEALTH MEASURES

Daily Self-Screening Practices

- In order to prevent the spread of infection, students, teachers and staff who have signs and/or symptoms of COVID-19 (according to Ministry of Health and local Public Health guidance) must stay home and decisions about testing and return to school should be guided by the Ministry of Health in consultation with local Public Health protocols.
- Before leaving home, staff and students who will access the school for work or education must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the Alberta Health Daily Checklist (see Appendix A).
- Families will be provided a copy of the screening tool with the expectation that it needs to be completed on a daily basis.
- Families will not be required to provide a physical copy of the completed self-screening tool to the school each day; however, in order to contribute to the health and well-being of the whole RVS community, it is imperative that the tool is completed honestly and that the directions are followed exactly as indicated on the tool.
- Signs will be posted reminding persons not to enter the school building if they have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Strict stay-at-home policy will be in place for any students or staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (refer to the Alberta Health Services screening questionnaire).
- If your child has traveled outside Canada in the last 14 days, please follow the Government of Canada Travel, Testing, Quarantine and Borders instructions.

COVID-19 Protocol Education

- Students, families, and staff will receive continued education regarding health measures being implemented at the school.
- Signs will be posted to remind students and staff of health measures.
- Teachers will continue to educate students on appropriate hand and respiratory hygiene.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) / Mask Use

- Mask use for students in Grade 1 to Grade 6, as well as all school staff, will be mandatory in all indoor shared spaces including:
 - School entrances and exits
 - Hallways
 - Washrooms
 - Busses
- Mask use in all specialist, learning support, and Arrowsmith classrooms will be mandatory for staff and students in grades 1 to grade 6 (with the exception of physical and outdoor education, when students are physically exerting themselves).
- Within homeroom classes, when students and staff are eating, drinking, or physically distanced, mask use will not be mandatory.
- Mask use for students and staff will be optional during outdoor activities, recess, and DPA.



- Mask use for students in Pre-Junior Kindergarten, Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten will be optional, but recommended at drop-off and pick-up times.
- Students and staff who choose to continue wearing a mask in optional settings will be fully supported in their decision. Discussions about personal choice regarding mask use will be held in homerooms to ensure students feel supported amongst their peers.
- School staff will have the option to wear face shields in addition to masks.
- As indicated in the “Illness While at School” section of this document, students who become ill at school will be provided with masks, and staff will wear gloves, a mask, and a face shield while attending to the student exhibiting signs of illness.

Students and Staff with Pre-Existing Conditions

- Students and staff who have allergies or ongoing health concerns and who are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms. This will establish a baseline for the individual.
- Students and staff with pre-existing conditions involving COVID-19 symptoms will be encouraged to disclose those conditions to the school’s office administrators at info@rivervalley.school.ca. All staff will be made aware of the student’s condition in order to monitor symptoms daily.
- River Valley School will keep records of students’ and staff’s known pre-existing conditions. If a student and/or staff member’s symptoms change (e.g., worsen, additional symptom, change in baseline), the individual is required to isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms as per the Health Checklist OR receive a negative COVID-19 test and feel better before returning to the school.

Illness While at School

- Students exhibiting signs of illness will be immediately moved to a designated health station. The student’s parent or guardian will be notified and advised to pick up their child within one hour of notification, as per Alberta Government guidelines. If the student’s parent is unable to pick them up, they must designate an emergency contact for student pickup. It is the expectation that students are picked up by the parent, guardian, or emergency contact.
- Students in the designated health station will be supervised by staff at all times.
- All other staff and students will be kept out of the designated health station while the student exhibiting signs of illness is occupying that space.
- Students in the designated health station will be provided with a face mask.
- Physical distancing will be maintained in the designated health station, where possible.
- Staff will wear gloves, a mask, and a face shield while attending to the student exhibiting signs of illness.
- The staff supervising the student may use an electronic thermometer to take the temperature of the student.
- After the student is picked up, the designated health station will be thoroughly cleaned. All items that came into contact with the student will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the student has been picked up. Items that cannot be disinfected (e.g., paper, books, cardboard, etc.) will be removed and stored in a sealed container for 72 hours.
- Families should use the [AHS Online Assessment Tool](#) or call Health Link 811 to arrange for testing and to receive additional information on isolation.



Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

- People who have tested positive for COVID -19 or have symptoms of COVID-19 MUST isolate for at least 10 days.
- In the event that a student or staff tests positive for COVID-19, we request that they notify a member from our Senior Leadership Team, although There is no legal obligation for you to share this information.
- In the event that River Valley School is connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, the school will work with Alberta Health Services (AHS) for guidance.
- Class groupings or cohorts will not be required to self isolate in the case

Testing and Demonstrating Clearance to Return

- One of the essential strategies to support the health and well-being of all members of the River Valley School community is testing. Should anyone answer “YES” to any of the daily screening questions, they are prohibited from entering the school.
- [AHS Online Assessment Tool](#) tool should be used to determine whether a staff or student needs to be tested for COVID-19.
- Students and staff who exhibit core covid symptoms (as per the Alberta Health Daily Checklist), must isolate for 10 days from the onset of their symptoms OR receive a negative COVID-19 test and feel well enough before returning to school.
- Students and staff who exhibit other symptoms (as per the Alberta Health Daily Checklist), must stay home for 24 hours to watch for additional or worsening symptoms. If their symptom improves after 24 hours, they can return to school when they feel well enough to do so. Testing is not necessary.

Cleaning Protocols

- A thorough cleaning of our entire school facility will be completed prior to the first day of school.
- Regular, enhanced, and as needed cleaning will be performed by custodial staff, along with monitoring to ensure all necessary supplies are available. Daytime custodians will disinfect contact surfaces and high contact areas. Evening professional cleaning services will thoroughly clean all areas.
- School staff will clean and disinfect shared equipment and surfaces between uses and as needed during the course of the school day.
- Disinfectant stations have been placed inside the doorways of all classrooms and inside all external doors of the school. Use will be required upon entry and exit of all rooms of the school.
- An extra emphasis will be placed on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis before and after activities.
- Our facilities staff will continue with the use of sanitizing foggers and a variety of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- The HVAC system has been checked to ensure good ventilation.
- The sanitizing dishwasher will be used for regular deep cleaning of tools, manipulatives, and educational toys used in classrooms.



SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Student Cohorting

- Cohorting of our students and their timetables will continue.
- A cohort is defined by Alberta Education as a group of students and staff who remain together.

Classroom Setup

- We have ensured carpets and non-wipeable fabrics/furniture have been removed from all classrooms. Wipeable cushions are available in classrooms for student use during floor activities.
- Efforts will be made to arrange the classroom furniture to leave as much space as possible between students. Our smaller class sizes naturally aid in physical distancing.
- Teachers will give consideration in their daily planning to encourage activities that lend themselves to physical distancing in the classroom.
- Individual supply kits (e.g., scissors, pencils, erasers, etc.) have been purchased for all students to limit shared items.
- In a situation where it is necessary to share items, the items will be sanitized between uses.
- In situations where physical distancing is not possible alternative health measures will be followed, including extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis before and after activities.

Shared School Spaces

- Mask use for students in Grade 1 to Grade 6, as well as all school staff, will be mandatory in all shared spaces including:
 - Entrances/Exits of the school
 - Hallways
 - Washrooms
 - Busses
- Mask use for students in Pre-Junior Kindergarten, Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten will be optional in shared spaces, but strongly recommended during drop-off and pick-up.
- Grade 1-6 students will continue to attend Music, French, Art, and Drama in specialist classroom spaces. An effort has been made to stagger the timetable to ensure that cohort groups use these spaces on the same day, reducing contact between cohorts.
- Mask use for students in Grade 1 to Grade 6, as well as all specialist, learning support, and Arrowsmith teachers, will be mandatory in these classrooms (with the exception of physical and outdoor education when students are physically exerting themselves or when they are outdoors).
- As usual, Pre-Junior Kindergarten, Junior Kindergarten, and Kindergarten specialist teachers will deliver their respective programs in homeroom classrooms.
- Our gymnasium space will be used to deliver physical education programming.
 - Mask use for students in Grade 1 to Grade 6, as well as all physical education teachers, will be mandatory in this space; however, students will be asked to remove their masks when physically exerting themselves.
 - Shared items or sports equipment will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.



- All classes will continue to use the library once per week. An effort has been made to stagger the timetable to ensure that cohort groups use the library on the same day.

Water Fountains, Water Bottles

- Water fountains remain open; however, they can be used for filling water bottles only. Please ensure that your child brings a water bottle to school each day.
- Water fountain knobs and push buttons are considered high-touch surfaces and will be regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Lunch, Snacks, and Healthy Hunger

- As usual, students will remain in their classrooms for the lunch period.
- Lunches and snacks will be stored with student belongings.
- Hand hygiene will be practiced prior to and after snack/lunch breaks, and eating surfaces will be wiped clean before and after these breaks.
- Students will be encouraged to practice physical distancing while eating.
- In response to COVID-19, as well as for the protection of students with allergies, there will continue to be no sharing of lunches or snacks.
- The Healthy Hunger lunch program will resume on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

School Uniform

- We will resume our usual uniform guidelines for the 2021/22 school year.
 - Students in Grades 3-6 will resume changing into the uniform gym strip for Physical Education (PE).
- Please refer to the 2021-22 Uniform Guidelines document for uniform expectations.

Substitute Teachers

- Staff absences will be covered internally, where possible.
- When an external substitute teacher is required, priority will be given to substitute teachers who have committed to working exclusively at River Valley School.
- All substitute teachers will be required to thoroughly review River Valley School's re-entry guidelines before working at the school.
- Substitute teachers will be required to self-screen for symptoms using the Alberta Health Daily Checklist (see Appendix A) before entering the school. They will also be required to follow and promote all of the health measures outlined in this document.
- Mask use for all substitute teachers is mandatory throughout the school.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

- Following Alberta Health Services guidelines, measures have been taken to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19. These measures include limiting the number of students and staff interacting with each other at drop-off and pick-up times and promoting physical distancing as much as possible.



- All staff and students must utilize hand sanitizer prior to entering the building and before entering their classroom. Once in the school, students will move directly to their classrooms.
- Parents/guardians and guests may not enter the school during drop-off and pick-up times.
- No person should enter the drop-off or pick-up area if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or have been in contact with any person who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Drop-off

- Our morning drop-off window from 8:10-8:30 AM will remain the same, as this arrangement, along with early morning Kids Club and Bussing, naturally promotes staggered entry into the school.
- Students have been assigned to a specific entrance and must only use the doors indicated below to enter the building at drop-off:
 - Front Door:
 - All JK Students (and siblings)
 - Grade 1-5 students with NO siblings
 - Back Door:
 - Little Kids Club
 - All walk-in students
 - Pre-JK, Kindergarten and Grade 6 Students (and siblings)
 - Grade 1-5 Students WITH siblings
 - Exterior Gym Door:
 - Big Kids Club
 - Bussing Students
- If students arrive after 8:30 AM, they will be required to use the front entrance, as our receptionist will need to buzz them in.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 will be expected to independently walk from their vehicle to their designated entry point (see above).
- Families with students in Pre-Junior Kindergarten may temporarily park their vehicles on the far side of the traffic circle at the rear of the school in order to unbuckle their children and walk them to the steps at the back door, where they will be met by a staff member.
- Families with students in Junior Kindergarten may temporarily park their vehicles in the parking spots to the right of the front entrance in order to unbuckle their children and walk them to the front steps, where they will be met by a staff member.
- Families who are utilizing the walk-in option are to follow the walking path parallel to Bowness Rd. and students will enter through the back door.

Pick-up

- In order to promote physical distancing and to minimize traffic congestion during pick-up, we will be staggering traffic route pick-up times, as well as walk-in times as follows:



- 3:00 PM:
 - Pre-JK, JK and K students WITHOUT siblings
- 3:30 PM:
 - Pre-JK, JK and K students WITH siblings
 - All Grade 1-6 students
- All students being picked up via the traffic route option, including those in Pre-JK and JK, will wait outside at the back of the school in their supervised designated areas, while following physical distancing guidelines. It is imperative that families arrive at their designated times in order to reduce congestion and avoid traffic back-ups.
- Families who are utilizing the walk-in option are to follow the walking path parallel to Bowness Rd. and pick up at the indicated walk-in area.
- Mask use and physical distancing is encouraged for all parents and/or guardians using the walk-in pick-up option within the walk-in pick-up area.
- The maximum number of exit doors will be utilized at the end of the day to mitigate the flow of students within the building.
- During inclement weather, alternate arrangements will be made and communicated to all families.

Visitors, Parents, and Volunteers

- While we value the partnership we have with our families, we will be temporarily limiting day-to-day access to the school building to students and staff only.
- Pre-scheduled Parent Network meetings will be held in-person in a designated meeting space at the school.
 - Parents/Guardians attending these meetings must self-screen for symptoms before they enter the school using the Alberta Health Daily Checklist (See APPENDIX A). Mask use is required for the duration of the meeting. For more information, please contact our Parent Network Chair, Kimmy Berthelette, at parentnetwork@rivervalleyschool.ca.
- Our Meet-the-Teacher Day and progress meetings will be offered in-person, as well as virtually.
 - Parents/Guardians attending these meetings in-person must self-screen for symptoms before they enter the school using the Alberta Health Daily Checklist (See APPENDIX A). Mask use will be required in all areas of the school building.
- In lieu of in-person meetings with teachers and/or administrators before and after school hours, families may schedule Zoom meetings. Teachers and administrators will also remain available via email or phone.

School Events

- Large in-school assemblies will continue to be held virtually until further notice.
- School community events will be facilitated outdoors or virtually until further notice. Families attending these events in-person must self-screen for symptoms before they attend using the Alberta Health Daily Checklist (See APPENDIX A). Mask use at all in-person outdoor school events is highly encouraged.



Community Use of the School Building

- All community use of our school building has been suspended.

STUDENT LEARNING

Courses and Subjects

- Teachers will give consideration in their daily planning to encourage activities that lend themselves to physical distancing in the classroom.
- All courses and subject areas will continue, including specialists.

Specialist Classes, Learning Support and Arrowsmith

- Mask use for students in Grade 1 to Grade 6, as well as all specialist, learning support and Arrowsmith teachers, will be mandatory in specialist, learning support, and Arrowsmith classrooms (with the exception of physical and outdoor education when students are physically exerting themselves or when they are outdoors).
- Services provided by our Learning Support Team, including resource, enrichment, speech pathology, occupational therapy and Arrowsmith will continue, as necessary.
- High-touch areas and equipment utilized in these areas will be regularly cleaned and disinfected.
- Staff and students must utilize hand sanitizer prior to entering the Learning Support Team workspace and before leaving the space.
- Specialists, Learning Support and Arrowsmith will remain accessible to students who are required to remain home due to self-isolation or illness, and to students who continue with the remote learning model.
- Learning experiences involving wind instruments will be postponed.
- During singing activities, mask use for students in Grade 1 to Grade 6, as well as for all staff, will be mandatory.
- Shared items or sports equipment will be cleaned and disinfected between uses.

Field Trips

- Field trips (off-site activities) requiring group transportation will be postponed until further notice.
- Walking field trips within 5 kilometres of the school building will be permitted.
 - o Groups will be required to remain within their cohorts or homeroom groupings during these activities.
 - o Health measures such as physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will be practiced.

School Technology

- Each Grade 1-6 student will be assigned a school iPad to use for the year. This will eliminate the need to share iPads between students.
- Shared devices, such as laptop computers, will be divided into cohorts and/or Grade levels to limit



the number of students that contact the device.

- All shared devices will be cleaned after each individual use.

Recess and Daily Physical Activity (DPA)

- Recess and DPA will be staggered by cohort, allowing reduced student flow in hallways and more space for physical distancing in the playground area.
- Students and staff will be required to sanitize hands when exiting the school for recess and DPA and upon entering the school after recess and DPA.
- Students will not be permitted to bring items from home to play with at recess or during DPA.
- Each class will be assigned a bag of outdoor play equipment to use during recess and DPA. This equipment will remain with the class to which it was assigned and will not be shared between classes.

Learning At Home

- **As experts in early childhood and elementary school learning, we know that In-person learning is best for students, academically, socially, and emotionally. As such, we strongly support in-person attendance.**
- If a student is ill, the priority is rest and recovery. Ailing students will not be expected to access classes or complete assignments during their recovery period.
- If a student is self-isolating but feeling well enough to complete daily schoolwork, classes will be accessible to the student live via Zoom, and lesson materials and assignments will be available via Seesaw (or Google Classroom in Grade 6).
- In order to access the program, please provide your child's homeroom teacher with 24-hour notice. This will allow homeroom and specialist teachers time to ensure everything is ready for your child to successfully participate in the program.
- Lesson materials and assignments will be supported through the use of Seesaw (or Google Classroom in Grade 6), and student work will also be submitted and assessed using that platform.
- Families will be required to make arrangements with homeroom teachers to pick up course-specific supplies.

Mental Health

- As a school, we are proud of the resiliency we have shown during these uncertain times, and hopeful as we continue our journey together towards improved mental health outcomes for all.
- The return to near normal, will have important mental health benefits to students and staff alike.
- We will continue to focus on positive mental health practices and support of staff, students and parents, throughout the 2021-22 school year.
- If your child is struggling with the return to school, please let your child's teacher and/or an administrator know as soon as possible.
- If you and/or one of your family members are struggling at this time, you may find the following resources helpful:
 - [Kids Help Phone](#)
 - Phone 1-800-668-6868



- Text CONNECT to 686868
- [Mental Health Helpline](#)
 - Phone 1-877-303-2642
- [Alberta COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#)
- Health Link - Phone 8-1-1
- Alberta Health Services - [Addiction and Mental Health](#)
- Alberta Community and Social Services - [Children's Mental Health](#)
- [211 Alberta](#)
 - Call 2-1-1
 - Text INFO to 211
- [The Heart of Recovery: Creating supportive school environments following a natural disaster](#)
- [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: 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](#)
- [Student Learning Hub](#)
- [Supporting Learning at Home](#)

KIDS CLUB

Health Measures

- Please refer to the school [Daily Self-Screening Practices](#) before entering Kids Club.
- Mask use for all Kids Club staff will be mandatory. Mask use for students attending Big Kids Club (Grades 1-6) will be mandatory, except when students are physically exerting themselves or when they are outdoors.
- Mask use for students attending Little Kids Club (Pre-JK-K) will be optional, but highly recommended during drop-off and pick-up.
- Hand sanitizing will take place after entering and before leaving the Kids Club space, before and after snacks and meals, before and after outdoor play, and after using the washroom or using a tissue.
- Children may not bring personal items such as toys or stuffies to Kids Club. No personal items other than water bottles and snacks will be allowed in school (with the exception of blankets or bedding for students who are napping).
- If a child develops symptoms while in Kids Club, the child will be isolated away from other children



and provided with a mask, and the parent or guardian will be notified to come and pick up the child immediately.

Drop-off and Pick-up

- Separate doors have been designated for drop-off and pick-up. Big Kids Club will be accessed using the outer gymnasium door (bus door) and Little Kids Club will be accessed using the back door.
- No parents, family members, or guests will be allowed in the building, in an effort to reduce exposure and mitigate risk for our staff and students. Children will be met at the door by a staff member and accompanied to their program.
- Each family must accompany their own child(ren) to the door of the school and wait for them to enter the building. According to physical distancing regulations, carpooling with other families is not recommended.
- Families are asked to respect AHS physical distancing guidelines while dropping off and picking up their children.
- Students must be able to enter the building on their own. If a child has difficulty separating from their parent(s), staff will be there to reassure them and guide them to their program space.

TRANSPORTATION

Health Measures

- Please refer to the school [Daily Self-Screening Practices](#) before getting on a bus.
- Mask use will be mandatory for all students who ride the bus, as well as for all bus drivers.
- 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 testing positive for COVID-19.
- Students who live in the same household will be seated together.
- When possible, physical distancing of 2 metres between all persons (except household members) will be supported during student loading, unloading and transfers.
- Students will start loading from the back seats to the front of the bus.
- Students will start unloading from the front seats to the back of the bus.
- If a child becomes symptomatic during the bus trip to school, the school will contact the child's family to make the appropriate arrangements to pick up the student.
- High-touch surfaces, such as door handles, window areas, rails, steering wheel, mobile devices and GPS will be cleaned and disinfected prior to each run.
- Thorough cleaning and sanitization of the bus interior will take place after every trip.