



Introduction and Summary

In August 2021, the Alberta government gave direction for all schools in Alberta as we enter the next school year in September, still in a pandemic. New Heights School will continue to be open for in-person classes in September. This plan has been updated in October 2021 and in January 2022 as schools in Alberta continue to navigate the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Updates throughout this plan are included in **bold** to highlight additions or revisions.

As we prepare for the re-entry of our students to New Heights, we have taken our direction from Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Alberta Education, and have considered a number of areas to continue to promote health and hygiene in the building. We have also ensured that we are taking into consideration how our students learn best, building their social communication and emotional regulation in a practical learning environment. The New Heights 2021-2022 re-entry plan is subject to change as more information becomes available from AHS and Alberta Education. We will be re-evaluating these measures throughout the year.

Health measures that will still be in place at New Heights as school starts in September:

- Students and staff will still be expected to use the daily checklist to identify if they should attend or stay home.
- Stay home when sick -- students and staff who present with COVID-19 or respiratory illness symptoms are to stay home until their symptoms resolve.
- Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection of high traffic/touch areas.
- Open windows in classrooms and throughout the school.
- Classroom cohorts in our ECS and Elementary program.
- Reduced visitors, volunteers or external partners in the school building.
- All staff will be masking when indoors at the start of the year.
- All students in ECS and Elementary classrooms will continue with mandatory masking when indoors to start the year. Existing mask guidance, including exemptions, will be practiced as we did last year.
- **Update September 2021:** All staff and students in K-12 will practice mandatory masking at New Heights. Existing mask guidance, including exemptions, will be practiced as we did last year.
- **Update January 2022:** Limitations on field trips starting after Winter Break.

Some health restrictions will be lifted, including:

- **Update January 2022:** AHS will no longer be informing schools of positive cases, or contacting close contacts of positive cases in schools.
- Shared room spaces, such as the auditorium, the Loft, the Makerspace, and the multi-purpose room, can be used.
- Work Experience practicums can resume, following each workplace's health guidelines, and are subject to the Restriction Exemption Program in Alberta. **(update October 2021).**

The health measures put in place by New Heights School for the start of the year will be reviewed throughout the year and will consider any further direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Alberta Education.

The safest return to school possible during a pandemic is our shared responsibility. Families, students, and staff are all in this together to do our part to protect and respect each other's well-being.

Here is what you can expect at New Heights as we welcome students back for the 2021-2022 school year:

Cleaning & Physical Building

- Our COVID-19 cleaning standard aligns with the provincial directives around cleaning and disinfecting. These increased measures mean:
 - More frequent cleaning and disinfecting throughout the school, with specific attention to washrooms, high-traffic areas, and classrooms.
 - Frequently cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces such as water fountains and door handles.
- Desks, tables, and equipment that are used by more than one student will be sanitized before and after each use.
- Visitors to the school will be minimized and by appointment only. Anyone entering the building must complete the self-screening tool and wear a mask. Parents/Guardians will continue to remain outside the school to pick up and drop off students.

The Classroom & School Programming

- Our class size ratio will remain the same, with no more than 11 students in a class (8 students in ECS), with one teacher and one educational assistant in each classroom.
- There will continue to be limited interactions between our Elementary classroom cohorts. This is something we already do at the beginning of the year at New Heights as students are getting to know their teachers, the routines, and their classmates. If we are able to ease this restriction during the year, we will communicate in advance.
- **Update January 2022:** During the omicron wave, there will be more limited interactions between our Junior High classes. When we are able to ease this restriction, we will communicate in advance.
- Each classroom will have a designated New Heights psychologist, OT, and SLP.
- Classrooms will utilize outdoor learning spaces more frequently. Students should come dressed for the weather.
- Windows may be open more often, even on cooler days. Students should dress accordingly.
- Desks will be arranged so they are not facing each other (i.e. in rows instead of groups).
- New Heights will continue our practice of having a seating plan for all classrooms.
- **Update September 2021:** All students in ECS-12 will practice mandatory masking while at New Heights. Existing mask guidance, including exemptions, will be practiced as we did last year.
- All staff will be masking, when indoors at the start of the year, as we continue to monitor the trends during school re-entry.
- The 3 High school classrooms will be considered one cohort (this is a maximum of 32 students). We will be limiting indoor interactions between the High School students and other students to adhere to cohorting guidelines.
- **Update January 2022:** During the omicron wave, each high school homeroom will have lunch with their cohort, seated at their desks.
- Assemblies and other school-wide gatherings will be held virtually or outdoors during this time.

- New Heights will continue to provide each student with a laptop for school use. Laptops are assigned to students and not shared.
- Students will need to bring their own utensils for lunch/snack. New Heights will continue to have students eat lunch/snack with their classrooms, as this is a usual New Heights practice.
- **Update January 2022:** Field trips are not recommended at this time. When we are able to ease this restriction, we will communicate in advance.

Shared Spaces

- Water fountains will be used as water bottle filling stations only. Reusable water bottles will be an important item on the school supply lists for families. Water fountain buttons will be cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- Playgrounds will remain open, used on a scheduled basis. Handwashing will take place before and after playground use.
- Rooms such as the life skills workroom, auditorium, activity room, and multipurpose room will be available on a scheduled basis for classrooms/students. The rooms will be cleaned between uses, and disinfected nightly.
- Session rooms will be cleaned throughout the day, in between uses.
- There will be a maximum number of students permitted in the washroom at one time. There will be visuals to promote distancing while waiting your turn.

Daily Routines, Hand Hygiene & Masking

Hygiene:

- Handwashing is the best practice when facilities are available. Handwashing will be practiced frequently throughout the day. If unavailable, sanitizer will be provided. Student hand washing/sanitizing will occur:
 - every time they enter or exit the building;
 - before they enter classrooms;
 - before and after they use shared equipment;
 - before eating;
 - and regularly throughout the day.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided and available in all entrances/exits to the building, and entrances/exits from the classroom, as well as near high traffic equipment (by microwaves, water fountains, etc). It is also encouraged that families send their children to school with personal hand sanitizer.

Pick up and Drop off:

- Parents/Guardians will continue to remain outside the school to pick up and drop off students. Those who need to enter the school must book an appointment with the office. Individuals without an appointment will not be able to enter the school. Those with an appointment will be required to complete the daily COVID-19/respiratory illness symptom screening questionnaire and wear a medical mask.
- Students will follow the entrance routine and go straight to their classroom waiting area after screening and handwashing on arrival. New Heights will create a video that will be sent in late August for students and families to familiarize or re-familiarize themselves with the entrance routine.
- Students will wait in designated areas with their classroom outside for pick up. Students should come dressed for the weather.

Daily Screening:

- Before coming to school each day, all staff and students must complete the Government of Alberta's COVID-19/respiratory illness symptom screening questionnaire to determine whether they can attend or must stay home. This questionnaire is done electronically at New Heights, and will be sent through email each morning.
- Anyone that reports COVID-19 or other respiratory illness symptoms is directed to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner), and fill out the AHS Online Self-Assessment tool to determine if they should be tested.

- **Update January 2022:** Due to the nature of the spread of omicron, if an individual is a close household contact of a positive case, we encourage them to stay home and isolate for the duration of the symptomatic/positive person.
- Anyone else permitted in the building will also need to complete the daily COVID-19/respiratory illness screening questionnaire before entering the building. Anyone showing symptoms listed on the pre-screening tool will not be allowed in the building.

Masking:

- **Update September 2021:** All staff and students in ECS-12 will be practicing mandatory masking at New Heights.
- Students taking part in off-site activities (i.e. work experience, field trips, transit training) will be subject to the health guidelines of that location, which may include mandatory masking. Student will also be subject to the Restriction Exemption Program in Alberta, and asked to provide proof of vaccination at their workplaces (**Updated October 2021**).
- Masks are an important item on every student's supply list this year.
- **Update January 2022:** The current recommendation is medical masks or triple layered cloth masks. Alberta Education will be providing staff and students with medical masks for an 8 week period.

Illness at School:

- If a student becomes ill while they are at school, they will wear a medical mask and wait in a designated space with a staff member until they are picked up. Parents/guardians will be called and must have their child picked up. New Heights parents/guardians will need to provide an alternate emergency contact for student pick up. Students should be picked up within the hour.
- School staff will follow health protocols around personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning and disinfecting the area.

What's new from AHS & Alberta Education for Schools

In AHS's latest guidance, they are emphasizing that routine public health practices can minimize transmission of respiratory infections, including COVID-19, influenza and common colds. These practices include: proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting, maintaining ventilation, staying home when sick and getting vaccinated.

Rapid Test Kits:

- **Update January 2022:** The government will be providing rapid test kits for students and staff. These tests are to be administered at home, and will not be administered at school. In the initial phase, students will receive kits to test at home twice per week, 72 hours apart.
- **Update January 2022:** More information on how to use the test and what to do with the results are posted on the government [website](#) including a [video](#).
- **Update January 2022:** There is no requirement to report rapid test results to the school.

Vaccines:

- We encourage our staff, parents, and students who are able to access the vaccines for respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and influenza.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19 and Respiratory Illnesses protocol:

- AHS Public Health will not be informing school authorities or administrators of individual cases of COVID-19 within their school setting.
- **Update January 2022:** Individuals are not required to share their rapid test results with school administration.
- At the direction of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, school administrators no longer contact AHS to report student or staff cases. School administrators should continue to monitor their school population and/or absenteeism due to illness, following the usual protocol for respiratory illnesses.

Prepare for a Possible Shift to At-Home Learning:

- **Update January 2022:** Maintaining in-person classes is our priority and our focus in the coming weeks. However, we are planning for potential transitions to at-home learning if required. The decision to transition individual classes to at-home learning will be based on staff availability and/or student absences.
- **Update January 2022:** A full school move to at-home learning requires approval or directions from Alberta Education. Decisions to move individual classes will be decided by New Heights administration.
- **Update January 2022:** If your child's class is going to be transitioned to online learning, you will receive information from the school directly through email. While we will do our best to give as much notice as possible, there may be times when these transitions may happen more quickly.

Appendix B: Management of Individuals who are Symptomatic and/or Tested for COVID-19

Symptoms	COVID-19 Test Result:	Management of Individual:
Symptomatic	Positive PCR test or rapid take-home test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully vaccinated staff (i.e. staff who have received the complete vaccine series for COVID-19 and it has been 14 days after the second dose in a two dose series, or one dose in a one dose series (i.e. Janssen vaccine)) or student (2 doses of mRNA vaccine): Isolate for 5 days from the start of symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer, if symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition • For up to five days following their isolation, all fully vaccinated individuals must wear masks whenever they are in a public place and/or in the company of another person (no exceptions permitted). If schools find this operationally challenging to accommodate, the consistent use of a 10 day absence prior to return, for both immunized and non-immunized cases, is an acceptable approach. <p>Not fully vaccinated: Isolate for 10 days from the start of symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer, if symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition.</p>
	Negative PCR test	<p>Fully vaccinated staff (i.e. staff who have received the complete vaccine series for COVID-19 and it has been 14 days after the second dose in a two dose series, or one dose in a one dose series (i.e. Janssen vaccine)) or student (2 doses of mRNA vaccine): Stay home until symptoms resolve, before cautiously resuming normal activities.</p> <p>Not fully vaccinated: Stay home until symptoms resolve, if symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition, before cautiously resuming normal activities.</p>
	Negative rapid take-home test	<p>NOTE: A negative test result does not rule out infection. Continue monitoring your symptoms and following public health guidelines.</p> <p>Isolate immediately for 24 hours.</p>

Symptoms	COVID-19 Test Result:	Management of Individual:
		<p>Take second rapid test in 24-48 hours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If negative, continue isolating until symptoms resolve before cautiously resuming normal activities. If positive, continue isolation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully vaccinated: 5 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer, plus 5 days of wearing a mask at all times whenever they are in public place and/or in the company of another person (no exceptions permitted). If schools find this operationally challenging to accommodate, the consistent use of a 10 day absence prior to return, for both immunized and non-immunized cases, is an acceptable approach Not fully vaccinated: 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer
	Not tested	<p>Student: If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath or loss of sense of taste/smell, follow instructions for symptomatic positive above.</p> <p>Adult: If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, loss of taste/smell or runny nose, follow instructions for symptomatic positive above.</p> <p>Student: If other symptoms (chills, sore throat/painful swallowing, runny nose/congestion, feeling unwell/fatigued, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, unexplained loss of appetite, muscle/joint aches, headache or conjunctivitis):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ONE symptom: stay home, monitor for 24h. If improves, return when well enough to go (testing not necessary). TWO symptoms OR ONE symptom that persists or worsens: Stay home until symptom(s) resolve <p>Adult: If other symptoms, stay home until symptoms resolve.</p>
Asymptomatic	Positive PCR test	<p>Fully vaccinated staff (i.e. staff who have received the complete vaccine series for COVID-19 and it has been 14 days after the second dose in a two dose series, or one dose in a one dose series (i.e. Janssen vaccine)) or student (2 doses of mRNA vaccine): Isolate for 5 days from the collection date of the swab or from the date when the PCR test was completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For up to five days following their isolation, all fully vaccinated individuals must wear masks whenever they are in a public

Symptoms	COVID-19 Test Result:	Management of Individual:
		<p>place and/or in the company of another person (no exceptions permitted). If schools find this operationally challenging to accommodate, the consistent use of a 10 day absence prior to return, for both immunized and non-immunized cases, is an acceptable approach.</p> <p>Not fully vaccinated: Isolate for 10 days from the collection date of the swab or from the date when the PCR test was completed.</p>
	Positive Rapid take-home test	<p>Fully vaccinated staff (i.e. staff who have received the complete vaccine series for COVID-19 and it has been 14 days after the second dose in a two dose series, or one dose in a one dose series (i.e. Janssen vaccine)) or student (2 doses of mRNA vaccine): Isolate for 5 days from the collection date of the swab or from the date when the rapid take-home test was completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For up to five days following their isolation, all fully vaccinated individuals must wear masks whenever they are in a public place and/or in the company of another person (no exceptions permitted). If schools find this operationally challenging to accommodate, the consistent use of a 10 day absence prior to return, for both immunized and non-immunized cases, is an acceptable approach. <p>Not fully vaccinated: Isolate for 10 days from the collection date of the swab or from the date when the rapid take-home test was completed.</p> <p>Individuals can conduct a second test in 24-48 hours, and if negative, and still no symptoms, they do not need to continue to isolate. If test positive on repeat test continue to isolate. If at any time, you develop symptoms, you need to follow isolation instructions for symptomatic individuals.</p>
	Negative	No isolation required.