



## Introduction and Summary

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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.

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 at the start of the school year.
- Reduced visitors, volunteers or external partners in the school building at the start of the school year.
- 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.
- We are asking students in Junior High and High School to continue masking indoors to start the year, as we share a building with children who cannot yet be vaccinated, as well as a number of immuno-compromised individuals.

Some health restrictions will be lifted, including:

- At the direction of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, schools will no longer have the information to inform close contacts of positive cases, but additional health measures may be implemented as the COVID-19 situation evolves, or if outbreaks occur.
- Shared room spaces, such as the auditorium, the Loft, the Makerspace, and the multi-purpose room, can be used.
- Limited off-site activities can resume, including field trips.
- Work Experience practicums can resume, following each workplace's health guidelines.

The health measures put in place by New Heights School for the start of the year will be reviewed before the end of September 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

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- 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

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- 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.
- To start the year, 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.
- 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.
- To start the year, when indoors, in our ECS and Elementary Classrooms (Turtle, Kidd, Skoki, Rundle, Copper), students will continue to practice masking and distancing as children under 12 are currently unable to receive the vaccine. We are asking that our students in junior high and high school also maintain these same practices while our province monitors the trends of the delta variant in Alberta.
- 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 Junior High classrooms may gather for larger activities (this is a maximum of 30 students) and outings. The 3 High school classrooms may also gather for larger activities (this is a maximum of 32 students) and outings. We will be limiting indoor interactions between the High School, Junior High, and Elementary groupings to start the year.
- 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.

## Shared Spaces

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- 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

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## 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 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.

- 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:**

- To start the year, when indoors, in our ECS and Elementary Classrooms (Turtle, Kidd, Skoki, Rundle, Copper), students will continue to practice mandatory masking and distancing as children under 12 are currently unable to receive the vaccine. We are asking our students in junior high and high school to also maintain these same practices while our province monitors the trends of the delta variant in Alberta.
- All staff will be masking when indoors at the start of the year as we continue to monitor the trends during school re-entry.
- 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.
- Masks are an important item on every student's supply list this year.

**Illness at School:**

- If a student becomes ill while they are at school, they will wear a 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

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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.

## **Vaccines:**

- We encourage our staff, parents, and students who are able to access the vaccines for respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19 and influenza.
- It is important for those who are eligible to get vaccinated to reduce the risk to the broader community and those who are unable to receive the vaccine at this time, including children under 12 years old.

## **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, as notification to the school is not required for the individual's case management.
- Individuals are not required to share their COVID-19 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.
- Where absenteeism of 10% or greater has been identified by AHS due to illness, AHS may declare an outbreak and recommend additional voluntary measures to reduce ongoing transmission for the duration of the outbreak, generally 14 days from when the outbreak was declared, unless absenteeism continues to increase. Additional recommendations may include active health screening with questionnaires, increasing frequency of cleaning and disinfection, cohort classrooms, mask recommendations, and/or limiting group/extra-curricular activities.



## Appendix B: Management of Symptomatic Individuals and Individuals Tested for COVID-19

Symptoms	COVID-19 Test Result:	Management of Individual:
Symptomatic	Positive	Isolate for a minimum 10 days or until symptoms have improved AND no fever for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer.
	Negative	Stay home until symptoms resolve.
	Not tested	<p><b>Student:</b> If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath or loss of sense of taste/smell: Isolate for a minimum for 10 days or until symptoms have improved AND afebrile for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer.</p> <p><b>Adult:</b> If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or runny nose: Isolate for a minimum for 10 days or until symptoms have improved AND afebrile for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer.</p> <p><b>Student:</b> 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"> <li>• ONE symptom: stay home, monitor for 24h. If improves, return when well enough to go (testing not necessary).</li> <li>• TWO symptoms OR ONE symptom that persists or worsens: Stay home until symptom(s) resolve (testing recommended but not required).</li> </ul> <p><b>Adult:</b> If other symptoms, stay home until symptoms resolve.</p>
Asymptomatic	Positive	Isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the collection date of the swab.
	Negative	No isolation required.