



# BORDER LAND

## SCHOOL DIVISION

### **Planning for Re-opening and the 2020/2021 school year**

Border Land School Division is planning and preparing for the re-opening of schools in September as well as for the 2020-2021 school year. The planning principles are provided by Manitoba Education and will follow all directions set forth by the Chief Public Health Officer for Manitoba. Throughout all of our planning, the health, safety and well-being of the divisional community is a priority. We want to ensure that BLSD is doing its part to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

I continue to encourage the Border Land community of staff, students, and parents/guardians to check the webpage on a regular basis for both provincial and divisional updates.

The Border Land School Division re-opening plan will involve planning for multiple scenarios that we may be presented with in September but also throughout the next school year. Throughout this pandemic, we have built fluid plans that change as the situation evolves. Our ongoing planning process will continue in the same way and we will continue to consult outside agencies and professionals to help guide us in our thinking.

What follows are details of the planning for re-opening schools in Border Land School Division. We recognize that geography and school enrolment are two critical factors in determining how re-opening will occur in schools. This means that it will look different in different communities across BLSD. As the Provincial Government determines what re-opening stage we will be in Sept 8, your school specific plan will be shared.

I thank you for your continued patience and support as the staff of BLSD work to navigate this unprecedented time of uncertainty. Please continue to be well and take care.

Krista Curry, Superintendent

## **Table of Contents**

Introduction  
School Attendance  
School Calendar  
Provincial Assessments  
Institutional Preparedness  
Student and Family Preparedness  
Learning Preparedness  
School Staff Preparedness

## **Introduction**

In July and August 2020, the BLSO leadership team will continue to refine the plan for reopening of schools in September and will update the divisional webpage as information becomes available. Staff will begin to return to schools on September 2 to review the plan information and expectations and to finalize their school's preparedness plan.

Our new reality is such that a constant on-going assessment of risk and public health measures to mitigate risk will continue as the norm until we arrive at the end of the pandemic or a vaccine for COVID-19 becomes available.

Manitoba Education has indicated that there are three possible re-opening scenarios that school divisions are to prepare for:

### **Scenario 1**

- In class learning resumes for all; near normal with public health measures.

### **Scenario 2**

- In-class learning resumes with additional public health measures.
- In-class learning resumes, five days per week, for students in K-8, students with special needs (all grades) and students who require additional supports.
- Schools may increase in-class learning for Grades 9-12 to five days per week if they can maintain physical distancing and limit interaction between different groups of students.
- If not, Grades 9-12 will participate in blended in-class and remote learning, with a minimum of two days in class per week.

### **Scenario 3**

- Limited Use of Schools
  - In-class learning is suspended.
  - Teacher-led remote learning for all K-12 students.

**The province will confirm which scenario will be followed in fall on or before August 1, 2020.**

**Schools will need to be prepared to roll-back in-class learning based on public health advice.**

All scenarios need to ensure they support continued learning and well-being throughout the pandemic.

In July and August BLS D will finalize a comprehensive plan for **Scenario 2** and refine our approach in **Scenario 3** based on the provincial framework.

**Scenario 1** would look very similar to school in September 2019 with in-class learning resuming in a “near normal” situation still requiring some public health measures.

One important exercise that occurred in June has been an audit of spaces in BLS D that would account for the physical distancing and cohort requirements being asked for by public health for **Scenario 2**. These two requirements have us reimagining how school can be organized and function with learning cohorts.

These two requirements also have us planning with the following in mind:

- The use of all spaces in BLS D to develop and have cohorts for learning
- Utilizing teachers and support staff in relationship to smaller learning cohorts
- The design and delivery of curricula in relationship to a blended learning
- The relationship between scheduling and timetabling with cohorting and blended learning

We are using the word “cohort” rather than “classroom” in a purposeful way. In **scenario 2** and **3** of Manitoba’s framework to resume in-class learning, one of the new realities that face us is the ability to manage the circulation and mixing of students outside of their small learning cohort and to consider repurposing all available spaces to allow these smaller learning cohorts to come together in a school.

In some circumstances we may need to look to off site locations to accommodate the cohort size with physical distancing.

It will be an important part of our planning to create and nurture a sense of community for all cohorts in September to ensure that students feel comfortable and can thrive throughout the 2020-2021 school year, regardless of the scenario we find ourselves in.

## **School Attendance**

Unless an underlying health condition prevents a student from being at school, regular attendance is expected.

There may be times where a child needs to stay home or returns home because they exhibit signs of illness.

Barring any exceptional circumstances, if a student is at home, it is expected they engage in remote learning.

## **School Calendar**

Manitoba Education has communicated the following:

The school calendar will have three additional days added prior to Labour Day weekend, meaning the school year will start September 2, 2020 for staff.

Students will return to class on Tuesday September 8, 2020.

September 2, 3, and 4 are mandated as non-instructional days. These days will be used by schools to prepare physical spaces, educate staff on public health protocols, and engage collaboratively on approaches to recovery learning and teaching in the 2020-2021 school year.

BLSD will schedule the remaining non-instructional days. All professional development days should be focused on COVID-19 related priorities and response.

Unfortunately, BLSD will not have a 2020-2021 flip calendar. An updated BLSD school year calendar is online and will be provided by your local school.

## **Provincial Assessments**

An update from Manitoba Education on the provincial tests and assessments scheduled for the 2020-2021 school year:

### **Grade 3 and 4 Assessment and Middle Years Assessment**

The provincial data collection associated with the Grade 3 Assessment in Reading, Lecture and Numeracy and Grade 4 Assessment in French Immersion Lecture, as well as the Middle Years Assessment of Key Competencies in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Expository Writing, and Student Engagement will be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year.

Schools and school divisions are encouraged to continue to use the assessments as one of many tools to help identify students' strengths and needs in key competency areas in order to guide instructional planning.

### **Grade 12 Tests**

A decision regarding the status of the Grade 12 provincial tests will be made as more information becomes available regarding the return to school in the fall.

## **Institutional Preparedness**

As mandated by Manitoba Education in Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools, BLSD shall ensure institutional preparedness by:

- Preparing school facilities to accommodate physical distancing, including increased sanitation, hand hygiene and other public health provisions.
- Following the guidelines for re-opening school facilities. These will be updated regularly to reflect new public health orders and guidance.
- Posting information about physical distancing, cleaning, and other public health measures to help schools prepare for in-class learning.
- Planning for adjustments to transportation routes and schedules for all stages of re-opening, including asking parents to transport their own children where possible.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that BLSD will implement to achieve these goals.

### **Health and Safety of our Community**

According to Manitoba Education, "current evidence indicates that staff and students can return to school while protecting individual health and minimizing risks from a public health perspective."

As schools plan for the return of staff and students, a balanced focus on maximizing people's health and wellbeing while mitigating risk is our paramount goal.

### **Contact Tracing**

If a student or staff member reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The principal will immediately advise the superintendent.
- The superintendent will contact public health officials, seek advice, and collaborate with divisional and school colleagues to implement the recommendations of public health officials.

To facilitate contact tracing, schools must:

- Record student attendance in school and on buses regularly and accurately
- Maintain a log of all visitors and itinerant employees that access the building
- Keep groups of students (regular classes in scenario 1 and cohorts in scenario 2) together and avoid interactions between groups - **If there is a case of infection in a school, this practice can help with contact tracing, but also limit potential exposures and drastically reduce the potential number of exposed staff and students.**

Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for other students or staff who would be considered "close contacts" of the individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools must not communicate such information without specific direction from the superintendent and public health officials.

### **Rethinking Spaces in Schools**

Manitoba Education has explicitly stated that resuming in-class learning still requires a level of physical distancing:

- Schools will need to implement strategies to avoid crowding in hallways, entrances and other non-instructional spaces.
- Schools will need to limit nonessential visitors and stagger drop-offs, pick-ups, class times and breaks to the greatest extent possible.
- Schools will not schedule assemblies and gatherings that exceed public health advice.

Manitoba Education recommends keeping groups of students together (cohorting), and preventing circulation and exposure between cohorts where possible, to limit exposure to and spread of COVID-19 while pandemic restrictions are in effect.

Cohorting is recommended but not required if two metre spacing between students is possible.

The extent to which cohorting will occur will depend on available space, age of students, and students' developmental ability to follow safety protocols, school configurations and staffing requirements.

We are planning to meet the requirements for physical distancing and cohorting of students by analyzing and implementing the completed space audit of schools to determine how appropriately sized cohorts of students can be spread out across a school's footprint and in some instances require satellite locations in other buildings.

### **Rethinking Learning and Teaching**

The three re-opening scenarios will require us to reimagine teachers and support staff in relationship to smaller learning cohorts of students and a holistic approach to learning and teaching.

Some staff assignments will need to change temporarily.

To ensure all 3 schooling scenarios are successful we need to co-create and co-articulate a K-12 learning journey that values essential learning with relevancy and creativity as much as rigour and accountability.

Manitoba Education makes explicit that 2020-2021 will require school systems to continue to refine their 'Blended Learning' strategy.

- Teacher-directed remote learning will be an essential component of K-12 education throughout the pandemic.
- Asynchronous (working independently on their own) and synchronous (working with a teacher in real-time) options will need to be refined.
- Remote and blended in-class and remote learning plans may need to be implemented on short notice.

- Remote learning plans will also need to be developed for students with underlying health conditions that prohibit them from returning to in-class learning (before broad access to a vaccine) and students in 14-day quarantine or isolation.

BLSD will continue to

- Monitor students that require support to obtain access to devices and the Internet
- Enhance staff access to technology (devices, software and systems) to ensure the ongoing development of its 'blended learning strategy'
- Refine its 'blended learning strategy' by meaningfully engaging staff, students and parents/guardians to develop their technical proficiency and capacities

### **Online and Technology Capacity**

BLSD will continue to leverage technology (Microsoft Office 365, Microsoft Teams and SeeSaw) to support learning for all three planning scenarios. Since the beginning of the pandemic, our priorities have been:

- Ensuring students have access by
  - loaning out divisional devices for student use
  - supporting wifi access to utilize Teams
- Offering professional development support for teachers to transition to an online teaching environment
- Enhance technology in the classroom for staff and students

### **Student Transportation**

On June 25, Manitoba Education released "Guidelines for Transportation to Schools" for the 2020-21 school year.

BLSD is working diligently on the student transportation plan.

School bus transportation to and from the school is an integral part of the plan. Based on the June 25, 2020 guidelines, the school buses will be operating at 50 per cent capacity or less due to physical distancing requirements. In order to meet the needs of approximately 1700 students who get to school on one of our busses, we will need the support of families to find alternative means of transportation in 2020-2021.

We are currently considering a range of temporary options to reduce the number of students on busses. Some of our thoughts include the following:

- Staggered bus pick up times, where the same route will be run twice at the beginning and end of the day
- Not offering transportation to K-6 students in an urban area living less than 1.6 km away from the school

In order to better assess the needs of our transported students, parents served by our transportation department will receive an important survey to be completed in July. It is

important that we connect with bus families. We understand that any decision to reduce or alter our regular ridership will impact many families, but our goal is to ensure school bus transportation is provided to those students who have no other means of getting to and from their school.

### **Student Services and Clinical Services**

Student Services and Clinical Services staff are also preparing for a 'new reality' in 2020-2021 school year that may include smaller student cohorts, remote learning, ongoing disruptions to on-site learning due to student health and pandemic restrictions, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other changes required to adapt to pandemic restriction requirements.

BLSD Schools regularly engage in student-specific, classroom and school-level student services planning. BLSD will strive to support students with additional needs in school settings where and when possible.

It is expected there may be an ongoing need for some remote learning due to possible changes in provincial public health restrictions or more frequent student health barriers to onsite learning. During pandemic restrictions, which may increase or decrease quickly, school teams will need to navigate various contexts for student support including small cohorts onsite and remote learning. It will be important that student-specific planning include continual capacity building for remote learning and use of technology for communication and learning where possible, to mitigate disruptions in learning when students are not able to attend school. Please see important additional information from Manitoba Education: [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#).

### **Priorities**

- Wellbeing of students, families and staff
- A focus on equity for our most vulnerable students
- Maintaining connections between school staff and students

### **Guidelines**

- Student specific resources/ supports and services can be effectively provided remotely if necessary.
- We will continue with our service delivery models as is possible. Ongoing capacity building (identification and preparation) for remote and small cohort learning opportunities will be important.
- Remote learning comes in many forms and is not always online learning.
- Engagement and dialogue with families is key.
- Schools and families have local contexts that they must navigate.
- Planning and time for planning are key.
- We will adopt a [Growth Mindset](#): we are in a novel situation and we will learn and improve service delivery.

### **Issues Requiring Additional Planning During Pandemic Restrictions**

- Student and staff physical and mental health and well-being
- Student transition planning
- Planning for students unable to follow physical distancing requirements
- Designing cohorts where students with greatest needs have the greatest access to necessary professional staff, support, and spaces
- Reducing staff and student circulation in schools
- Ongoing Remote learning
- Special needs transportation
- Home situation and family/childcare availability
- Equipment and space sharing and cleaning
- Appropriate understanding, use, care, and disposal of PPE

#### Guidance for School Administration

- Principals are responsible to lead and organize the school's support team collaboration (Administrators, Resource Teachers, Guidance Teachers, etc.).
- Review Manitoba Education's Covid-19: [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#) with school team.
- Review Manitoba Education's Covid-19: [Guidelines on Support Students Who Require Interventions or Supports that Cannot be Delivered at a Distance](#) with school team.
- Lead and support the school team's planning for comprehensive school health and well-being, including planning proactively to anticipate stress behaviours in students by optimizing physical spaces, establishing universal classroom routines, and teaching students about self-regulation.
- Arrange School Support Team Meetings
  - Confirm scheduled meetings and provide options for MS Teams participation.
  - Invite Clinicians assigned to your school to your team meetings to participate in planning as needed.
  - Maintain communication with Student Services Manager and invite to your team meetings for specific support requests.
  - Provide information to team members in advance where possible to make meetings more efficient.
- Use and collect data to identify Students at-risk due to pandemic or family circumstances (access to technology, requiring 'Student Specific Planning', well-being, loss of contact with student/family, etc.).
- Update class profiles and student-specific planning to include remote learning and physical distancing requirements as necessary.
- Prepare transition planning, intakes, and cohort configurations for 2020-2021 year.
- Support collaborative problem solving and open communication with the entire staff
- Plan ongoing necessary communication and training for staff to work safely with students including:
  - Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - [Guidelines on Supporting Students Who Require Interventions or Supports that Cannot be Delivered from a Distance](#)
  - Safe Work Procedures

### Important Tasks During Pandemic Disruptions

- Review and assign case management to staff
- Review and implement Manitoba Education's Covid-19 guidelines for [Case Managers: Reaching out to Parents/Caregivers](#) with staff
- Ensure early connection with parents/guardians is established to create an ongoing communication plan
- Review Class Profiles, and transition information with teachers and identify students requiring new student-specific planning in the current context
- Plan meeting dates with the School Support Team as soon as possible and invite Clinicians or Student Services Manager
- Have general resources for parents prepared in advance specific to their child's needs
- Case Manager arranges virtual Student Specific planning meetings for students to establish educational continuance goals and planning with parents and school teams.
- Prepare resources/supports and arrange services/connections to support students with tier 2 and tier 3 programming
- Re-evaluate transportation plans and supports as necessary

### Communication

- All communication to parents should use plain, direct, accessible language
- It is essential to connect with parents/guardians to understand their circumstances and needs, to establish a consistent and predictable communication plan, and share information to inform student-specific planning whether at school or at home.
- We need to provide notice to families regarding specific tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 supports that student services will provide to their children remotely if necessary.
- Arrange regular, ongoing check-ins with families (phone, email, online tools, etc.)
- Use check-ins to discuss resources, supports and services, prioritize learning needs, problem-solve learning and behavioural issues at home, and customize the daily schedule for students
- Help to overcome individual obstacles to accessing materials and resources
- Scheduled times with students and families is recommended
- Consider office hours and staff accessibility
- Specific hours in the day parents can sign-up for ahead of time and touch base with a specific person at the school

### Guiding Resource Teacher Service Delivery During Remote Learning

- Co-plan inclusive, developmentally appropriate learning activities with teachers and develop learning resources for parents/students
- Provide student-specific planning support for teachers and families
- Support student-specific planning implementation
- Support outreach for students in-risk and struggling to engage in remote learning easily
- Support understanding of each child's remote learning environment and current considerations for student-specific plans

- Support teachers in the identification of students' learning recovery needs upon return to school

#### Domains of Remote Service Delivery (where necessary)

- Providing Supports and Resources for remote learning activities
- Providing remote instruction and services (small group and individualized)

#### Student Specific Plans

- Learning should be enjoyable and promote relationship, communication and wellbeing
- Student specific goals must consider new learning environments and supports available
- Consider greater use of outdoor spaces
- Move from student-specific programming to cohorts of students with common needs where possible to reduce social isolation and staff circulation/distribution of resources and needs for spaces. Inclusion must be meaningful and purposeful, not merely physical/social.
- Assets and resources available to students will vary
- Co-planning and co-constructing using a team approach with parents/guardians and older students is even more essential
- Whether curricular or student-specific, goals should be developmentally appropriate and relevant and appropriate for onsite or remote learning contexts
- Focus on making curriculum learning accessible (accommodation, adaptation, modification if the student is eligible)

### **The Role of Support Staff Working with Students During Pandemic Restrictions in BLSD**

BLSD recognizes the value of its support staff and their contributions in supporting the inclusion of all students in our schools. During the pandemic period, the learning environment has changed to include remote learning and learning in schools in smaller cohorts with public health restrictions. As a result, the context and possibilities for meaningful work for support staff working with students have changed.

Support Staff will play an important role in supporting the transition of students back to schools and greater supervision responsibilities as we work to organize students into smaller cohorts needed to respect physical distancing requirements. **Support staff who work with students will experience changes in expectations and assignments as required to supervise and support students in their cohorts.**

However, the distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of support staff and professional staff have not changed. The norms for roles and responsibilities, and the requirement for professional staff to plan for and assess learning, provide initial instruction to students and support staff, and to schedule and manage communication between staff, students and parents/guardians, remains in effect. For clarity on roles and responsibilities please see the document [Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools](#).

The following applies to engaging support staff in work with students:

- Support staff may have increased responsibility for supervision and support of student learning planned by professional staff.
- Remote student engagement is to be scheduled and supervised by the teacher/supervisor in Teams in collaboration and as planned with students, staff and parents/guardians.
- It will be understood that professional staff will join and supervise/participate in the remote or onsite learning activities with a frequency and duration as they deem appropriate and necessary depending upon the learning task, the staff/student relationship and familiarity with each other, the learning task, and other factors which may require more direct support.
- Professional staff will be available to support as needed
- Support staff will communicate student progress or other feedback to supervising professional staff daily and not to parents/guardians
- Only professional staff will communicate with parents regarding students as per normal protocols.

During any future class suspension period, the assignment of meaningful work for support staff will be directed by school administration and will support our current Student Support Services priorities. Meaningful work includes the following:

- Support home learning by assisting with check-ins and maintaining connections
- Offer supplemental support and encouragement to students as staff are capable and trained to do.
- Follow-up and reinforce instruction provided by teachers
- Support reading/speaking activities (especially in 2nd language programming)
- Review social stories and assist with transition activities
- Help prepare resources, supplies, and care packages for students
- Support learning resource creation guided by teachers (e.g. .ppt, videos, print resources, visual schedules)
- Engage in other normal duties to support professional staff and students as assigned

### **Board Meetings**

The Border Land School Board will continue to meet regularly throughout 2020-2021 (see schedule). Should a public health order restrict physical gatherings, meetings will occur via electronic means. Public participation is welcome.

### **Community Use of Schools**

Community use of schools for evening and weekend facility use are suspended until further notice. The suspension will accommodate increased cleaning requirements and afford schools greater flexibility to repurpose gyms and multipurpose rooms for other types of instruction.

### **New Student Registrations**

We can expect that families will continue to relocate within the BLS D boundaries both in summer and throughout the school year.

To guide the safe and successful welcoming and registration of new students, the following guidelines apply:

- Families new to BLS D must contact the school by phone or email to arrange a registration appointment. Families who are uncertain of which school to contact can contact the Board Office for assistance.
- The school will arrange an appropriate time and mechanism for registering new students (in-person, online, or other).
- If the family is relocating from a region that warrants a mandatory quarantine or isolation period, they may be asked to verify their travel dates, and quarantine dates and plans. New registrations will only occur after any mandatory quarantine or isolation period has been completed.
- Scheduling and timetabling of new students may require additional time to comply with distancing and cohort limitations. Families will be advised that this may take more time to arrange than normally occurs.

### **Out-of-Province Student and Staff Travel**

All out-of-province student travel is suspended for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year. A similar suspension of any BLS D-related staff travel is likewise in place. The travel ban will be reviewed no later than October 31, 2020, regarding any trips intended for the period from January 2021 to June 2021.

The rationale for the suspension of travel is as follows:

- The concern for student and staff safety and wellbeing.
- Continued uncertainty about predicting the spread, impact, and potential second wave occurrences of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Travel restrictions and quarantine requirements vary across regions and countries.
- Significant and unpredictable insurance issues regarding both medical and liability insurance for travellers and the Division.
- Unpredictable cost projections due to uncertainty regarding the availability and cost of transportation, variability of currencies and exchange rates.
- Reducing the financial impact on families by cancelling trips with as much advance notice as possible.

### **Student and Family Preparedness**

As mandated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#), BLS D shall promote student and family preparedness by:

- Identifying students with disabilities and those who are vulnerable to disengage from school, develop and implement strategies to re-engage them and prioritize these students for five days a week in-class learning, where possible.
  - Refer to [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#) for principles and practical resources to assist with planning.
- Communicating expectations for in-class attendance and participation in remote learning.
  - Students are expected to attend in-class learning. If remote learning is included as part of their learning plan, students will be expected to participate.
  - Students who are unable to return to school due to personal or family health risks factors related to COVID-19 will be supported in remote learning.
- Developing comprehensive strategies for regular communication with families to raise awareness of the health and safety measures implemented at the school
- Ensuring the understanding that students may not attend school when sick or exhibiting symptoms of illness.
  - Refer to the online COVID-19 screening tool to develop materials.
  - Signal that in-class learning may be increased or suspended on short notice in response to changing public health advice

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that BLS D will implement to achieve these goals.

### **Modifying Behaviours that Mitigate the Risk**

There are many uncertainties about the COVID-19 pandemic that may cause us to feel stress. How long will the pandemic last? How long will I have to work from home? How long until I can return to school full time? Will I or my loved ones get sick?

We are not in control of the answers to these questions and spending too much time worrying about them may make us feel worse. Some things that you **CAN control daily**:

- **Stay home** if you show any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue)
- Wash hands regularly
- Exercise every day
- Spend time outside
- Take time to focus on breathing
- Treat others with kindness
- Focus on schoolwork
- Talk with friends or family members on the phone or online

## **Student Screening and Self-Assessment**

Students must be in good health to attend school. Before leaving for school parents/guardians are to use the [Manitoba COVID-19 Screening Tool](#), using the following guidelines:

- If a student shows any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue) they should remain at home.
- If a person in the household has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province, they are required to consult with [Health Links](#) prior to attending school and follow their directions.

## **Reporting and Contact Tracing**

In the event of a student or member of the same household reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The parent/guardian will immediately advise the school principal.
- The school and division will work with public health officials.

To facilitate contact tracing, schools will record attendance regularly and accurately. Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for other students or staff who would be considered "close contacts" of the individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools will not communicate such information without specific direction from their superintendent and public health officials.

## **Personal Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

- Students will use hand sanitizer or wash their hands immediately upon entry into the school.
- Students will be instructed to follow all floor signage such as directional arrows or physical distancing spacing at all times within the school building.
- Personal hygiene practices that minimize the risk of virus transmission must be followed at all times. These include:
  - covering the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow
  - immediately disposing of used tissues in a garbage container
  - washing hands frequently, particularly after coughing or sneezing without a tissue, touching frequently used surfaces such as door handles or taps as well as before and after eating
  - avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth
- Cleaning and sanitizing of shared spaces will be a priority in BLS D schools and facilities. Washrooms will be cleaned on a regular basis according to health and safety guidelines.

## **Communication**

Our divisional website will continue to provide the most up to date and comprehensive information for students and families. Regular email updates will also be provided.

BLSD will continue to engage all stakeholders as we approach a return to schools in the fall to share up-to-date plans and procedures for re-entry and gather feedback from employee groups and various provincial organizations to support the safe return to school.

## **Learning Preparedness**

As mandated by Manitoba Education in Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools, BLSD shall ensure learning preparedness by:

- Planning for recovery learning.
- Developing action plans to address students' recovery learning needs identified in the June 2020 report card and referring to the Recovery Learning Guidelines to inform this planning.
- Adapting schedules to facilitate levels of physical distancing (outdoor classrooms, frequent and staggered hand-washing breaks, staggered recesses and lunch breaks, physical distancing measures in place in classrooms and bathrooms).
- Planning for blended in-class and remote learning models and referring to the list of learning resources for educators provided on the Manitoba Education website.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that BLSD will implement to achieve these goals.

Manitoba Education has defined [Recovery Learning](#) as the "process to enable Manitoba students to transition back from remote learning to classroom learning in schools, while addressing their mental and physical wellbeing and academic success". [Manitoba Education](#) highlights the following principles for school teams to reference as we plan for students' return to school:

- When in-class learning resumes, schools will plan for a period of reorientation to classroom routines, rebuilding community and relationships, and planning for instruction. In September 2020, educators will use their existing assessment processes, along with the information provided on recovery needs on the June 2020 report card.
- Dialogue between the previous year's teacher(s) and the current teacher(s) will aid in transition planning. Families may add insights about the student's experiences with remote learning. Schools should ensure that there are sufficient supports in place to facilitate this dialogue, as well as joint planning among colleagues, parents, and students.
- Recovery learning will differ according to the opportunities and constraints of the school year. Schools are encouraged to develop a flexible learning approach and allow the

implementation of recovery learning to vary according to the needs of the students, the opportunities and constraints of the school schedule, and available resources

[Manitoba Education](#) requires that the following considerations be incorporated into planning for the return to school:

- School teams will need to review the diverse student and educator experiences that will have unfolded during the suspension of classes and intentionally address the mental wellbeing of the school community upon their return to school.
- Students who are most at risk due to the disruption of their learning will require additional supports when classes resume so that they may reach their full learning potential within their grade level.
- Schools will need to plan for varying lengths of time, as well as diverse models and strategies for recovery learning, depending on student needs, grade levels, subject areas, and school contexts.
- There may be additional waves of COVID-19 over the next 18 to 24 months, and recovery learning and alternate ways of addressing learning needs will be considered as part of this planning.

### **Responding to the Needs of Students**

Establishing a safe return to school and the building of school and classroom communities alongside recovery learning is the primary focus of the first six weeks of school and may extend further as needed or even recur should subsequent waves of COVID-19 take place. School teams will leverage existing structures such as opening day conferences and class profiles to plan for both the socioemotional and academic needs of students.

If, as expected, recovery learning needs are greater this fall than in a typical year, these processes will be even more important than ever. A coordinated, collaborative, intentional and responsive approach to recovery learning will promote accelerated learning.

### **Planning for Recovery Learning is Not New**

Each year, students arrive in classrooms with varying abilities. To mitigate this reality and thus promote the success of each student, schools employ a number of valuable processes, notably:

- Referencing learning goals indicated on the final report card
- Holding transition meetings between the teachers of the current and previous years
- Holding Opening Day Conferences to learn more about students directly from families
- Conducting baseline assessments and addressing gaps in learning by re-teaching concepts before introducing new content
- Preparing class profiles to document Tier 1, 2 & 3 strategies

### **School Staff Preparedness**

As mandated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#), BLSD shall ensure staff preparedness and compliance with Public Health orders and guidelines

in all our schools and workplaces by:

- Orienting staff to new public health protocols that must be followed in the school, before resuming in-class learning.
- Including all staff in orientation, including bus drivers, custodial staff, etc.
- Providing orientation to volunteers, if they are on site in a limited way, to ensure they receive orientation when they begin.
- Using the online [COVID-19 screening tool](#) to inform staff orientation.
- Presenting information on self-monitoring, managing a suspected case of COVID-19, managing shared spaces, etc.
- Identifying staff who may need to work at home due to underlying health concerns that make them more vulnerable to exposure to COVID-19, and making any necessary adjustments.
- Planning for health and safety training that may be required, and also ensuring that professional learning focuses on COVID-19 pandemic priority areas, including recovery learning, collaborative planning, mental health and wellbeing and remote learning strategies.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that BLSA will implement to achieve these goals.

### **Modifying Behaviours That Mitigate Risk**

To ensure the safety of the work environment for all, staff will adhere to the safety protocols created by MSBA and keep abreast of updated procedures and protocols.

In the event that a family member of the staff person in the same household reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The staff member will immediately advise their direct supervisor.
- The school and division will work with public health officials.

### **Staff Screening and Self-Assessment**

Staff members must be in good health to attend work. Before leaving for the worksite all staff are to use the [Manitoba Health COVID-19 Screening Tool](#), using the following guidelines:

- Any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue) they should remain at home.
- If a person in the household has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province, they are required to consult with [Health Links](#) prior to attending school.

### **Reporting and Contact Tracing**

To facilitate contact tracing, staff attendance will be tracked at each location.

Visitors to schools and itinerant Divisional Employees will upon entry to each work site, sign-in on the Entry Log with the date, name, and entry time, and the location(s) being accessed in the building. Staff will need to sign-out their departure time on the Entry Log.

Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for staff who would be considered "close contacts" of any individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools will not communicate such information without specific direction from their superintendent and public health officials.

### **Personal Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

It is especially important to clean your hands:

- After coughing or sneezing
- When caring for a sick person
- Before, during and after you prepare food
- Before eating
- After toilet use
- When hands are visibly dirty

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands, or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

Physical distancing [measures](#) to reduce your risk of infection:

- Minimize prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two meters/ six feet) contact between your co-workers and other individuals in public.
- Where possible, meet with colleagues online or via telephone instead of in person.
- Avoid greetings that involve touching, such as handshakes.
- Avoid travel, crowded places, and events, especially if you are at higher risk (e.g., seniors and those with underlying medical conditions).
- Disinfect frequently used surfaces in your workspace.
- Follow public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have been exposed to COVID-19 through travel or contact with someone infected with COVID-19.

### **Safety-Related Adaptations to Teaching and Learning**

The Province of Manitoba has issued the following directives for learning and teaching safely during the current public health situation:

- [Sports Guidelines](#)
- [Guidelines for Vocalists and Instrumentalists](#)

BLSD is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of such guidelines and that all guidelines are implemented faithfully. As more guidelines are developed and approved by the Province, BLSD will communicate them to staff and support their implementation.

## Communication

Since the onset of the pandemic, BLS D has strived to communicate effectively with staff through:

- Emails
- Memos
- Announcements and updates in pertinent Microsoft Teams channels

Our divisional website will continue to provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information for staff. Other forms of communication will be used, as deemed appropriate.

BLS D will continue to engage staff as we prepare to return to schools in the fall. Up to date plans and procedures for re-entry will be shared with all staff. Staff are encouraged to check their email prior to returning to school.

It is anticipated that public health orders may change suddenly, prompting an immediate change to existing practices. It is essential that staff stay informed. Staff are expected to check their email regularly. Should the need arise, schools will activate their emergency phone tree to ensure timely communication with staff when class is not in session.

Staff must advise their supervisor immediately should they learn that they or a member of their household has tested positive for COVID-19 or that they or a member of their household has been in close contact with someone that has tested positive for COVID-19. Staff should note their supervisor's contact information so that such communication can occur after school hours, if necessary.

## A Collaborative Approach

No one has previously experienced a global pandemic of this scale. We are living an unprecedented time of dynamic change that requires collaborative, evidence-informed, agile and solution-focused thinking.

In BLS D, we share everyone's hope that September will see us returning to school under **Scenario 1**. Even with the loosening of public health orders and guidelines in **Scenario 1**, the continued vigilant practice of screening for symptoms, hand washing and respiratory hygiene, and some physical distancing, will be required to mitigate health risks.

Most importantly, we need to recognize the likelihood that next school year will bring continued uncertainty and we may find ourselves implementing **all three scenarios**. Learning and teaching will occur in school, at home and a hybrid of both. Whatever the scenario and place from where we learn and teach, we will ensure equity and inclusion are guiding principles.

Collaboration among education systems, schools, staff and families has been key to our ability to thrive and flourish under extraordinarily challenging circumstances.