

January 8, 2022

Dear Parents,

Earlier this week, Education Minister LaGrange confirmed that on **Monday, January 10, 2022**, ECS-12 students will return to in-person learning to support their overall wellbeing. WWSD has spent this weekend revising its operational guidelines document to provide families with important information about changes made over the extended Christmas break. This information will be available [on our website](#) shortly. In the meantime, please be aware of the following:

- All individuals must still review the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) with their children before sending them to school. Staff and students exhibiting any symptoms **must** remain at home until symptoms resolve.
- Federal guidelines currently dictate that staff and students who are not fully vaccinated, including those under the age of 12, must not attend school for 14 days after out-of-country travel [LEARN MORE](#).
- COVID-19 case data will no longer be provided to schools by AHS to support the previous approach to public reporting on COVID-19 in schools. As a result, we will no longer be notifying families about positive cases in schools.
 - We will continue to track student and staff illnesses in schools, and in the case of a high number of student or staff absences, it may become necessary to move to temporary online learning. Temporary online learning will only be used as a last resort when it isn't possible to continue in-person learning due to high numbers of staff or student absences.
- There have been important changes to [isolation and quarantine requirements](#). If staff or students [have symptoms or test positive](#):
 - Fully vaccinated (2 doses or 1 dose Janssen): 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 5 days following isolation, wear a mask at all times when around others at school, including in-class and behind barriers.
 - Not fully vaccinated (1 dose or less): 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.
 - If you test negative and have symptoms, you should still stay home and away from others until symptoms resolve.
- Alberta Education has announced that student safety will be enhanced through access to rapid tests and medical-grade masks. Next week, masks and tests will be distributed to schools to lower the risk of in-school transmission of the Omicron variant of COVID-19.
- Masks continue to be required for grades 4-12 and recommended for K-3. Please ensure students arrive at school with a clean, well-fitting mask every day. Based on our current understanding, expectations for masking will be as follows:
 - Masks must be worn in all hallways and gathering areas of the school and are not required while students are seated in the classroom during instruction if students are working quietly and desks are arranged so students are not facing each other or are separated by a barrier.

- If close contact between students, or students and teachers/staff will occur as a result of classroom activities, masks should be used for the duration of this activity.
 - A teacher/staff may remove a mask when alone at a workstation and separated by at least two metres from all other persons.
 - Masks are required on school buses.
- Rapid tests and masks will be provided for all ECS-12 students and staff, and we will distribute these to schools as soon as we receive them. Initially, rapid test distribution will offer enough rapid test kits for each student and staff member to test twice per week for 2.5 weeks.
 - Rapid tests are to be administered at home, and their use is optional. We encourage families to use the rapid tests twice per week, 72 hours apart (e.g. Sunday and Wednesday or Monday and Thursday). More information about rapid tests is available [online](#). In addition, there is a how-to video and a rapid test program fact sheet available [HERE](#).
 - January diploma examinations for senior high students are cancelled. No decision has been made about the April and June diploma examinations. Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) are postponed to the week of January 20.
 - Beginning January 11, students in grades 4 to 9 and their parents can access free online tutoring through the e-Tutoring Hub to catch up on important skills and learning. The online tutoring services will be expanded over time based on feedback from school authorities, parents and students. A link will be shared as soon as it becomes available.
 - Co-curricular activities (field trips for group physical activity, performance activities and recreational activities that occur during the school day) can resume. If your school chooses to continue with off-sites activities, they will have plans in place for COVID safety while travelling and attending any offsite activity. This includes physical distancing, use of masks, cohorting for students in kindergarten through grade 6, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and enhanced cleaning and disinfection.
 - Extracurricular activities (concerts, fine art performances, and athletics) will resume in Westwind and spectators are welcome to attend. Schools will have the autonomy to decide if attendance will be 1/3 capacity or involve more spectators under the [Restrictions Exemption Program](#). Please check with the host school on which spectator program is being used for each specific activity.

We understand families may have additional questions. We ask for patience as we amend our operational guidelines, which will provide more comprehensive details. Thank you for your continued understanding and co-operation. Please reach out to your school with any questions.

Westwind School Division