

**March 14, 2020**

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Today, the Alberta Chief Medical Officer of Health gave **new directions** to our schools that will be effective, **Monday, March 16, 2020.**

We wanted to share the following with our families. We are now following the [Alberta Guidance for Schools and Child Care Programs document](#).

Our school division will have a zero tolerance policy for any children with **any respiratory symptoms** attending school. Teachers will be asked to closely monitor their classrooms and if any student is having respiratory symptoms such as cough or symptoms of a mild cold, the steps below should be followed. The same steps should be followed if a staff member begins to experience respiratory symptoms.

- If a student, child or staff develops respiratory symptoms while at school, they should be removed from the school environment.
- Schools promptly separate the student/child or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, muscle aches and including symptoms that may seem like a mild cold) in an area separate from others, with adequate supervision until they can go home.
- To help prevent transmission, the most important steps are to reinforce strict respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene practices and to have the ill student/child or staff stay two meters away from others. If possible, the student should be placed in a separate room from other students/children with a closed door. Any rooms they have been in while symptomatic will be cleaned and disinfected before others enter them.
- Masks provide a level of protection when worn by a symptomatic person. It is acknowledged that it is neither practical nor feasible to have schools procure masks at this time, therefore adhere to strict respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection.
- Schools will notify parents/guardians if their child begins to experience respiratory symptoms while at school and arrange for immediate pick up.
- Students/children who begin to show respiratory symptoms while at school should be picked up by their parent/guardian and avoid travel on public transport, such as school buses.
- Schools will clean and disinfect any rooms the student/child was in while symptomatic. There is no need to take any further special precautions or to close the school.
- Students/children or staff who develop respiratory symptoms should be kept home for 14 days after the start of the symptoms.
- If students/children are tested for COVID-19, those who test negative will be advised individually about return to school settings.

Since younger children may not always be able or willing to identify or disclose symptoms, they will be closely monitored by staff for symptoms.

Thanks for working together as the situation continues to evolve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Finnigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped 'F' and a long, sweeping tail.

Kathleen Finnigan  
Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools