

Return to School Plan 2021-2022



Park West School Division
Learners Today, Leaders Tomorrow

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Introduction

Park West School Division is providing this document as an overview of the plans to allow for the safe return of students and staff to our schools. We look forward to working collaboratively with students, families, and our communities to help mitigate risk.

This year, schools are opening at Limited Risk (Yellow) level which means that it will be near normal operations. Students will return to full-time, in-class learning, while continuing to implement Public Health fundamentals, masks in indoor areas and buses, hand hygiene, and staying home when sick. For the Public Health fundamentals, see:

<https://gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/focus-on-the-fundamentals.html>

On August 5, Manitoba education and health representatives shared details on a "Safe Return to School". The full document is available at:

https://news.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/newslinks/2021/08/K-12_FallPlanning_Aug2021_FNL.pdf

The guidance in the "Safe Return to School" document included the following:

- Full-time return of Kindergarten to Grade 12 students.
- Cohorts will be used for Kindergarten to Grade 6 students.
- Students and staff will continue to follow the fundamentals of self-screening, hand hygiene, and staying home when sick.
- School transportation will return to pre-COVID policies and practices with some additional requirements such as additional cleaning and assigned seating.
- Music and Band will be allowed while ensuring adequate ventilation and physical distancing.
- Kitchens and cafeterias will be open with additional guidelines.
- Extracurricular activities and field trips are permitted in accordance with Public Health guidelines and orders.
- Immunocompromised students or those with household members who are immunocompromised will be able to access remote learning opportunities

The Province recently made two additional announcements related to the Return to School:

- A K-12 mask mandate for all indoor public settings, including schools and buses.
- A requirement for all provincial employees who work with vulnerable populations, including education workers, to be fully immunized for COVID-19 or undergo regular testing.

Assessing and Addressing Learning Impacts

The impacts of COVID-19 on student learning will be felt in the 2021–2022 school year and beyond. The school division and schools will incorporate the following principles into their approach to addressing the impacts of COVID-19 on student learning:

- Addressing the mental well-being of students and staff once in class learning has resumed, as a foundation for learning
- Using assessments to further understand the impacts of COVID-19 for learners, examining themes across classes and school communities and using the results to inform planning
- Understanding individual students' unique strengths and needs
- Building plans that acknowledge the diversity of student and educator experiences during the pandemic

Returning to In-Class Learning:

Recognizing that students are returning to school with more varied learning experiences than usual, all schools are planning to support students with learning as needed. Learning is not a one-time event. It will continue to be viewed as an ongoing process throughout the school year. Learning gaps will be identified and monitored.

To support on-going learning, your child's teacher will employ the following approaches:

- Initial assessments will be conducted to provide a starting point for teachers; however information will continue to be collected
- Teachers will plan for instruction using this information
- Students will be provided with a variety of opportunities to learn and to demonstrate understanding

Assessment & Reporting:

Students' learning will be assessed on an ongoing basis to ensure that next steps are being appropriately planned. Learning that occurs in classrooms or remotely will be assessed using good assessment practices that focus on the essential understandings of the curriculum. Assessment and reporting continues to follow the guidelines and policies established by Manitoba Education and reflected in the following Park West policies and procedures.

The Province has announced that there will be no Grade 12 provincial exams this year as they transition to new assessments. Classroom-based exams / assessments will replace these provincial exams.

Remote Learning

Some students may require remote learning immediately. Others may require remote learning due to changes with respect to their personal circumstances or Public Health orders.

Remote Learning for Immunocompromised Students:

- Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre will provide remote learning for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 who are immunocompromised or who have family members who are immunocompromised.
- InformNet, Teacher Mediated Options and possible learning with the support of the home school are available for students in Grades 9 to 12 who are immunocompromised.

Possible Remote Learning for Other Students:

If additional remote learning is required for larger numbers of students due to Public Health orders, Park West School Division will employ remote teaching and learning.

- At-home learning will be facilitated by teachers who may support their students via online platforms and print-based materials, with outreach for students who are at-risk.
- Small groups of students will be scheduled to meet with their teachers at the school if permitted by Public Health measures and the provisions of the provincial Limited Use of Schools guidelines.
- Regular personal connections will be made with students and families via phone, email or other online platforms.
- For Grades K-8, teacher-directed learning will focus on literacy and numeracy with opportunities for science and social studies, physical education/health education and the arts through cross-curricular planning.
- For Grades 9-12, teachers will prioritize learning outcomes/expectations and plan specific curriculum-related tasks for students.

Requests for remote learning should be made to your local principal.

Homeschooling:

Families who choose to educate their children at home can find more information about homeschooling by contacting:

Homeschooling Office
 Manitoba Education and Training
 1567 Dublin Ave. Winnipeg, MB R3E 3J5
 Phone: 204.945.8138
 Email: homeschooling@gov.mb.ca

Public Health Measures

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment:

- The Province has mandated masks for all students and staff in all buildings and buses.
- Masks will be available to students and staff who require them.
- Mask may be removed when staff or students are seated with physical distancing of 2 metres. Mask breaks may also be scheduled in areas where physical distancing is not possible.
- When students are working in groups, masks should be worn.
- Divisional staff should wear medical masks upon entering schools and keep them on in all public areas and in locations in which physical distancing is not possible.
- Students and staff requesting an exemption from the mask requirement must provide a medical note that:
 - Has been issued by a medical professional.
 - Is on official letterhead.
 - Is dated.
 - Clearly states the person's name and that they have a medical condition that prevents them from wearing a mask.
- Additional guidance regarding mask exemptions may be found at https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/docs/mask_exemption.pdf

Vaccine Requirement:

- All school division employees must be fully vaccinated by October 31, which means they must get their first dose no later than September 7, the first day of school, and their second dose by October 17.
- Any employee who hasn't been fully vaccinated or who does not show proof of vaccination must take regular COVID-19 tests, up to three times a week for full-time employees.
- The provincial policy does not require vaccination as a condition of employment. Employees have a choice between being fully vaccinated and showing proof of vaccination or undergoing regular COVID testing.
- The details of implementation for this vaccine requirement will be provided by the Province in the near future.

Hand Hygiene:

- Encourage, and where possible supervise, hand hygiene and make alcohol-based hand sanitizer available at all building access points and throughout the school and in classrooms.



Cleaning:

- Increased frequency of cleaning, disinfecting and sanitizing, particularly high-touch surfaces and common/shared areas, will be completed by school custodians.
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces frequently (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, electronic devices, chairs, desks, art supplies, toys, games, gym equipment, tools and equipment).
- Increase monitoring of hand cleaning supplies to ensure an ample supply at all sinks in washroom and kitchen areas.

Physical Distancing:

- Two metres of physical distancing is required, to the greatest extent possible.
- Arrange spaces and schedules to encourage the recommended separation.
- Schools will manage the flow of people in common areas, including hallways and washrooms, to minimize crowding and allow for the ease of people passing through.
- Schools will implement the practice of staggered entrance and exit times or use separate entrances (if feasible).
- Signage and floor markings will be used to assist with traffic flow.
- Libraries and other common spaces will have seating arranged to maintain 2-metre spacing.
- No shared lockers unless for students from the same household.
- Singing and wind instruments require 2-metre physical distancing.

Cohorts:

- Schools will use cohorts for Kindergarten to Grade 6 to assist with limiting potential close contacts and to minimize exposure for students who are not yet eligible for vaccinations.
- Cohorts are not required for students in Grades 7-12 unless those students are in combined classes with students in Grades K-8.
- Whenever possible, keep children and staff together with the same cohort throughout the day, including lunch breaks and recesses. Locations of classrooms, use of additional space and timetabling by cohorts can all be considered to reduce mixing.
- Stagger schedules and movement of cohorts to avoid being in shared spaces (e.g., foyers, hallways) at the same time.
- Avoid the movement of classes of students where possible. It is preferable that teachers move between classrooms instead of students.
- Keep daily records that include the names of students, staff, and volunteers of cohorts.

Shared/Common Spaces:

- Monitor access to the school to avoid congestion.
- Ensure washrooms and lunchrooms are cleaned/disinfected frequently.
- Water fountains that are not touchless or cannot be cleaned between users must be turned off.
- Encourage outdoor activities. Outdoor spaces and playground structures can be used.
- Remove materials (toys, furniture, etc.) that are not easily cleaned.
- Ensure physical distancing in areas such as guided reading tables and learning carpets.

Recess/Breaks:

- Playgrounds and play structures will be open to students. Possible class and/or cohort grouping usage of play structures may occur on a rotational schedule if deemed necessary by school administration.
- Public Health advises that playgrounds and play structures are low risk for transmission. There are no recommended specific requirements for cleaning play structures.
- Ensure handwashing or hand hygiene is performed before and after recess.
- Custodial / maintenance staff will complete regular checks for play structure safety.

Transportation:

- School transportation will return to pre-COVID policies and practices with some additional cleaning requirements.
- Buses will be at full capacity.
- Assigned seating will be retained and attendance taken daily.
- Students from the same household will sit together to the greatest extent possible.
- Additional transportation guidelines are found at the end of this document.

Schools will begin the school year at the **Caution (Yellow)** level of the Pandemic Response System.

**CAUTION**

The spread of COVID-19 is at low to moderate levels.

Household and close contact transmission is occurring in Manitoba.

There may be multiple and isolated small cluster outbreaks (or a small number of larger outbreaks) which are mostly contained.

Community transmission is low and/or localized/geographically limited.

Protocol for Students and Staff Who Exhibit Symptom:

- Symptom screening must occur prior to the start of each school day.
- Parents and caregivers are responsible for ensuring their children are not displaying symptoms before sending them to school or on the bus.
- Staff is responsible for self-screening.
- An individual who meets any of the exclusion criteria from the screening must stay home from school and is advised to contact Health Links or their health care provider.
- If a student develops symptoms while at school, they will be isolated in a predetermined isolation space. Where a separate room is not available, students will be kept at least two metres away from others.
- A mask must be worn by the child exhibiting symptoms.
- The student's parent/caregiver will be notified to come and pick them up immediately and instructed to call Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257.
- A symptomatic individual can return to the school once it has been determined that it is safe to do so by their health care provider or Public Health.
- ***A flow chart is attached to this document to help determine when it is safe for to return to school.***

If individuals have one symptom from the Column A or two from Column B, they should isolate and immediately get tested for COVID-19.	
Column A	Column B
Do you have a new onset, or worsening, of any ONE of the following symptoms? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever > 38°C or think you have a fever or chills • Cough • Sore throat/hoarse voice • Shortness of breath/breathing difficulties • Loss of taste or smell • Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours 	Do you have a new onset, or worsening, of any TWO of the following symptoms? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny nose • Muscle aches • Fatigue • Conjunctivitis (pink eye) • Headache • Skin rash of unknown cause • Nausea or loss of appetite • Poor feeding (if an infant)

Responding to Positive Cases in Schools:

- In the event of a confirmation of a case of COVID-19 connected with a school, Public Health will lead the response, conduct contact tracing, and provide guidance.
- Public Health will advise staff and students if they have been in close contact, if they need to self-isolate or self-monitor, and when they can return to school.
- Decisions about school or class closures will be made on a case-by-case basis with Public Health making the determination.
- Classroom teachers will support the development and provision of at-home learning packages for students who are isolating or quarantined as directed by Public Health.

Other Considerations

Classroom set-up:

- Classroom teachers, K-12, are required to set seating plans and all students are required to respect their teacher's seating plan.
- Classrooms and cohort learning environments will be decluttered of all non-essential items to allow for cleaning and to maximize floor space for physical distancing.
- Workspaces, desks, and tables, if at all possible, should be arranged so students are not facing each other or sharing tables.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided and available in all classrooms.
- Animals and pets are permitted in the school. Children and staff who handle animals should perform proper hand hygiene before and after handling.

Community use of facilities:

- Community use of school facilities will resume on October 1.
- This delay in the external use of school facilities will allow schools to assess the return of all students in K-12 during the month of September.

Divisional meetings / Professional development:

- We will minimize large in-person gatherings of divisional staff. It is recommended that the majority of divisional meetings and professional development be held remotely using electronic means.
- When divisional meetings occur in person, require physical distancing of at least 2 metres. Limit group size to the greatest extent possible.

Extracurricular:

- Extracurricular activities, including sports and optional programming, are allowed as long as the activities follow current Public Health recommendations and orders at the time.
- Schools will follow the Manitoba High School Athletic Association return to play guidelines as well as those prescribed by the governing bodies of the various sports.
- No out-of-province teams are permitted to participate in exhibition or league games or tournaments.
- As per Manitoba's *Restoring Safe Schools* plan, overnight trips remain prohibited.
- Mask use during sports should follow Public Health guidance for sports in place at the time.
- Schools must manage spectators as per the MHSAA guidelines.
- Extracurricular travel will be by school bus or individual vehicles. No carpooling.
- Additional guidelines regarding the safe return of sports may be found at <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/sports-guidelines.html>

Exchange students:

- Any unvaccinated international exchange students are required to isolate for 14 days immediately following arrival in Manitoba prior to attending school.

Field Trips:

- Field trips are allowed, as long as the activities follow current Public Health recommendations and orders at the time. Overnight trips remain prohibited.

Large gatherings/assemblies:

- School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts, dances) should be avoided.
- Smaller grade-specific or cohorted assemblies are recommended.
- Virtual options should be offered instead of large in-person gatherings.

Libraries:

- School and classroom libraries are open for use.
- Ensure good hand hygiene before and after use of libraries.

Limiting non-essential visitors:

- Non-essential persons will be limited in the schools. Limit parents, volunteers for classrooms, guests, and others inside the school, except in emergency situations, or at the request of the school administrator, whereby they will be required to use the screening tool and conform to any expectations of safety, prior to entry being granted.
- Parents/guardians can attend the school if they are required as part of the educational programming needs of the school (e.g., medical injections, learning supports).
- Use of video and telephone should be used to interact with families, where possible, rather than in person interactions.
- A record of all visitors and contact information must be kept.
- School visitors must wear masks.
- Events such as school open houses or community performances or concerts are not allowed at this time.

Limiting shared materials and equipment:

- Make arrangements for storage of personal items.
- Sharing of manipulatives is to be limited if possible. If required, ensure cleaning between users.
- Shared play stations, such as water tables and sand tables, are permitted, provided good hand hygiene occurs before and after use.
- Learning carpets may return to classroom but physical distancing is required during student use.

Multigraded Interaction:

- Unless K-6 classes are combined in full-time cohorts, schools should avoid grouping of students of different grades. Practices such as multigraded reading buddies, house systems, intramural sports, open gym periods, and multigraded teacher advisor teams should be avoided for K-6 students.

Nutrition programs:

- Kitchen and cafeteria areas will be open. Allow 2 metres of physical distancing for seating and avoid overcrowding. Ensure proper hand hygiene practices.
- Food and nutrition courses involving food preparation with students may resume if supervised by qualified staff that follow industry standards.
- Students should not participate in food preparation outside of Food and Nutrition courses.
- Stagger lunch times, to the greatest extent possible, to allow students to wash hands before eating, without creating congestion in washrooms or handwashing stations.
- Students are encouraged to eat lunch in their classroom to ensure chances of contact and transmission are minimized.
- No self-serve or buffet-style meal service. Food should be served in individual portions to each child by a designated staff member. School-supplied food should be delivered directly to the classroom.
- Utensils should be used to serve food items. Reusable utensils must be cleaned and sanitized after each use.
- Food from home must not be shared with other students and should be stored with the student's belongings.
- Microwaves will not be available for student use.
- Students should have their own water bottle that is labeled, kept with them during the day, and not shared.

Out-of-province student and staff travel:

- All out-of-province school-related student and work-related staff travel is currently suspended, subject to guidance from Public Health.

Parent councils:

- Parent councils may continue to meet as required.
- Parent councils are asked to plan for remote or virtual meetings in lieu of in-person gatherings.

Staff rooms:

- All staff shall maintain physical distancing practices.
- Where possible, staff is asked to bring prepared lunches from home.
- Schools may need to consider opening additional staff room spaces for lunch hours depending on staff numbers.

Student teachers:

- Park West will continue to host student teacher practicum placements during the 2021-2022 school year.
- Schools will treat student teachers as regular staff members to ensure that they receive all relevant communication and training relative to divisional and school re-opening plans.
- The sending universities may have specific guidelines that need to be followed for their respective teacher candidates.

Substitutes:

- Schools should treat substitute teachers as divisional staff to ensure that they receive communication and training relative to divisional and school reopening plans.
- Administrators should develop coverage plans for days when not all substitute teacher vacancies are filled.

Ventilation:

- Schools will apply guidance regarding ventilation, including the following:
 - Move activities outdoors when possible (for example: lunch, classes, and physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit.
 - Ensure that the ventilation system operates properly.
 - Increase air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system.
 - Open windows when possible and if weather permits.
 - Maximize space and avoid crowded rooms and hallways.

Contingency Planning:

- The degree to which schools can remain open for in-class learning depends on several factors, such as vaccinations, variants of COVID-19, and the capacity of our health care system.
- As the level of risk changes, Public Health officials may identify regions or schools of concern. Schools will work with Public Health and Manitoba Education to implement the appropriate additional measures and contingency plans as needed.

Subject Specific Planning

Art:

- Art classes for K-6 students should occur in their regular classroom.
- Art classes for Grades 7-12 may occur in Art classrooms.
- Limit shared tools and plan for cleaning materials between uses.

Music and Band:

- Band, Choir, and Music programs are permitted, with physical distancing and other measures.
- Encourage spacing where possible and consider outdoor classrooms as weather permits.
- Wind instruments and singing require 2-metre physical distancing.
- Sharing of music stands and sheet music is permitted, provided good hand hygiene practices are followed.
- Instruments, including accessories (for example: drumsticks, mallets) should not be shared. If sharing instruments and accessories is required, then they will be thoroughly cleaned between users.
- Until further notice, there will be no in-person performances or concerts.

Physical Education:

- Focus on aspects of activities and sports in which it is possible to maintain physical distancing.
- Mitigate risks from exposure to high-touch surfaces (e.g., surfaces frequently touched by others).
- Limit the use of shared equipment during recreational activities. Any shared equipment should be cleaned between uses.
- Increase frequency of cleaning, especially of high-touch surfaces that continue to be accessed (e.g. handrails, floor mats).
- Change rooms / restrooms may be used. If used, limit the number of users at a given time, maintain handwashing supplies, increase cleaning and disinfecting frequency, and install no-touch garbage bins.

Vocational Education:

- Vocational programming is permitted, provided Public Health measures are followed.
- When planning for technical-vocational, industrial arts, human ecology, and applied commerce education programs, use the Manitoba COVID-19 support documents as resources. These documents are available at:
https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/restoring-workplace-guidance.pdf.



Park West School Division

TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO SCHOOL

1. Students are required to self-screen or have parents screen them daily before attending the bus. Students with symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend school or ride the bus (see <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>).
2. Drivers are required to self-screen daily and drivers with symptoms of COVID-19 should not drive the bus (see <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>).
3. Non-medical masks are mandatory for all passengers on the bus. These should be put on before getting on the bus and taken off after exiting the bus, if removal is appropriate for the setting. **Non-medical masks are mandatory for bus drivers only while transporting passengers.**
4. If a student refuses to wear a mask:
 - a. The bus driver will first offer them a mask.
 - b. If they continue to refuse and a parent or guardian is present, then access can be refused.
 - c. If they are alone and not in the presence of a parent or guardian, the student can access the bus for that trip only. The bus driver will communicate to the Principal upon arrival at the school that the student refused to wear a mask.
 - d. The Principal will contact the parent to pick up the student that afternoon and they will not ride the bus until they agree to wear a mask.
5. All passengers and drivers should perform hand hygiene before and after being on the bus. (Drivers and passengers may carry a personal size hand sanitizer with them on the bus. No hand sanitizer can be left on the bus while unattended.)
6. No physical barriers will be allowed to be installed on the bus (curtains, plexiglass or any other barrier) as per the department of Pupil Transportation.
7. When possible and as weather permits, windows and/or roof vents will be opened to allow for increased ventilation.
8. Where capacity allows, the seat directly behind the driver will be left unoccupied.
9. Seats will be assigned so the same students are seated in the same seats every day for regular bus routes. One student (or more than one student from the same household) will be assigned to a seat. **Any seating changes must be approved by the Transportation Supervisor.**

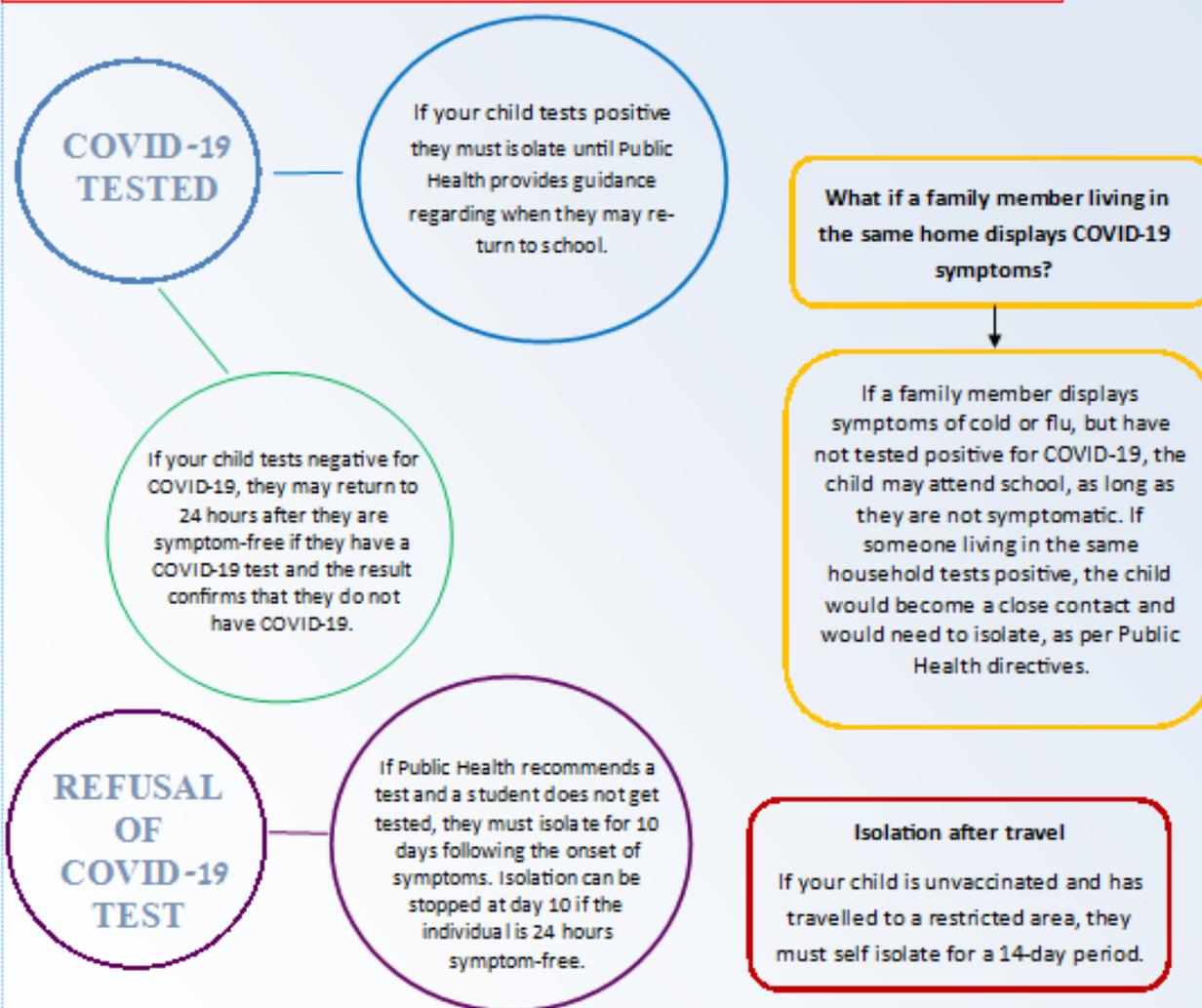
10. Where required due to school bus capacity limitations, school-aged daycare students from community daycares may be seated together.
11. Students may transfer from one bus to another to get to and from school, but these students will be assigned seats that haven't been used on a prior portion of the bus route (each seating area will be cleaned before another student from a different household sits in it).
12. Special needs students who require a companion may sit next to their companion (companions will be treated as if they are from the same household).
13. Students must remain seated in their own seats and will not be allowed to move around the bus.
14. **No additional passengers are allowed to ride the bus.** Only students that have assigned seats on the bus will be able to ride the bus, and transportation will only be provided from the student's primary residence to the school and back (note that school of choice students are permitted to meet the bus on route at previously approved locations).
15. Drivers will be required to keep an up to date list of who rode the bus on both the morning and afternoon routes. Drivers will be supplied with student checklists to take attendance each time the bus is loaded. The checklists are to be submitted monthly to the Division Office.
16. Students should maintain physical distancing (2 meters) when lining up to get on the bus, and when exiting the bus.
17. Drivers will be responsible for enhanced cleaning of seats and other high touch surfaces (e.g., windows, railings, seat tops) before each new group of students loads the bus.
18. Bus loading/unloading at schools will be staggered. Buses will unload one at a time to assist students in maintaining physical distance.
19. Buses will be loaded from back to front and unloaded from front to back whenever possible.
20. Hard-surface disinfectants or cleaning agents may be transported on a bus providing the product is secured and not accessible to students (maximum of 1 litre).

Based upon Public Health direction, it is possible that the transportation guidelines may change during the school year.

When Can a Sick Child Return to School?

Students should stay home from school when they are sick, no matter how mild the symptoms. If your child comes to school with symptoms, the school will immediately isolate them and call parents / guardians to pick them up.

If your child has symptoms, please call Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 if they notice symptoms. If Health Links says that no test is required, students may return 24 hours after being symptom-free. When Health Links direct students to get a test, families must confirm with the school that they have been tested, state the result of the test, and any direction from Public Health.



Additional information regarding Provincial guidelines regarding Isolation and Quarantine may be found at <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html>

