



Message from the Director of Education: Fall Reopening Update

August 4, 2020

Dear Chinook Families,

I hope that you have all had a safe and an enjoyable summer! With the vast amount of attention that has been paid to reopening schools in the media, surely the question of “**What is Chinook doing?**” has crossed your minds.

All Saskatchewan school divisions take direction from the Ministry of Education and the Government of Saskatchewan. In the spring, while your children were learning from home, we began working on our **Reopen Chinook** plan. We took direction from parents and staff through our Chinook COVID-19 Survey, and formed a focus group that reviewed research and made recommendations to help us develop a draft plan. We have worked with the ministries of Education and Health, and we received direction from the Provincial Education Response Planning Team that met throughout the summer.

The Chinook School Division submitted our plan to the ministry and the Provincial Education Response Planning Team (RPT) on June 29th. The ministry and the RPT have reviewed all plans and provided recommendations to each Saskatchewan school division.

Although there is commonality between divisions, local and provincial COVID numbers and prevalence will dictate what interventions and what precautionary measures will be required in each school or community.

We are going to have more interesting times in the upcoming months and the health and safety of students and staff will remain our first priority. We will be doing everything we can to provide the best learning environment possible and to make sure student supports are available, while ensuring all health and safety measures are in place and procedures are followed.

Please read this entire document. The messages I hope you will find are these:

- The health and safety of Chinook students, staff and community is paramount.
- An understanding and support of the social-emotional impact on students and staff is important.
- **All students and staff must stay home if they are sick.**
- Information about local levels of transmission should be gathered and monitored regularly.

All decisions about implementing school-based strategies (e.g., dismissals, event cancellations, field trips, assemblies, other social distancing measures) will be made locally, in collaboration with the province’s Chief Medical Health Officer who can help determine the level of transmission in the community.

In the fall, you will notice some changes in every Chinook school. You will see the following strategies in each building:

- There will be enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfecting procedures, including daily cleaning for all areas of the school, washrooms and high-touch surfaces will be cleaned several times a day, and regularly scheduled deep cleaning when students are not present.
- There will be a strict stay-at-home policy for any students or staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (even if symptoms resemble a mild cold).
- Physical distancing recommendations will be enforced where possible.
- Personal Protective Equipment and supplies have been secured and will be implemented when required. Reusable cloth masks will be provided to all staff for voluntary use.
- As much as possible, groups of students will be assigned to cohorts which means they remain together for most of the day and will not mix with other groups. Staff should remain with the same cohort whenever possible.
- Drop-off/pick-up and student transportation procedures will be implemented that limit contact between households as much as possible.
- Public access to schools will be limited to essential school business and schools will carefully document attendance of students, staff and visitors and ensure up-to-date contact information to facilitate public health management should a case be identified in the school.
- Schools will develop a rapid method to contact students/families with information.
- Hand hygiene expectations will be enforced when entering and exiting the school and classrooms, before and after eating.
- There will be continual reminders of the importance of respiratory and hygiene etiquette (e.g. cover coughs and sneezes, avoid touching the face and disposal of used tissues promptly, followed by hand hygiene) will be posted and spoken about.
- Masks may be considered in circumstances where there is prolonged close contact (greater than 15 minutes) and distance of two metres cannot be maintained. (Note that masking is generally not recommended for young children, however if families choose to have their children wear masks, they should learn proper/safe mask use and care should be taken that the children not be stigmatized.)
- Use of shared items or equipment is to be avoided where possible.
- All students should have their own supplies and be provided with an area for storing personal items.
- Where sharing of equipment is required, the equipment should be cleaned between uses.

- There may be foot traffic flow through entrances and hallways by using markers on the floor or pylons/barriers.
- At the time of reopening, we will be temporarily postponing field trips and all activities requiring group transportation until we are permitted to do so by the province.
- Additionally, we will be suspending all large gatherings, such as assemblies, pep rallies, career expos, outside performances, multi team tournaments and performances, until further notice.
- There are also procedures to address staff, children or students who develop symptoms while at school, including isolating the symptomatic individual until they are able to leave the school or be picked up.

I have two teenage kids who are eager to return to school. My wife also teaches. I want my family and our students and staff to be safe. We have implemented many procedures, strategies, enhanced hygienic measures and enhanced sanitization and cleaning in our schools. I am confident that our schools will be safe and will continue to be great places to work and to go to school, even in a pandemic.

Please read through the [Reopen Chinook](#) plan. Division plans will evolve as required by emerging health risk assessments. As our new school year begins, remember we are all in this together. Our staff are trying to keep all students safe while preparing them for their future. Let's please work together and have one another's backs. We need to work as a team right now, more than ever.

As I mentioned before, this is new territory for us all. If you have questions, concerns, or needs please feel free to contact either your school's principal, superintendent or our central information line at: 306-778-9200 or toll-free 1-877-321-9200.

Take care and stay safe!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. McIntyre', written in a cursive style.

Kyle McIntyre
Director of Education