

Peace River School Division 2020-2021 School Relaunch Plan

Scenario 1



Updated – August 24, 2020

**Scenario 1: In-school classes resume
(near normal with health measures)**



Peace River School Division

Learning Together - Success for All

Introduction

The Peace River School Division (PRSD) is pleased to provide the PRSD 2020-21 School Relaunch Plan. One of the division's guiding principles for decision making is "we will ensure health and safety for our students and staff." This plan is designed to support our collective responsibility to ensure we maximize health and safety for students and staff while also ensuring that student learning continues.

Implementation of this School Relaunch Plan may change based on future direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health. It is based on the best available information and conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan will evolve and be adjusted as the status of the COVID-19 pandemic changes.

The School Relaunch Plan considers three scenarios that could exist at the start of the 2020-21 school year:

1. In-School Classes resume (near normal operations with health measures)
2. In-School Classes partially resume (with additional health measures)
3. At-Home Learning continues (in-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

Currently, our plan is drafted to reflect Scenario 1. Scenario 2 and 3 will be released in the coming days. Alberta Education is committed to advising us by no later than August 1, 2020, as to which scenario we will be guided by.

I wish to thank all stakeholders for their continuing patience, understanding and support throughout these challenging times. You have done a magnificent job of promoting PRSD's mission of "Learning Together-Success For All."

I especially wish to thank members of our senior leadership team who have worked tirelessly over these last several weeks to develop this plan, our school administrators for their input and feedback, and our students, parents and staff who participated in the re-entry survey in June. All feedback is being considered and will be balanced with guidelines provided by Alberta Education on August 1, 2020.

Paul Bennett
Superintendent of Schools

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General Building Safety

During COVID-19, general building safety is of great importance in all PRSD schools and facilities. Each school and facility will be subjected to the following cleaning and disinfecting procedures, and must adhere to all of the guidelines listed below:

- Prior to school opening for the 2020-2021 school year, all schools will undergo thorough cleaning.
- Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. PRSD locations will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the [AHS Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document](#) (please note this is a document from British Columbia. We will update with an Alberta document as it is available).
- Area rugs and soft furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned are being removed.
- Hand Hygiene - Students and staff are encouraged to wash their hands frequently as per the attached AHS guidelines poster. Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be promoted. Schools must develop procedures that outline hand hygiene. Hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol will be placed at building entrances and exits, classroom entrances, high-touch areas such as microwave ovens and vending machines and other high traffic areas. If parents have questions about their child using alcohol-based hand sanitizer, they should contact their school administration to discuss potential alternatives.
- Mask Use - Staff will be required to wear masks in all settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained, and grades four to twelve students will be required to wear them in all shared and common areas, such as hallways and on buses. Mask use for kindergarten to grade three students will be optional and encouraged where physical distancing cannot be maintained. All kindergarten to grade twelve students, and all staff will be provided with two re-useable masks.
- Microwave Ovens: Students and staff are required to clean the touch areas on a microwave oven prior to each use. The PRSD will be supplying approved disinfectant wipes for this cleaning purpose. Custodians will thoroughly clean each microwave on a weekly basis.
- Water Fountains: While water fountains can remain open, students and staff are encouraged to use personal water bottles. Touchpoints on water fountains will be disinfected by the cleaning staff at least six times each day.

All schools will be cleaned as per the following schedule:

- The school will be cleaned thoroughly every evening after the school is closed.
- High touchpoints will be cleaned multiple times during the day.
- Supplies (paper towels, soap and spray bottles) will be checked daily when the classroom or area is unoccupied.
- If supplies are low, contact will be made with the custodian or school administration.
- Custodial staff must be aware of areas that have been occupied, and cleaning is required.

The following surfaces will be disinfected daily by cleaning staff:

- Classrooms: Desks, chairs, pencil sharpeners, telephones, doorknobs, light switches, sink faucets, soap dispensers.

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- Hallways and Corridors: Light switches, elevator buttons, stair railings, water fountains and mouthpieces, entrance door handles, alarm panels, inside handicap door buttons.
- Washrooms: All surfaces.
- Offices: Desks, chairs, telephones, light switches, doorknobs, copier.

Additional Alberta Health Services (AHS) resources:

- AHS Infections Prevention Control [Posters](#)
- AHS Hand Washing Posters:
 - [Poster 1](#)
 - [Poster 2](#)
- How to use alcohol-based hand rub/sanitizer (AHS) [Poster](#)

Screening

It is important for students and staff to self-screen on a daily basis as per the following guidelines:

- Before leaving home each day they plan to enter school for work or education, staff, students, parents/guardians, volunteers, and any other visitors must self-screen for symptoms using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)
- Parents and students must be provided with a copy of the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) during school registration with the expectation that it needs to be completed on a daily basis.
- Schools must keep records of children's known pre-existing conditions. If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the child should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to school.
- Those who report symptoms should be directed to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner, or 911 for emergency response), and fill out the AHS Online Self-Assessment tool to determine if they should be tested.
- Signs must be posted reminding persons not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.

Cohorting

As the risk of transmission of COVID-19 is reduced by limiting exposure to others, cohorts are recommended where possible. A cohort is defined as a group of students and staff who remain together. Cohorting will decrease the number of close contacts a case of COVID-19 would have in a school, and will assist public health officials in their efforts to trace contacts and contain an outbreak. It is still recommended to maintain physical distancing (i.e., spacing between desks) within a cohort, whenever possible, to minimize the risk for disease transmission

Schools will be responsible for:

- Keeping students together during the day, including lunch, recess, etc.
- Whenever possible, having staff move to different areas to meet intact cohorts.

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- Striving to limit the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) who interact with groups of students throughout the day (i.e., minimize the amount of mixing between students and different staff in the setting).
- Whenever possible, staggering transitions (i.e., class times, recess, and bathroom breaks) to minimize contacts with other cohorts.
- Assigning lockers based on cohorts.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing (2-metre spacing) is a useful public health measure to help prevent the spread of disease. Increasing the space between persons decreases the risk of transmission. Where 2 metres is not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended. In situations where physical distancing is not possible (i.e., busses, classrooms and some sporting facilities), there should be extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and extra emphasis on monitoring health to help prevent participation when sick. Staff will be required to wear masks in all settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained, and grades four to twelve students will be required to wear them in all shared and common areas, such as hallways and on buses. Mask use for kindergarten to grade three students will be optional and encouraged where **2-metre** physical distancing cannot be maintained. All k-12 students and all staff will be provided with two re-useable masks.

Schools will be responsible for:

- Educating students, staff, and parents on the importance of physical distancing.
- Striving to maintain distance between cohorts by planning movements throughout the day.
- Where possible, keeping student desks in rows facing forward.
- Educating students and staff on the proper use of masks.

Non-medical Face Masks

- [Non-Medical Face Masks](#) can play a role in reducing the transmission of COVID-19 in the community when worn properly and hygiene practices are followed, particularly when consistent physical distancing is not possible.
- It is required that all teachers and staff in all school settings and students in grades 4-12 wear non-medical masks while in shared areas of school, outside the classroom, and on school buses where they may not be able to maintain the recommended 2-metre physical distancing requirements.
- Non-medical masks are not required while students are seated in the classroom during instruction if following the physical distancing guidelines above. If close contact between students, or students and teachers/staff is occurring as a result of classroom activities, non-medical masks should be used for the duration of this activity.
 - Two reusable masks per student/staff will be provided by the Government of Alberta.
 - Masking for close contact groups is required in addition to other strategies that mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19, such as physical distancing, cohorting where possible, daily screening, hygiene, and enhanced cleaning.

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- There is increasing evidence that older students may be more likely than younger students to transmit COVID-19, and are at a higher risk of significant disease than younger students.
- When a non-medical face mask is used, hands should be cleaned before and after putting it on and taking it off. Avoid touching the mask once it is on. Masks should be changed after they become wet or soiled.
- After removing a reusable non-medical face mask that will be re-worn prior to washing, it should be placed into a clean, breathable bag or container (allows for evaporation) for storage. Consider using a bag that can be washed. All masks should have two distinct sides, one side that touches the face and one that faces outwards.
- Do not reuse masks that are wet or soiled prior to laundering. A wet or soiled mask that requires laundering should be placed into a sealed bag or container where it is stored until it can be taken home and washed.
- Disposable masks that are damaged or dirty should be discarded into a garbage bin that is lined with a plastic bag.
- A very small number of individuals may not be able to wear masks due to sensory or health issues. It must be noted that face shields are not considered to be equivalent to non-medical face masks. It is important to comply with other personal preventative practices such as frequent hand hygiene and physical distancing as much as possible.
- Additional guidance on non-medical face masks is available [here](#).
- **Exemptions to mask requirements for all teachers and staff in all school settings and students in grades 4-12 include:**
 - Persons who are unable to place, use or remove a non-medical face mask without assistance;
 - Persons unable to wear a non-medical face mask due to a mental or physical concern or limitation;
 - Persons consuming food or drink in designated areas;
 - Persons engaged in physical exercise;
 - Persons providing care or assistance to a person with a disability where a non-medical face mask would hinder that caregiving or assistance;
 - Persons engaging in services that require the temporary removal of the non-medical face mask;
 - Spaces where physical barriers have been installed between persons.
- Non-medical face masks may be considered but are not routinely recommended for younger students in grades K-3. It is recommended that these students, instead, adhere to the other public health strategies that mitigate the risk of transmission of COVID-19, such as cohorting, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of transmission.
 - Masks are not routinely recommended for younger students in grades K-3 due to difficulties with proper fit, compliance, and less virus transmission among younger children.
 - Younger children may not be able to avoid touching their mask, and this could end up increasing the risk of virus transmission more than not wearing a mask at all.

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- Non-medical face masks are encouraged for younger children in the community for brief, casual interactions where physical distancing is not possible or is unpredictable. While these children are usually supervised by parents/guardians who can ensure proper mask use, young children in school settings may not always be under direct supervision and teachers may not be able to consistently monitor mask use in this group.
- Parents/guardians who are considering non-medical face masks for their child in grades K-3 should make their choice based on a risk assessment, including the child's ability to consistently use the non-medical face mask correctly and safely during the day, which may be dependent on various factors such as age, maturity, physical ability and comprehension.
- School administrators should develop a plan to ensure that students who are hearing impaired or rely on facial cues, are able to communicate with others in areas where non-medical face masks are being worn, or have their educational needs met when teachers are wearing non-medical face masks in the classroom. This may include the use of transparent masks. As with other non-medical face masks, it is important that transparent masks cover the nose and mouth, as well as fit securely against the face.
- School staff should monitor for and address any discrimination or bullying associated with a student either wearing or not wearing a non-medical face mask.
- Parents/guardians should be encouraged to help their children become comfortable with wearing a mask. Masks should not be worn by anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance (e.g., due to age, ability or developmental status).

Expectations for drop-off/pick-up and entry areas at schools

- Parents/guardians must remain outside of the school to drop off their children. They must not enter the school unless previous arrangements have been made with the school office.
- Individual school administration will determine student entry points, and drop-off and pick-up schedules.
- Physical distancing of 2 meters must be maintained.
- Parents and guardians are encouraged to communicate with staff via email or by phone regarding any additional information that may be needed to support their child.

Expectations for visitors and volunteers

- Prior to entering a school, prospective visitors must use the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#). If a prospective visitor answers YES to any of the questions, the individual must not be admitted into the school.
- Signs will be posted reminding persons not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.
- Hand sanitizer will be required and made available upon entry.
- Visitors will be required to wear a mask upon entry.
- Physical distancing of 2 meters must be maintained.

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- A record of all visitors who enter the school will be kept, including the tracking of entry and exit times.

Transportation

- Prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year, all school buses will undergo a thorough cleaning. Transportation management staff will meet with all school bus drivers and school administrators prior to school start-up to review COVID-19 requirements.
- Parents will be required to complete daily at-home screening for their child(ren)'s symptoms prior to students boarding the school bus. [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)
- Parents and students should not be in the pick-up area or enter the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Students will be required to wear a mask while traveling on a school bus.
- The bus driver will be provided with a protective face shield for use during loading and unloading and will be required to wear a mask when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Front row seats will have no occupancy (2-metre physical distance from the school bus driver).
- Bus drivers will be provided with five cloth reusable non-medical masks for emergency use.
- Students will be assigned seats, and a record of this seating plan will be kept and updated as needed in order to assist with contact tracing. Students who live in the same household will be seated together whenever possible.
- Non-medical face masks are required for student in grades 4-12.
- Non-medical face masks may be considered for students in grades k-3; however, they are not routinely recommended.
- Students will not be permitted to eat while on the school bus in an effort to limit food sharing and to sustain appropriate levels of hygiene.
- Attendance records will be kept for contact tracing purposes and retained for two months.
- Bus notes will be suspended due to contact tracing requirements.
- The PRSD Transportation Department will support schools in developing procedures for student loading, and unloading that support physical distancing of 2 metres between all persons (except household members), when possible and may include:
 - Students start loading from the back seats to the front of the bus.
 - Where feasible, limit the number of students per bench unless from the same household.
 - Students from the same household may share seats.
 - Students start unloading from the front seats to the back of the bus.
 - Transferring of students will be suspended, unless in mechanical situations (bus breakdown).
 - Interschool service between schools will be suspended.
 - If a child becomes symptomatic during the bus trip, the bus driver will ensure s(he) is wearing a mask and will provide one if necessary. While K-3 students are not normally required to wear a mask, they will be provided with one in this circumstance. The driver will contact the PRSD Transportation office, who will

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contact an office manager at the appropriate school to ensure necessary communication with parents.

- A communication workflow process for outbreak notifications will be adopted to include reporting from Holy Family Catholic Regional Division (HFCRD), Conseil Scolaire du Nord-Ouest (CSNO) and Grande Prairie Catholic School Division (GPCSD) to the PRSD Transportation Department.
- Buses will be kept dedicated to one driver as much as possible.
- Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces will be completed at the end of the morning and afternoon school bus runs.
- Drivers will be supplied with disposable gloves, cleaning and disinfectant spray, paper towels and hand sanitizer.
- Completion of required ongoing cleaning on buses will be documented on driver timesheets.

In-person Learning

Schools will develop procedures and plans:

- for in-person learning that supports physical distancing where possible, and to separate cohorts to the greatest extent possible (See the cohorting section above for further guidelines).
- to best address traffic flow throughout the schools. This may include:
 - one-way hallways,
 - single direction lanes in hallways,
 - designated entrance and exit doors,
 - restricted access to high traffic and gathering areas (See the later section on risk mitigation for high traffic areas).
- when two or more people from different cohorts are required to come within 2 metres of one another for the purposes of instruction, practice or undertaking examinations. In these situations, additional protections must be instituted such as engineering controls (such as plexiglass barriers or partitions), or administrative controls (such as adapting the activity to minimize or eliminate close contacts).
- to minimize the amount of student transition time throughout the day (i.e., teachers could move between classes instead of students moving).
- to enhance the flexibility of transitioning from this scenario to another (i.e., shifting from scenario 1 to 2 to 3) by promoting common planning for delivery of essential outcomes in the core subjects.
- to stagger lunch/breaks/recess to maintain physical distancing among students where possible.
- for implementing safe activities. Consideration should be given to:
 - pursuing learning and physical activities where optimal physical distancing can be achieved. Guidelines for resuming indoor sport are under development by provincial bodies and will be shared when available (See the Physical Distancing section above for further information).
 - avoiding field trips and activities requiring group transportation.
 - avoiding activities involving shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands.

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- the ease in which high touch surfaces (e.g., electronic devices, science and music instruments, tools/equipment, toys) are able to be adequately cleaned after each activity (See the later section on Expectations for the Shared Use of Equipment and Resources).
- Learning experiences involving unprotected (without a mask or physical barrier) in-person singing, cheering or shouting or playing wind instruments should be postponed at this time. Consider alternatives such as:
 - Recording or live-streaming individual performers in separate locations;
 - Including more lessons focused on music appreciation or music theory;
 - Choose to play instruments that are lower risk (e.g., percussion or string instruments over wind instruments).

Risk Mitigation for High Traffic Areas

Schools should institute controls to promote physical distancing between all attendees in areas in and outside of the classroom, including hallways, washrooms, and common areas. This may include:

- Staggering start and end-times for classes to avoid crowded hallways.
- Posting signs, using stanchions and marking floors.
- Establishing one-way hallways or single direction lanes in hallways.
- Removing and restaging seating in public areas to prevent gathering.
- Considering limiting bathroom occupancy at any one time.
- Designating entrance and exit doors.
- Restricting access to high traffic and gathering areas.
- Use of non-medical face masks for all staff and students in grades 4-12 in high traffic areas.

Expectations for Shared Use of Equipment and Resources

Sharing equipment/resources should be avoided where possible. Where not possible, schools will develop procedures and plans for shared use that consider the following:

- Where possible, equipment (e.g., electronic devices, equipment for gym, science, art, music, shop, etc.) should be designated and labelled (with a removable label) for a single student. Where not feasible, designate the equipment to the fewest number of students.
- Equipment that is shared must be cleaned and disinfected after each use. Note that cleaning protocols will vary depending on the type of equipment. (for example, alcohol-based cleaners must not be used on Chromebook or other electronic devices). Specific cleaning protocols will be shared as necessary.
- Students/staff must use hand sanitizer and/or follow other hand hygiene protocols before collecting and returning equipment to the storage areas.
- Individual schools will make arrangements for storage of personal items. Schools must give consideration to appropriate physical distancing and cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

Auxiliary Spaces

- In addition to using auxiliary spaces (e.g., gym, library/learning commons, foyer, cafeteria, etc.) for their intended purpose, these spaces can be used to create physical distancing for the delivery of various other educational programs.
- The use of gymnasiums to deliver physical education programming must consider the following:
 - When possible, physical education should be done outside as the risk of transmission is more likely to occur indoors. Follow the Guidance for Sport, Physical Activity, and Recreation as relaunch progresses.
 - Administrators and teachers should choose activities or sports that support physical distancing (e.g., badminton over wrestling).
- School assemblies or other large gatherings (e.g., concerts or dances) are to be avoided. Virtual gatherings should be utilized.

Work Experience Programs

Participation in work experience programs will only resume as long as Alberta Health guidelines can be followed, and the risk of infection is mitigated for all participants.

Consideration must be given to the following:

- The student is expected to follow health rules set out by the workplace, which should comply with the [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#).
- The time that individuals are in close contact should be kept to a minimum.
- The use of shared items or equipment should be avoided. Equipment that must be shared should be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use, and users should perform hand hygiene before and after each use.

International Programs

In light of nationwide travel restrictions, participation in international programs is suspended until further notice.

Food Services

- Activities that involve sharing of food (including sharing of utensils, condiments, etc) between students or staff should not occur.
- Schools will be responsible for ensuring:
 - All existing food handling regulations are followed. Ensure that food-handling staff practice meticulous hand hygiene and are excluded from work if they are symptomatic.
 - Only designated staff or volunteers have access to food preparation areas, while food preparation is occurring.
 - No self-serve or family-style meal service. Instead, switch to pre-packaged meals or snacks served by designated staff or volunteers.
 - Food provided by the family is stored with the student's belongings.
 - There are no common food items (i.e., salt and pepper shakers, ketchup, etc.).

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- The common lunchroom (if used for a staggered lunch schedule) is cleaned and disinfected after each use, including all surfaces of the tables and chairs.
- Students/staff practice physical distancing while eating.
- No food is brought from home for sharing (i.e., no cupcakes, cookies etc.)
- Cohorts staying together through lunch whenever possible.

Response to Illness

- Each school will receive two contactless thermometers to assist with managing student and staff health.
- Schools must keep records of a student's known pre-existing conditions as part of baseline data. If a student develops symptoms in or outside of school that could be caused by COVID-19 (i.e., not related to pre-existing conditions), the student should be tested at least once to confirm that COVID-19 is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to the school.
- If there is an absence rate of 10% due to illness OR there are an unusual number of individuals with similar symptoms, school administrators must report to the local public health unit or school nurse as per their usual outbreak notification process, regardless of the COVID-19 test results for each individual. The purpose of this is to continue to monitor for other clusters of illness that may not be COVID-19 related and alert Alberta Health Services to potential outbreaks of other diseases.

Prior to coming to the school:

- Staff must use the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) themselves daily for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the school.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of COVID-19 prior to entering the school using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)

During the school day, staff supervising students should ensure that:

- If a student is showing signs of COVID-19 (e.g., fever, new or worsening cough, difficulty breathing, runny nose or sore throat), the student must wear a non-medical mask if s(he) is able to, and be isolated in a separate room where possible, and the parent/guardian must be notified immediately to pick up the student.
- If a separate room is not available for the student while waiting to be picked up by a parent/guardian, the student must be kept at least 2 metres away from all other students and staff while wearing a face mask.
- If the student requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the student until the parent is able to pick up the student. The student and staff must wear a mask, and close interactions with the student that may result in contact with the student's respiratory secretions should be avoided. If very close contact is required and the child is young, the staff member should also use a face shield or eye protection.
 - School staff will receive one reusable face shield for their use in the school, to be used at the discretion of the individual staff member. Plastic shields can help reduce exposure by protecting eyes, nose and mouth of the wearer from splashes and

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sprays of bodily fluids from other people. As face shields are not equivalent to masks, a mask must still be worn while wearing a face shield.

- If a student is sent home due to showing signs of COVID-19, the parent/guardian should be encouraged to access COVID-19 testing by utilizing the Alberta Health Services online testing tool ([COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#)) and follow the advice provided.
- The isolation space for the sick will be cleaned and disinfected after the student leaves, and any items that cannot be disinfected (i.e., paper books or cardboard) will be placed in a plastic bag and stored for a minimum of 10 days.

Staff should:

- Upon showing signs of COVID-19, notify their administrator and go home. Staff will be required to complete a leave request using sick days for the time they are away from school.
- Complete the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#), or call 811 for further instructions.
- Return to work when cleared to do so:
 - After a negative COVID-19 test result.
 - After 10 days of self-isolation following the start of symptoms or with a Doctor's note.