

Parent Update

September 17, 2020



Hello everyone,

I want you to know that as a school division our staff have gone out of their way to try and make things go smoothly at the start of the school year. Given our circumstances, I do believe we are off to a very good start as a school division.

I have also received positive feedback regarding our staggered start from parents and staff in our communities. I thank each of you for your willingness to keep your child at home more often than you might have liked to at the start of the year. By helping us that way you have made it much easier for us to build our confidence that we can keep everyone as safe as possible. As staff get more comfortable implementing new Alberta Health restrictions, they become much more able to focus their energy on student learning.

I also want you to know that our staff made great use of the September 11th organizational day. It allowed them time to revisit and refine safety protocols. If they felt they had any difficulties implementing critically important health restrictions, this was a day to make changes that will help keep our students and staff as safe as possible for the rest of the year.

In case you missed my last message, please know that we moved the previously designated professional development day from September 25th to September 11th, so this means we will now have school on Friday, September 25th.

I am so proud of our staff for going above and beyond as they implement a wide range of restrictions put in place by Alberta Health Services. I am equally as proud of our students who have shown up with a very positive, cooperative attitude when it comes to the inconvenience these health restrictions create.

When it comes to student learning, I want you to know that our teaching staff are doing their best to assess, diagnose, and move forward filling a variety of learning gaps that may have arisen in the spring. As a school division, we are also working very hard to prepare for different ways to sustain the learning even if or when students cannot attend school. As the year progresses, we want to be well prepared so we can keep the momentum that we have been able to create in our face to face learning environments since schools re-opened for students.

I am sure by now you have seen that a few schools in Alberta have been dealing with what Alberta Health has called an outbreak (two individuals testing positive). We have been very fortunate to this point to not have anyone in Chinook's Edge test positive and require us to have some students and staff self isolate in a particular school. Over time it is quite likely that one or

more of our communities will experience having a positive test result or an outbreak (two cases). Should that happen in your community, you will receive a letter from us explaining what we are doing to ensure everyone's safety and the continuation of learning. We expect those disruptions to be brief. Should this happen in your school community we would ask that you stay calm and remain patient with us during those times. Know that our first priority will always be to ensure a safe learning environment, and that once that has been fully addressed with guidance from Alberta Health, we will move back to normal operations as soon as possible.

To help us minimize the chances that anyone needs to self isolate, and to ensure the safest learning environment possible in each of our schools, I need your help with the following, if you haven't already had a chance to:

- a) Familiarize yourselves and your children with our [Re-entry Plan](#).
- b) Click on the link for [assessing your child's health](#) and create a daily morning routine where you and your child carefully complete the daily self assessment. *It is critically important that you keep your child home if they are showing any symptoms.*
- c) Help your child to understand that while the wearing of masks will not eliminate risk, they are an effective way to minimize risk for anyone grade 4-12 or older who can't physically distance. Schools have been very practical and reasonable about providing breaks from wearing masks, however, when they do expect students and staff to wear them, we need everyone's full cooperation.
- d) Help us keep everyone safe by honouring our expectation that you do not enter school buildings without a specific purpose and prior permission from the school Principal.

Please [click on this link](#) for a helpful flow chart and a one page document to help you understand the recommended actions Alberta Health expects you to take should your child become sick. To be clear, should they have the symptoms outlined in the checklist, and the process recommends testing, please have your child tested. This helps all of us to reduce the spread of this pandemic and do our part to protect each other and ensure the safety of our schools and our communities.

It would also really help us if you could please make sure that you can pick up your child on short notice in the event that they show Covid-19 symptoms while at school. If you are unable to do that yourself please ensure you have a plan for an emergency contact to be able to assist you.

To our remote learning parents, I thank you for your patience as it took us a little longer than we would have liked to get everything off the ground. That is not the fault of any individuals, it simply was a challenge that we weren't as prepared for as we would have liked. If for some reason you have still not been contacted, please call the Principal of your child's traditional school or call our office (403-227-7070) if you need assistance.

I continue to encourage you to take time to build a very positive relationship with your child's teacher and your local school. Throughout Chinook's Edge School Division, we pride ourselves on relationships built on kindness and understanding. We all need to continue to support each other now more than ever.

Thanks again for your continued patience. I do believe that we have set ourselves up very well for a great year in Chinook's Edge School Division.

Yours truly,

Kurt Sacher
Superintendent of Schools