

2021

# Return to School Plan

**WESTERN**  
School Division  
Morden, Manitoba



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*"Rooted In Caring;  
Committed to Learning"*

Western School Division is committed to providing a safe return to school by following Provincial Health Orders. During the last school year our community was tremendously supportive of this approach. We hope to return to a more normal school year, while adhering to Public Health direction. Southern Manitoba, including the catchment areas of Western School Division continue to have some of the lowest vaccination rates in Manitoba. Both Public Health and Manitoba Education have raised this as a concern. As such we must prepare for the potential of regional restrictions that may not be imposed in other areas of the Province. Throughout the school year this plan will adjust according to changes to the Public Health order and [direction from Manitoba Education](#).

The Province has provided direction to school divisions in regards to the 2021-22 school year:

- On August 5<sup>th</sup> the Province of Manitoba released it's [Planning Guide for 2021-2022 School Year](#)
  - Schools will return in Yellow (Caution)
- On August 24<sup>th</sup> the Province announced new Public Health Orders including:
  - Mandatory Mask Requirements in schools
  - A requirement for divisional staff to either provide proof of full vaccination or submit to regular (up to 3X/week) COVID Testing. Individuals who have received testing cannot return to work until they can demonstrate a negative COVID test result.
- On Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> the Province announced new Public Health Orders directing that proof of vaccination or testing was required by Oct. 18.
- On Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, the Province announced new PH Orders including moving the Province from Yellow to Orange (**Schools stay in Yellow**), in addition to other restrictions.

<b>Summary of Changes to the Plan</b>	
Date	Key changes
August 24 <sup>th</sup> , 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory mask requirements</li> <li>• Requirement for proof of vaccinations or regular testing</li> </ul>
October 4, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updates to the requirement for proof of vaccination or testing</li> <li>• Mask breaks</li> <li>• Assembly and gathering limits</li> <li>• Guidance for sports &amp; MHSAA participation</li> </ul>

Public health measures for the reopening of schools on September 7, 2021  
 \*Updated to current Public Health Orders

		Measures
Instructional Program	Kindergarten to Grade 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students are learning in class. Full curriculum is being taught.</li> <li>Modifications to delivery may be required as a result of current public health measures.</li> </ul>
	Students with Special Learning Needs and Students at Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students with special learning needs and students at risk may continue to require additional supports, as well as frequent collaboration and planning, strong communication, flexibility and creativity within the student support team. Students will continue to receive appropriate supports, as per the student-specific planning process and where required by their individual health care plans.</li> <li>School teams will continue to work in collaboration with families and related agencies and organizations that support children, youth and their families. Planning will take into account particular timelines, responsibilities of each partner and key practices across environments, to ensure appropriate educational programming is in place for in-class or remote learning.</li> </ul>
	Students who are Immunocompromised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manitoba Remote Learning Support Centre will provide remote learning for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 who are immunocompromised.</li> <li>InformNet, Teacher Mediated Options and Learning from Home School/L'École Apprendre-chez-soi are available for students in Grades 9 to 12 who are immunocompromised.</li> </ul>
Physical Distancing and Cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools will use cohorts for Kindergarten to Grade 6 to assist with case management and to minimize exposure for students who are not yet eligible for vaccinations.</li> <li>Schools should encourage physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>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. They will implement the practice of staggered entrance and exit times, or use separate entrances (if feasible).</li> <li>Schools will be prepared to implement physical distancing requirements of 1 to 2 metres when recommended or directed by public health officials.</li> </ul>	

	Measures
<p>Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At this time, <b>masks are required in schools for students as well as for staff and visitors.</b></li> <li>• <b>Masks are required on school buses for bus drivers, students, and any other passenger on the bus.</b></li> <li>• Extra masks will be made available at all schools throughout the school year for those who do not have their own.</li> <li>• Masks may be removed indoors where there is physical distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) for the purpose of eating, drinking, and for short, infrequent mask breaks. Mask use during extracurricular school sports should follow public health guidance for sports in place at the time. Masks can be removed when outside.</li> </ul>
<p>Transportation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Masks are required on school buses for bus drivers, students, and any other passenger on the bus.</b> Mask requirements will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> <li>• School transportation will return to pre-COVID policies and practices with some additional cleaning.</li> <li>• Buses will be at full capacity.</li> <li>• Only students eligible for transportation will be allowed on buses. Ineligible students will not be allowed on buses.</li> <li>• Assigned seating and attendance records will be retained.</li> <li>• Groups of students on a bus may be considered a cohort for the purposes of transportation to and from school.</li> </ul>
<p>Extra- curricular, sports and field trips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra-curricular activities, including sports, optional programming and field trips, are allowed, as long as the activities follow current public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> <li>• <b>Overnight trips are currently prohibited.</b> Any change will follow public health recommendations and orders.</li> </ul>
<p>Assemblies and gatherings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types and size of gatherings and assemblies will align with public health recommendations and orders for indoor gatherings. Smaller grade-specific or assemblies by cohort are recommended.</li> <li>• For assemblies and events/gatherings in schools the updated indoor public gathering group sizes will change to 25 people or 25 per cent capacity, whichever is lower.</li> </ul>
<p>Visitors, Community Use of Schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visitors, volunteers and community use of schools are permitted, provided they adhere to public health recommendations and orders.</li> <li>• Any required public health recommendations and orders must be followed by the users of the facilities.</li> <li>• Documentation of visitors is required to support case and contact management.</li> </ul>

	Measures
<p><b>Public Health Fundamentals</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and staff will continue to follow hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Guidance is found at <a href="http://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/focus-on-the-fundamentals.html">www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/fundamentals/focus-on-the-fundamentals.html</a>.</li> <li>• Hand hygiene stations at entrances and exits to school facilities and classrooms will continue.</li> <li>• It is important that parents and guardians screen their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms before sending them to school each day. A self-screening tool is available at <a href="https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/">https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/</a>.</li> <li>• A school can require students or staff who are showing symptoms to stay home, encourage them to seek testing and follow public health recommendations and orders on testing. Current public health information on isolation requirements and exemptions is found at <a href="https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html">https://manitoba.ca/covid19/fundamentals/self-isolation.html</a>.</li> <li>• Public Health will continue to perform contact tracing. Schools shall continue to keep detailed records to assist with this process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vaccine or Testing Requirement for Staff and Volunteers</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As directed by the Province all staff, volunteers and Trustees must either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Provide proof of full vaccination</li> <li>○ Submit to regular COVID testing (up to 3 times/week) and demonstrate proof of testing negative for COVID 19.</li> <li>○ Further guidance may be found in AP 1-108 and AP 1-109.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Cleaning and Disinfecting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the risk of COVID-19 transmission from surfaces is low, a transition to pre-COVID cleaning practices will occur as directed by the Province.</li> <li>• Cleaning and disinfecting will focus on high-touch surfaces and common areas but frequency will return to normal practices. Washrooms are the exception, as they require more intensive cleaning (3x/day).</li> <li>• Schools will be prepared to enhance cleaning and disinfection measures and protocols when required.</li> <li>• Schools will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Monitor hand hygiene supplies to ensure an ample supply at all sinks in washroom and kitchen areas.</li> <li>○ Continue to implement touchless water drinking practice, including the use of water bottles.</li> <li>○ Return bus cleaning to pre-COVID practices.</li> <li>○ Perform good hand hygiene after waste removal. No-touch waste receptacles are preferred.</li> <li>○ Health Canada has posted a list of disinfectants shown to be effective against COVID-19 at <a href="http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html">www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Measures
Food Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only school staff will handle, prepare and serve food, following all safe food handling protocols.</li> <li>• Utensils should be used.</li> <li>• Remove shared food containers from eating areas. If using single serve packets of condiments, provide them directly to students. Use prepackaged snacks and serve them directly to students.</li> <li>• Open kitchen and cafeteria areas to eat, but avoid overcrowding.</li> <li>• Ensure proper hand hygiene practices.</li> <li>• Food and nutrition courses involving food preparation with students may continue if supervised by qualified staff who follow industry standards.</li> </ul>
Sharing toys, and manipulatives and using the library	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can share toys and manipulatives. Ensure hand hygiene before and after use.</li> <li>• Shared play stations (e.g., water tables and sand tables) are permitted, provided good hand hygiene before and after use is practiced.</li> <li>• School and classroom libraries are open for use. Ensure good hand hygiene before and after use.</li> </ul>
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WSD exceeds the ventilation standards provided by the Province in all of our schools. We continue to monitor HVAC systems circulating fresh air from outside.</li> <li>• Schools will apply guidance, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ move activities outdoors when possible (for example, lunch, classes and physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit.</li> <li>○ ensure that the ventilation system operates properly.</li> <li>○ increase air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system.</li> <li>○ open windows when possible and if weather permits.</li> <li>○ maximize space and avoid crowded rooms and hallways.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Music (Wind instruments and singing indoors)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wind instruments and indoor singing are permitted.</li> <li>• Teachers shall continue to assess ventilation, encourage spacing where possible and consider outdoor classrooms as weather permits.</li> <li>• Sharing of music stands and sheet music is permitted, provided good hand hygiene practices are followed.</li> <li>• Instruments, including accessories (e.g. drum sticks, mallets) should not be shared. If sharing instruments and accessories is required for equity purposes, then they will be thoroughly cleaned between users.</li> </ul>
Patriotic observances (O Canada)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under current Public Health Orders singing is permitted indoors. These activities shall resume.</li> </ul>

	Measures
<p>Technology Education (RRTVA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology education programming (RRTVA) is permitted, provided public health measures are followed.</li> <li>When planning for technical-vocational, industrial arts, human ecology and applied commerce education programs, the following Manitoba COVID-19 support documents may provide useful sector-specific information: <i>Workplace Guidance for Business Owners and Guidance for Industry Sectors</i>. These documents are available at <a href="https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/restoring-workplace-guidance.pdf">https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/coronavirus/restoring-workplace-guidance.pdf</a>.</li> </ul>
<p>Sport &amp; MHSAA Participation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools shall always consult with the division in regards to decisions relating to competition with schools outside of Western School Division.</li> <li>During the pandemic schools shall formally request approval to participate in league play, exhibition games and tournaments. Approval will be based on PH Orders at the time, bussing and liability issues. Approval from the division must be granted prior to the school entering into an agreement to participate in play. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When schools are in <b>Yellow</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice can occur</li> <li>Competitions are allowed</li> </ul> </li> <li>When schools are in <b>Orange</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice can occur</li> <li>Competitions may be restricted. Consult with the division for direction.</li> </ul> </li> <li>When schools are in <b>Red</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice and competition is restricted. Consult with the division for direction</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>At the present time (<b>Yellow</b>): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try-outs and practices may occur.</li> <li>There are no restrictions on competition, as long as Public Health Orders are adhered to.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Spectators</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following Public Health Orders and creating a manageable environment:</li> <li>Outdoor facilities: Public Health Orders must be followed at all times. The number of spectators at an outdoor sporting or recreational facility must not exceed 50% of the usual spectator capacity of the facility.</li> <li>Indoor facilities and Gymnasiums: <b><u>No Spectators will be allowed at this time.</u></b> Live streaming of competitions is possible.</li> </ul> <p><b>Coaches and Officials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proof of immunization or testing requirement is in place for all coaches, team officials, referees etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The order applies to staff and practicum students working in K-12 schools and facilities.</li> <li>Proof of vaccination status is required prior to any try-outs, practices or competition.</li> <li>Some divisions may require proof of vaccination to enter their facilities. Schools should take this into consideration when selecting coaches and team officials.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Player and coach attendance records shall be kept by each coach at each team event. These records shall be maintained by the Athletic Director in the event they are needed for contact tracing.</li> <li>The Principal will ensure that all coaches and officials understand their responsibilities related to Public Health Orders, Division policies and procedures and MHSAA expectations. This responsibility may be delegated to another individual such as the Athletic Director, however the ultimate responsibility remains with the Principal.</li> </ul>

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**Transportation**

- All teams will travel to out of division events via a WSD School Bus. Attendance records shall be kept by the Bus Driver and will be maintained by the Supervisor of Operations.
- Masks are required for everyone on the bus.

**Food/Events**

- Participants shall take their own food as individuals 12 years and older are required to provide proof of vaccination status to eat in a restaurant.
  - As noted ([COVID Education Plan](#)), family-style, buffet, or potluck meals should be avoided.
  - Team events when attending tournaments need to also avoid places (museums etc.) that require proof of vaccination to enter.
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## Appendix 2: School reopening contingency plans for Caution (Yellow), Restricted (Orange) and Critical (Red) Levels

Schools will be prepared to implement measures as outlined in Caution (Yellow), Restricted (Orange) and Critical (Red) levels of the Pandemic Response System, as well as any additional public health measures in place at the time. The table below provides an overview of additional public health measures that may be required to ensure student and staff safety.

		Additional Public Health Measures		
		Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Instructional Programming	K to 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students are in full-time class learning to the greatest extent possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students are in class learning to the greatest extent possible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Remote learning for all students is required.</b> Schools are open for Kindergarten to Grade 6 students of critical services workers who cannot make alternative care arrangements, students with special needs and students at risk.</li> <li>Focus on literacy, numeracy and other curricular areas, as time and resources permit.</li> <li>Rotating in of small groups (5 to 6) may occur for support and assessment purposes.</li> <li>Classroom teacher provides remote learning to ALL students as per the Manitoba Education Standards for Remote Learning.</li> </ul>

		Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Instructional Programming	9 to 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All students are in class learning to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>Modifications to program delivery may be required as a result of current public health measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blended learning is required where two metres of physical distancing and cohorts with a minimum of one metre could not be achieved.</li> <li>Modifications to program delivery may be required as a result of public health measures.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move to remote learning.</li> <li>Students with special learning needs and students at risk may be accommodated at school.</li> <li>Rotating in of small groups (5 to 6) may occur for support and assessment purposes.</li> <li>The classroom teacher provides remote learning to ALL students as per the <i>Manitoba Education Standards for Remote Learning</i>.</li> </ul>

	Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Physical Distancing and Cohorts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage physical distancing between students to the greatest extent possible.</li> <li>Other physical distancing and cohort measures for Kindergarten to Grade 6 continue to be followed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schools must ensure two metres of physical distancing to the <b>greatest extent possible</b>, and adjust classroom space as necessary; excess furniture must be removed from classrooms to create additional space; other spaces within schools must be repurposed to accommodate more distancing (e.g., multipurpose rooms, shared spaces, common areas, and libraries).</li> <li>Where physical distancing is not possible, students must remain within <b>cohorts with a minimum distance of one metre</b>.</li> <li>Other physical distancing and cohort measures found in Caution (Yellow) continue to be followed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Two metres of physical distancing must be maintained for students who are in-class learning.</b></li> <li>Multiple groups are allowed to operate in a school setting at the same time, provided these groups can be segregated to prevent contact with each other. The use of separate entrances/exits and staggered drop-off/pick-up schedules should be employed to minimize congestion and mixing of groups.</li> <li>Other physical distancing and cohort measures found in Caution (Yellow) continue to be followed.</li> </ul>
PPE (Masks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mask use and any additional personal protective equipment usage will follow current public health recommendations and orders.</li> <li>At this time, <b>masks are required in schools for students as well as for staff and visitors.</b></li> <li><b>Masks are required on school buses</b> for bus drivers, students, and any other passenger on the bus.</li> </ul>		

	Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Masks are required on school buses for bus drivers, students, and any other passenger on the bus.</b></li> <li>• Seating plans and attendance records are required.</li> <li>• Where possible individuals from the same household occupy the same seat.</li> <li>• Any additional measures would align with public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bussing will be provided for the children of critical service workers who do not have other means of transportation. <u>Transportation is only available to those who received transportation under Yellow and Orange.</u></li> <li>• Any additional measures will align with public health recommendations and orders.</li> </ul>
Field Trips and Extra-Curricular Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
Assemblies and gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
Visitors and Community Use of Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
Cleaning and Disinfecting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time</li> <li>• Health Canada has posted a list of disinfectants shown to be effective against COVID-19 at <a href="http://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html">www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html</a>.</li> </ul>		

	Caution (Yellow)	Restricted (Orange)	Critical (Red)
Food Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
Sharing Toys, Manipulatives, and Use of Libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
Ventilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		
Music, Wind Instruments and Singing Indoors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any additional measures will follow public health recommendations and orders at the time.</li> </ul>		