

CIRCULAR

Date: August 25, 2020

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To: All School Divisions and School-Located Licensed Child Care Centres

Subject: **COVID-19 Guidelines for Schools and School-Located Child Care Centres**

Type: Policy For Internal Reference Only
 Procedure Information Only

Effective Date: Immediately

On July 30, the province released “Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools” (https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/covid/k-12-reopeningplan.pdf), which contains guidelines to support the return of students and staff to in-class learning. On August 13, the province also released additional information with *Practice Guidance and Protocols for Restoring Safe Schools*, last updated on August 24, (<https://manitoba.ca/covid19/restoring/rss-practice-guidance.html>).

Manitoba’s plan to resume in-class learning establishes provincial consistency, while allowing for local flexibility where needed. The plan reflects the importance of safety, health and well-being, while ensuring reasonable measures and plans are in place to minimize the risk of transmission and exposure to the virus in schools.

The guiding principles of the plan are:

- Safety, health and well-being for all students, staff and families is a priority.
- High quality learning and assessment continues for all students.
- Accessible, trauma-informed resources and supports for students, parents and caregivers.
- Consistent, reliable and appropriate connection to school learning and belonging, for every student, regardless of location, barriers, special needs or challenges.
- System-wide communication and collaboration will promote consistent approaches throughout the province.

The K-12 Guidelines for September 2020, the COVID-19 K-12 School Settings Practice Guidance and Protocols and the updated COVID-19 Early Learning and Child Care Practice Guidance have both been approved by Manitoba’s Chief Provincial Public Health Officer. These guidelines should be followed by schools and child care facilities to ensure consistency and alignment of public health policies and practices and the health of all children, families and staff.

- The K-12 Guidelines for September 2020 are available at: <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/restoring/rss-guidelines-september.html>
- COVID-19 K-12 School Settings Practice Guidance and Protocols are available at: https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/k-12-reopeningplan-guidance.pdf

- The COVID-19 ELCC Practice Guidance is available at:
https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/famcirculars/Covid-19_ELCC_Practice_Guide_-_UPDATED_June_2020.pdf.

As schools re-open and in-class learning resumes, there are important implications for early learning and child care programs located in or on the property of schools. The departments of Education and Families are working with school divisions and the child care sector to ensure that families can continue to access child care within schools.

The attached *COVID-19 Guidelines for Schools and School-Located Child Care Centres* document has been developed by both departments, with feedback from the Manitoba Child Care Association. The K-12 Guidelines for September 2020, the COVID-19 K-12 School Settings Practice Guidance and Protocols and the COVID-19 ELCC Practice Guidance provide the basis for the safety and health guidelines to be followed by schools and child care facilities.

The purpose of this document is to build upon the existing guidelines to help identify key areas where schools and child care facilities are connected. This will allow for open discussion and communication between school divisions and child care facilities to develop a coordinated plan.

We want to take this opportunity to thank Manitoba schools for supporting the continuation of early learning and child care programming, which is critical to the well-being of children and supports working and studying parents.

Thank you to all child care facilities for your ongoing commitment to ensure safety and health guidelines are met to protect all children, parents and staff as part of the provincial COVID-19 response.

The Early Learning and Child Care Program

