



**MINISTER
OF FAMILIES**

Legislative Building
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0V8
CANADA

July 30, 2020

Dear Community Living disABILITY Services Participant,

The past few months have been a challenging time in terms of school for families, educational staff and students. Manitoba Education recently shared their “back to school” plan, acknowledging that we will continue to live with COVID 19 and the effects of this virus for the near future. As the Minister responsible for the Department of Families, I want to assure you that my staff will be working closely with the department of Education to make sure that the proper guidelines and supports are in place for your return to school.

The plan in September 2020 is for K-12 students to return to their classrooms five days per week, including students with additional support needs. Classroom configurations may look a little different to support physical distancing where possible. Students (assisted where necessary by caregivers and parents) and staff will be asked to self-screen for cold or flu-like symptoms and stay home when they are exhibiting symptoms. Enhanced cleaning protocols for schools and buses will be in place. Movement throughout the school during the day may be limited for students, and staff will move between classrooms where necessary.

At this time, public health guidance does not require students and staff to wear masks or other personal protective equipment in school settings or on school buses. Some staff and students may choose to bring and wear a non-medical mask while in the facility.

Schools must identify students with disabilities and those who are vulnerable to disengage from school, develop and implement strategies to re-engage them and prioritize these students for five days a week of in-class learning, where possible. Students are expected to attend in-class learning. If remote learning is included as part of their learning plan, students will be expected to participate.

The 'back to school plan' has three levels of response in the event schools need to adjust plans due to higher outbreak levels and direction from public health. Level one includes all students attending in class five days a week. Level two has all students up to grade 8 attending five days a week and students with disabilities are prioritized for in-class learning. Level three has schools closed and only students up to grade 6 who are children of critical workers attending in-class learning.

More information on Manitoba Education's COVID-19 response, including resources, planning documents, and Frequently Asked Questions, can be found at Latest COVID-19 Education News. Information specific to students with special needs and educational planning can be found at Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs.

Please reach out directly to your school team if you have questions, or to your Community Living disABILITY Services Community Service Worker with any concerns you may have, and we can assist you with sharing them with your school team as you plan to return to school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heather Stefanson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Honourable Heather Stefanson
Minister of Families