



Newfoundland and Labrador

K-12 Education Re-entry Plan

Department of Education

Updated: September 3, 2020

The Re-entry Plan

This plan is subject to change and direction from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH). This plan will evolve and be adjusted as necessary according to the status of COVID-19.

Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in Newfoundland and Labrador, K-12 schools will reopen in the fall of 2020. It is recommended that schools implement as many public health infection prevention and exposure control measures as possible.

The Department of Education (EDU) consulted with the school districts, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health to develop this plan. EDU will continue to engage our education partners as part of the re-entry to school process.

COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening, by The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) in Toronto has also been considered in this plan. As stated in the SickKids' Report, in planning the resumption of school during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical to balance the risk of direct infection and transmission of COVID-19 in children with the harms of school closure on their physical and mental health. While school closures may have been reasonable as part of the early pandemic response, current evidence and experience support the concept that children can return to school in a manner that maximizes children's health and minimizes risks from a public health perspective. Recent evidence indicates that children may be less susceptible to COVID-19 infection and may be less likely to transmit the virus to others (see [COVID-19 and Children](#) for more information).

The public health measures implemented to mitigate COVID-19, while necessary, have significant adverse health and welfare consequences for children. Therefore, it is critical that the risks of COVID-19 in children be balanced with the harms of school closure, which is impacting their physical and mental health. Consistency is essential for students and it will be important to ensure that once students return to school, the schools stay open to the extent possible. Children rely on structure and schedule for stability, which supports the need for a daily school model.

For the 2020-2021 school year, government expects that every student will continue to learn. The focus of the ***Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Education Re-entry Plan*** is to maximize in-person attendance in the K-12 education system while ensuring health and safety measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Instruction and in-person attendance targets have been established to ensure the number of students in the teaching and learning environment is manageable and aligns with public health guidelines.

This plan outlines three scenarios for learning and instruction for the 2020-2021 school year, depending on the status of COVID-19.

Return to in-class learning in school may vary across the province, dependent on the situation with COVID-19 in the local area. A localized model is best as it allows for consistency, stability and equity regardless of the region in which students live. Those areas with minimal cases and lower risk may continue with in-class instruction more fully than areas with more COVID-19. The intent is to avoid a provincial “shut-down”. Adjustments will be made to education delivery at appropriate levels:

- regional;
- family of schools;
- school; and/or
- classroom.

School districts will have the autonomy and flexibility to determine which scenario a school will operate under, throughout the school year, in order to meet local community needs. This will be done in consultation with local public health officials (see [COVID-19 and Schools](#) for more information).

The five main priorities informing the plan are:

- maintaining a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees;
- all students completing 100 per cent of curriculum, to the extent possible;
- providing the services needed to ensure, to the extent possible, in-class instruction for K- 6 students;
- supporting ALL students with exceptionalities and those who require additional supports; and
- providing continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

Government and school districts will continue to work to identify options for students who have limited internet availability or other barriers to online learning.

Key Health Information - Minimizing Risks

The Department of Health and Community Services has created a COVID-19 guidance document for K-12 schools that outlines specific criteria and protocols to be implemented in the eventuality (see [NL Public Health Guidance](#) for K-12 Schools).

It is important to re-emphasize that schools support the physical, social and emotional wellness of students. All of these factors need to be considered in the context of an evolving pandemic. Not offering in-person schooling has both broad societal implications that need to be considered, and risks to students of loss of educational and social opportunities and supports that must be weighed against public health considerations.

An increase in cases of COVID-19 is possible upon the resumption of school. It is therefore important that appropriate measures are proactively put in place to mitigate the effects of such an increase.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing (2 metre spacing) is a useful public health measure to help prevent the spread of disease; however, in a controlled school environment, where 2 metres is not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended. However, the daily school routine should not be disrupted to accommodate smaller classes for physical distancing.

Strict physical distancing should not be over-emphasized to children in the school setting as it is not practical and could cause psychological harm. Close interaction, such as playing and socializing is central to play-based curriculum and child development, and should not be discouraged. However, physical distancing should be reinforced if there is an increase of COVID-19 in communities.

Physical Education and Healthy Living

Sports and physical education classes should be encouraged and continue according to current available public health protocols. Outdoor activities such as recess should be encouraged. Sports with a high degree of physical contact should be postponed or modified for the present time. Students must perform hand hygiene prior to and after sports activities and outdoor play. Sports equipment (e.g., balls, hockey sticks) must be cleaned at the conclusion of the activity.

Cohorting

The purpose of cohorting is to limit the mixing of students and staff so that if a child or employee develops infection, the number of exposures would be reduced. Contact tracing is more feasible when groups (cohorts) are maintained. It is recommended, where possible, that students be cohorted by class. It is recognized that cohorting can be more easily adopted in primary/elementary schools; however, cohorting should not be done in a manner that compromises daily attendance or alters the curriculum options available to students. Additionally, the daily school schedule should not be disrupted in order to accommodate smaller cohorts.

Use of Masks

Students and staff should wear masks in accordance with current public health guidelines. Practices such as physical distancing, hand washing, staying home when sick, increased environmental cleaning and the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) continue to be priority public health measures. Within the context of K-12 education, PPE is primarily focused on non-medical masks (see Annex C for more information).

Mental Health Awareness and Supports

A proactive approach is important to minimize the mental health impacts of the school closures on the return to school. Student mental health and wellness is a core element of the re-entry to school plan. It can be anticipated that children and youth may experience increased stress and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, children and youth may have mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression and substance abuse, which may have been exacerbated by physical distancing, including school closures, and may experience symptom escalation on return to school.

School districts should ensure that appropriate supports and services are available for students and staff for the 2020-2021 school year.

General

It is important to remember that there is not a reliance on one single public health measure to stop the spread of COVID-19 in the school setting. The risk of a COVID-19 outbreak is less likely the more public health measures are implemented and adhered to. Reducing the risk of COVID-19 outbreaks in schools will require the dedication and support of school districts, administration, teachers, staff, students and parents/guardians.

All scenarios of this plan will minimally include the following health measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission:

- routine self-screening (not testing) for all staff for symptoms and exposure to COVID-19;
- routine daily screening of students by parents/guardians before arriving at school;
- enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfecting recommendations, including daily cleaning for all areas of the school, washrooms and high-touch surface cleaning several times a day, and a regularly scheduled deep cleaning when students are not present;
- strict stay-at-home policy for any students or staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (even if symptoms resemble a mild cold);
- physical distancing recommendations;
- reorganization of rooms to allow for more physical space;
- cohorting of students by class where possible;
- hand hygiene expectations when entering and exiting the school and classrooms, and before and after eating;
- continual reminders of the importance of respiratory etiquette (e.g., cover coughs and sneezes, avoid touching the face, prompt disposal of used tissues, followed by hand hygiene);
- a no sharing policy, i.e., all students should have their own supplies, (where sharing of equipment is required, the equipment should be cleaned between uses);
- guiding foot traffic flow through entrances and hallways by using markers on the floor or pylons/barriers; and
- no large gatherings such as assemblies.

Detailed Public Health Guidance for School Re-entry is provided in Annex A. A Screening Questionnaire for staff, students and essential visitors is provided in Annex B.

Scenarios for the 2020-2021 School Year

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

- This scenario will be initiated based on public health advice when the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very low.
- Regular in-class instruction resumes for all K-12 students.
- School districts must follow public health measures for student learning and extra-curricular activities, including physical distancing when possible.
- Virtual learning or other forms of structured learning must be put in place for students who are required to stay home because they are sick or in isolation due to COVID-19 infection or exposure.

Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

- This scenario will be initiated based on public health advice when the risk of COVID-19 is low to moderate.
- Priority is for in-class instruction for ALL K- 6 students, to the extent possible.
- 100 per cent in-school participation for students with exceptionalities and/or who require additional supports.
- Minimum of 30 - 50 per cent in-class instruction; balance of learning will be online/remote instruction.
- Taking into consideration local circumstances, school districts may divide students into two or more groups to go back to in-school classes on an alternating schedule.
- School districts must follow public health measures for student learning and extra-curricular activities, including physical distancing when possible.
- With physical distancing requirements, school districts will need to consider:
 - bus transportation;
 - parent drop off/pickup protocols;
 - entry to the school;
 - the start and end times for school days;
 - how classes are scheduled;

- large gatherings, such as recess and lunch breaks (may need to off-set schedules, limit number of students and supervisors);
- washroom use;
- movement in hallways;
- use of auxiliary spaces;
- the configuration of furniture and equipment to ensure that physical distancing, to the extent possible, is in place;
- hygiene and cleaning protocols; and
- protocols for isolating students who become ill at school.

Scenario 3: At-home learning continues (In-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

- This scenario will be initiated based on public health advice in the event of moderate to widespread transmission of COVID-19.
- School districts offer at-home instruction and learning opportunities to their students. The expectation is that teaching and assessment of curriculum outcomes will continue. As such, teachers may be required by school districts to be in attendance at school, unless that school has been ordered closed by public health.
- To the extent possible, school districts must consider and enable the full participation and inclusion of students with exceptionalities within the school environment.
- Following are the expectations on the number of instructional hours for the education system when operating within Scenario 3 for the 2020-2021 school year. These instructional hours are minimums and school districts have the flexibility to increase hours beyond these minimums.

Content to be delivered for all grades:

Kindergarten – Grade 3

- focus on language and mathematics learning outcomes that strengthen the development of literacy and numeracy;
- incorporate health curriculum outcomes (with a focus on social/emotional learning and mental health); and
- minimum of five instructional hours per student per week.

Grades 4-6

- focus on language and mathematics learning outcomes that strengthen the development of literacy and numeracy;
- incorporate science, social studies and wellness curriculum outcomes (with a focus on social/emotional learning and mental health); and
- minimum of six to eight instructional hours per student per week.

Grades 7-9

- focus on mathematics, language/literacy, science, social studies and wellness curriculum outcomes (with a focus on physical and mental health); and
- minimum of 12 to 16 instructional hours per student per week.

Grades 10-12

- focus on specified course requirements for high school graduation, including language (English and Français), social studies, mathematics, and science (biology, chemistry, physics and science); and
 - minimum of three instructional hours per two credit courses per week; minimum of one and a half instructional hours per one credit course per week (based on year long, non-semesterized courses).
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- Teachers continue to be responsible for assessing the progress of students.
 - Students continue to be responsible to actively engage in learning and diligently pursue their education.
 - School districts, parents/guardians, children and students must continue to follow public health measures in place.

Public Exams

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

- As of September 1, 2020, public examinations scheduled for January 2021 are cancelled.

Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

- As of September 1, 2020, public examinations scheduled for January 2021 are cancelled.

Scenario 3: At-home learning continues (In-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

- As of September 1, 2020, public examinations scheduled for January 2021 are cancelled.

Grades 3, 6 and 9 Provincial Reading and Mathematics Assessments (PRMA)

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

- PRMAs will continue to be administered. The established PRMA schedule provides flexibility for school districts to administer them within a fixed period of time.

Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

- PRMAs will continue to be administered. The established PRMA schedule provides flexibility for school districts to administer them within a fixed period of time.

Scenario 3: At-home learning continues (in-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

- EDU will decide on the administration of PRMAs based on the duration of the cancellation of in-school classes.

Students With Exceptionalities

School districts must consider and enable the full participation and inclusion of students with exceptionalities. In circumstances in which supports and services require support and adaptation for public health measures, plans must be developed to ensure their inclusion.

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

- School districts should review and determine components from the 2019-2020 school year for students with exceptionalities (e.g., behavioural, intellectual, learning, communication or physical characteristics, or any combination of them).
- Mental health supports for children, students and staff should be in place.

Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

- 100 per cent in-school participation for students with identified needs and those who require additional supports, to the extent possible.
- School districts are expected to have in place the same supports and services as noted in Scenario 1.

Scenario 3: At-home learning continues (In-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

- To the extent possible, school districts must consider and enable the full participation and inclusion of students with exceptionalities and/or who require additional supports within the school environment.
- School districts continue to offer at-home learning and instruction for all students in K-12, including those who require specialized supports and services.
- Teachers and other staff (e.g., speech language pathologists, educational psychologists, teachers of the deaf/hard of hearing or blind/visually impaired) will provide specialized supports and services to students, including those with disabilities, in consultation with families, in order to support learning outcomes at home, while avoiding direct contact to protect students' and staff health.

- Teachers will be responsible to ensure that individual education plans (IEPs) are implemented, monitored and evaluated for students who are in need of specialized supports and services.
- Teachers will consult with parents through their chosen communication methods, (e.g., email, phone, other digital modes), to develop IEPs.
- IEPs will be reviewed regularly by teachers with parents and when appropriate, with the student, to update information, review effectiveness of identified supports, strategies and services, and revise plans and identify new supports, strategies and/or services that will be provided.
- Teachers are responsible for assessing and reporting on a student's progress. Each school district will determine what will work best for their students.
- Continued mental health supports for students and staff are in place.

Extra-Curricular and Other Activities

Extra-curricular activities complement and are not part of instructional time where there is student-teacher interaction and supervision. School districts will continue to have the flexibility to offer extra-curricular activities to students. EDU will work with the Department of Health and Community Services to explore possibilities for athletic activities and events within the context of health measures in place.

Schools should endeavor to offer as many of their usual clubs and activities as possible. Minimally, school districts, parents/guardians, students and community members must continue to follow public health measures in place.

Student Transportation (Busing)

Children and students across the province travel to and from school through a combination of walking, being driven by their parents/guardians, and school bus services provided by school districts. Travel/transportation of children and students must follow public health measures in place (see [Student Transportation on Buses](#) for more information).

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

School districts determine transportation service levels, ensuring that all students eligible for busing are transported in accordance with current health guidelines regarding busing in response to COVID-19.

School districts must also consider additional safety measures to minimize the risk of exposure to the driver and students. Measures include:

- a protective physical divider may be considered for the driver;
- fixed seating plans with log sheets must be implemented to assist contact tracing;
- where possible students from the same family must sit together;
- where possible, maintain physical distancing between students;
- maintain a maximum of two children per seat;
- bus driver(s) must wear a mask;
- students wearing masks according to current public health guidelines;
- keeping the seat immediately behind the bus driver empty.

In addition, resources and supplies will be required to sanitize the bus after every route.

Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

Same as Scenario 1. It is anticipated that a full complement of buses and drivers will be required for school districts that have schools operating under Scenario 2, even if students are operating on a modified schedule such as alternating days. School districts have the flexibility to adjust bus routes accordingly.

Communications

The success of the school re-entry plan will depend in part on parents being informed about new protocols and confident that the approach will keep their children safe. To that end, school districts should clearly communicate expectations and provide guidelines to parents and students well before in-class instruction resumes, and ongoing throughout the year.

Communication strategies should include:

- Prioritizing digital communications, such as fact sheets explaining new protocols and links to helpful information, as well as detailed instructions regarding screening and pick-up/drop-off procedures and protocols if a child or staff person becomes ill.
- Providing age-appropriate information for students related to hand hygiene, physical distancing, school hours, remote learning, and resources to support learning and wellness at home.

Other Requirements

- Curriculum expectations and any adjustments for the re-entry plan will be directed by the EDU.
- District employees required to keep schools open and functioning (including for students with IEPs) will be deemed essential. This includes, but is not limited to teachers, administrators, and support staff.
- School districts must work within the parameters of all contractual agreements with school district employees.
- School districts must ensure the appropriate staff are available and on-site at schools to ensure health and safety measures are in place.
- School districts, in collaboration with schools, are expected to develop operational plans outlining their approach to teaching and learning.
- As a part of their operational plans, school districts will outline how:
 - measures will be put in place to meet the public health requirements as outlined in Annex A.
 - class configurations will adhere to health and safety measures, including physical distancing and reducing physical contact;
 - in-class instruction will be offered within in-person attendance targets (e.g., alternate days, half-days, blended model, different start and end times);

- K-12 students with identified special needs and/or who require additional support will be supported regardless of the scenario;
- remote, online and in-person teaching and learning will be delivered and balanced, when required; and
- supports, such as food services, transportation and technology will continue dependent upon district and/or school measures.

Annex A

COVID-19 Information Health Guidance for School Re-entry

Overview

The guidance provided in this document is intended to support schools and school districts in the safe launch of in-person classes in September 2020 under Scenarios 1 and 2 of the *Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Education Re-entry Plan* and reduce opportunities for transmission of COVID-19. This plan is subject to change and direction from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH). These guidelines will evolve and be adjusted as necessary according to the status of COVID-19.

Schools refer to public, private, and Indigenous. School-based activities which may be impacted by this guidance include sports, music and field trips into the community or to other schools, care provided outside of regular school hours (e.g., before and after care), and professional development/activity days. Although this information is relevant to all schools, it is recognized that First Nation schools on reserve are a federal responsibility. Information shared with First Nation schools is for information only. For public health information, COVID-19 questions or for reporting purposes, First Nation schools should contact their local health authorities.

There are measures that school settings in Newfoundland and Labrador can take to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. Such measures include, but are not limited to, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection and having staff and students stay home when ill. These are important steps that can support the health and wellness of our students, staff and community. Schools, in consultation with their district and health authorities, should implement the guidance for schools as applicable to their unique situation.

Parents/guardians play an integral role in the screening process for the child's/student's daily involvement in school.

Health and Community Services' personnel are available to support school authorities throughout the province. Their role is to provide guidance on communicable disease risk as well as risk management. If you have concerns, need specific guidance, or have questions about how to apply the measures in this document, please contact local health authorities.

Any school connected to a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 will be contacted by Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Services and may be required to close in-person classes to allow the public health investigation to take place. The decision to send a cohort/class home or to close a school will be made in consultation with local health authorities.

General Building Safety

- A thorough cleaning of school facilities must be completed prior to re-entry.
- Many school buildings may have had reduced or no water flow through the plumbing water system during the pandemic, leading to the stagnation of water in the pipes. Prior to the launch of school, the physical setting must be checked to ensure fresh water replaces the stagnant water in the water lines, as per government guidance.
- HVAC systems, where applicable, must be checked to ensure good ventilation.
- Area rugs and soft furnishings that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected must be removed. Increased frequency of cleaning of permanent carpets is recommended.
- Schools must develop procedures that outline [hand hygiene](#) and cleaning requirements for schools and should address:
 - Placement of hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol content (or a non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer approved by Health Canada) in entrances, exits, classroom entrances, and around high-touch equipment such as microwave ovens, vending machines and other high traffic areas. A list of Health Canada approved hand sanitizers is posted [here](#).
 - Placement of hand sanitizer and amounts of units require approval from local fire commissioners;
 - High-touch surfaces (including water fountains);
 - Washrooms;
 - Shared equipment;
 - Auxiliary spaces and common rooms; and
 - Others areas that may apply.
- Increased frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas and equipment inside and outside classrooms. [Cleaning and disinfection for public settings](#) must be followed.
- Validated cleaner-disinfectant products that are approved by Health Canada and have a DIN number assures that the product claims are validated. Not all disinfectants kill all pathogens which is why it is important to use one validated to kill human coronavirus. Ensure the disinfection is appropriate for use around children and for the intended surface.

- Sodium hypochlorite (Bleach) is an exception in that it does not have a DIN number but is acceptable. See guidance for appropriate use and storage of [household chemicals](#) and [bleach](#).
- Students and staff are required to perform hand hygiene when entering and exiting the school as well as before entering the classroom.
- Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be promoted.
- Water fountains can remain open. Water fountain knobs and push buttons are considered high-touch surfaces, and must be regularly cleaned and disinfected. Students should fill water bottles rather than drinking directly from the mouthpiece of a fountain.
- See [Environmental Measures](#) for more information.

Screening

- Before leaving home staff and students must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the attached self-screening tool (see Annex B).
- Parents and children/students must be familiar with the screening tool 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.
- Anyone who reports symptoms should be directed to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call 811 HealthLine, or their primary health care practitioner), and use the [COVID-19 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.

Cohorts

- A cohort is defined as a group of students and staff who remain together. The size of the cohort will depend on the physical space of the classroom or learning setting. Two metres of physical space should be maintained between desks, to the extent possible.
- Contact tracing is more feasible when groups (cohorts) are maintained. It is recommended, where possible, that students cohort by class.

- Cohorts will decrease the number of close contacts a case of COVID-19 would have in a school and assist public health officials in their efforts to trace contacts and contain an outbreak. For the purposes of contact tracing, consider limiting capacity of rooms to a number that allows for physical distancing (i.e., fewer students in a smaller room, more students in a larger room).
- See [Cohorts and Interacting with Cohorts](#) for more information.

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.
 - If 2 metres cannot be arranged between desks/tables, students should be arranged so they are not facing each other (e.g., arranged in rows rather than in small groups of 4 or a semi-circle). This way, if a student coughs or sneezes, they are not likely to cough or sneeze directly on the face of another student.
- In situations where physical distancing is not possible (e.g., buses, classrooms and some sporting activities), extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, not participating when sick and cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis before and after activities is strongly recommended.
- It is still recommended to maintain physical distancing within a cohort, whenever possible, to minimize the risk for disease transmission (e.g., spacing between desks).
- See [Physical Distancing](#) for more information.

Expectations for Drop-off/Pick-up and Entry Areas at Schools

- Schools must develop procedures for drop-off/pick-up that support physical distancing of 2 metres where possible between all persons (except household members).
- Consider strategies such as staggering drop-off and pick-up times and locations, or put in place other protocols to limit contact between staff/parents/guardians/students as much as possible.

In-person Learning

- Schools must develop procedures and plans for in-person learning that supports physical distancing (2 metres) where possible, and to separate cohorts to the greatest extent possible.
- Schools must consider how to best address traffic flow. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. It is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure adherence to the fire code.
- For activity planning, staff should ask themselves the following questions to determine the risk of the activities and whether they are allowed to proceed:
 - Does the activity involve shared surfaces or objects frequently touched by hands?
 - Can an activity be modified to increase opportunities for physical distancing?
 - What is the frequency/possibility to clean high-touch surfaces (e.g., electronic devices, instruments, equipment, toys)?
- To align with public health measures, field trips and activities requiring group transportation should not occur at this time.
- Schools may stagger lunch/snack breaks.
- Choir practices/performances and band practices/ performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher level of risk and must 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).
- Should a student need to be in a workplace (e.g., for Career Development 2201) the student is expected to follow the rules set out by the workplace.

Expectations for Visitors and Other Service Providers Entering the School

- Non-essential persons must not be permitted in the school.
- Parents/guardians can attend the school if they are required as part of the educational programming needs of the school (e.g., medical injections, learning supports).
 - When a school visit is essential, the school must screen visitors using the self-screening tool (see Annex B) before they enter the school.
 - If a visitor answers YES to any of the questions, the individual must not be admitted into the school.

- A record of all visitors and contact information must be kept.
- The school must screen service providers, including delivery drivers and independent contractors using the attached tool (see Annex B) before they enter the school.
 - If a service provider answers YES to any of the questions, the individual must not be admitted into the school.
 - If a delivery driver answers YES, the driver/school will make alternate delivery arrangements.

Risk Mitigation for High Traffic Areas in School Facilities

- Schools must 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;
 - Removing and restaging seating in public areas to prevent gathering; and
 - Considering limiting bathroom occupancy at any one time.

Expectations for Shared Equipment

- Use of shared items or equipment is to be avoided where possible.
 - Equipment that must be shared must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- Arrangements for storage of personal items should be made.

Auxiliary Spaces

- Gymnasiums can be used to deliver physical education programming. When possible physical education should be done outside instead of inside.
 - Sports and physical education classes should be encouraged and continue according to available protocols. There should be special consideration as to whether re-starting sports with a high degree of physical contact should be postponed or modified for the present time.
 - Administrators and teachers should choose activities or sports that support physical distancing (e.g., badminton over wrestling).

- Sports equipment (e.g., balls, hockey sticks) must be cleaned at the conclusion of the activity.
- Use of shared items or sports equipment should be discouraged. Equipment that must be shared must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use, and users must perform hand hygiene before and after each use. Equipment that cannot be adequately disinfected must not be used.
- School assemblies or other large gatherings must not exceed the maximum gathering size established by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Virtual options should be offered instead of in-person gatherings.

Food Services

- There are special considerations for cafeterias and food services. As there are a wide variety of food programs and cafeterias in schools across Newfoundland and Labrador, the following list is not prescriptive and risk mitigation should be tailored to each school's particular context (see [Cafeterias and Food Services](#) for more information).
- No activities that involve the sharing of food between students or staff should occur.
 - Classes that teach food preparation may occur as long as students do not share the food they prepare with other students or staff.
- For classroom meals and snacks:
 - No self-serve or family-style meal service. Instead, switch to pre-packaged meals or meals served by designated staff.
 - Food provided by the family should be stored with the student's belongings.
 - Close off food preparation areas.
 - Ensure that food-handling staff practice meticulous hand hygiene and are excluded from work if they are symptomatic.
 - There should be no common food items (e.g., salt and pepper shakers, ketchup).
 - Utensils should be used to serve food items (not fingers).
 - If a school is using a common lunchroom and staggering lunch times, ensure that it is cleaned and disinfected after each use. All surfaces of the tables and chairs (including the underneath edge of the chair seat) should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
- For cafeteria services:
 - Remove/rearrange dining tables or place signs on tables/chairs that are not to be used to maintain physical distancing.
 - Stagger meal service times to reduce the numbers of people present at any one time.
 - Adapt other areas to serve as additional dining space to increase spacing among persons in the same room.

- Do not use buffets. Instead, switch to pre-packaged meals or meals served by staff.
- Dispense cutlery, napkins and other items to students, rather than allowing them to pick up their own items.

Responding to Illness

- Staff members, parents, and students must not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Schools must develop procedures to address staff that become symptomatic during the school day to allow that staff member to leave the school for the time recommended by the health authorities (see [What to do if a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms](#) for more information).
- If a student develops symptoms while at the school, the student should be isolated in a separate room. The parent/guardian should be notified to come and pick up the student immediately. If a separate room is not available, the student should be kept at least 2 metres away from other students.
 - 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 must wear a mask and staff must wear a mask and face shield. Close interactions with the student that may result in contact with the student's respiratory secretions should be avoided to the extent possible.
 - Staff/students must wash their hands before and after touching a mask as per [mask guidance](#), and before and after touching any items used by the student.
 - All items the student touched/used while isolated must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the student has been picked up. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., paper, books, cardboard puzzles) must be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 24 hours.
- See [Stay Home When Sick](#) for more information.

Student Transportation

- Parents and students must not be in the pick-up area or enter the bus if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Encourage private (e.g., parents or caregivers) vehicle use where possible to decrease transportation density.
- The driver should be provided with a protective zone, which may include:
 - keeping the seat immediately behind the bus driver empty;
 - 2 metre physical distance;
 - physical barrier; or
 - non-medical mask.
- All passengers on the bus are required to wear non-medical masks (NMM). However, no student is required to wear a NMM if they cannot tolerate it.
- Students should be assigned seats and a record of this seating plan must be kept in order to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student having COVID-19. Students who live in the same household should be seated together.
- Maintain a maximum of two children to a seat.
- Schools must develop procedures for student loading, unloading and transfers 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 seat.
 - Students from the same household may share seats.
 - Students start unloading from the front seats to the back of the bus.
- Bus cleaning:
 - Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces, such as door handles, window areas, rails, steering wheel, mobile devices and GPS prior to each run.
 - It is recommended that vehicle cleaning logs be kept.
- See [Student Transportation on Buses](#) for more information.

International Students/Programs

- Once Canada lifts travel restrictions and non-essential international travel resumes, international travel and education programs in Newfoundland and Labrador can resume if approved by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Annex B

Screening Questionnaire

Staff persons and students must use this questionnaire daily to decide if they should attend school.

Parents should complete the screening on behalf of their school-aged child.

Annex C

Guidelines for Use of Non-Medical Masks

From a public health perspective, current evidence and experience support that students can return to school in a manner that minimizes risks associated with COVID-19. The wearing of non-medical masks (NMMs) is recognized as an important mitigation tool in addition to physical distancing, regular hand washing and staying home when sick. Therefore, the Department of Education (EDU) is instituting the following guidelines for NMMs in schools in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador:

- All passengers on school buses are required to wear NMMs; however, no student is required to wear an NMM if they cannot tolerate it.
- Bus drivers must wear an NMM.
- K-6 students who arrive by bus must wear their NMM until they are seated in their classroom, at which point it can be removed, stored and hand hygiene completed.
- K-6 students who travel by bus will be required to put their NMM on in their classrooms at the end of the day prior to making their way to the bus.
- K-6 students who do not take the bus will not be required to wear an NMM, but may choose to do so.
- NMMs will be required to be worn by students in Grades 7 to 12 in classrooms where physical distancing of 1 metre “face-to-face” is not possible.
 - NMMs are not required while students are seated in the classroom if following the 1 metre “face-to-face” guidance.
 - NMMs are required in the classroom when close contact between students, or students and staff, is occurring. NMMs should be used for the duration of the activity.
- Teachers or other staff will be required to wear NMMs when physical distancing is not achievable (e.g., staffrooms, break rooms).
- Teachers or other staff who move between cohorts or instruct multiple cohorts will have to wear NMMs if distancing cannot be maintained between themselves and other staff or students.
- Staff in the food service area must wear NMMs while preparing and serving food.
- Office staff will wear NMMs when physical distancing is not possible and physical barriers are not in place.
- Staff should wear an NMM when supervising or assisting an ill student. Where possible they should maintain a 2 metre distance.
- A student who is sick will wear an NMM to cover their coughs or sneezes while waiting to leave the school.
- A staff member who is sick will wear an NMM to cover their nose and mouth while waiting to leave the school.

When donning and doffing a mask it is important to adhere to proper hand hygiene, as per [mask guidance](#).

This situation will be closely monitored and if there is a change in epidemiology or evidence regarding COVID-19, these guidelines may change.



