



Vulcan Prairieview Elementary School

Re-entry Plan

August 2021

Introduction

On August 13, 2021, we learned that in-person classes would resume under scenario 1 (a complete return to school with safety measures in place to reduce the transmission of COVID-19). Vulcan Prairieview Elementary staff is very excited to welcome our students back and we are looking forward to the start of another school year.

We would first like to extend a huge thanks to all of our parents who took the time to respond to the survey we sent out mid August. We wanted to give all parents an opportunity to have their voice heard and the input we received was invaluable in helping us navigate this challenging situation and create our plan. As you can imagine, there are very diverse opinions, thoughts, and feelings from our parent community around what the school should be doing in light of the current situation and we are unable to meet the desires of everyone. Our primary concern is the health and safety of our students. We need to ensure that whatever we decide is in the best interests of student safety and wellness -- in all aspects (including mental health), not just in relation to COVID-19; we want to provide as balanced an approach as we possibly can. As per Palliser School Division's guidance both last year and this year, our three main strategies are:

- Follow expert advice;
- Keep the virus out; and
- Prevent the spread.

We have prepared this plan based on the current direction from Palliser School Division, Alberta Education, and Alberta Health Services. **Please note that it is flexible and subject to change as we respond to the current contexts, as well as the ongoing guidance from experts, the division and the province.**

For more information, we invite you to review the [Palliser School Division COVID-19 School Guidance](#).

Follow Expert Advice

Here are some links to the resources Alberta Health and Alberta Education have provided:

- [Alberta.ca/returntoschool](https://www.alberta.ca/returntoschool) is a great place to start for information on how parents, students, and school staff can reduce transmission of COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses.
- [Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention and Management in Schools](#) (see: Appendix B)
- [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#)
- [2021-2022 Parent Guide](#)

Keep The Virus Out

Our main strategy in keeping COVID-19 and all other airborne respiratory viruses from entering our school is to ensure that if people are sick, they stay home. As was the case last year, anyone that is sick or exhibits COVID-19 symptoms will not be permitted to enter Vulcan Prairieview Elementary.

Staying home when sick

Students, staff, and anyone else entering Vulcan Prairieview Elementary must continue to screen for symptoms using the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#). (Please note that there is a checklist for children under 18 and a checklist for adults 18 and older.) Anyone that has COVID-19 symptoms MUST stay home. By having our school community (parents, students and staff) diligently working together to ensure the virus does not enter the building, to the best of our abilities, we can hopefully ensure the safety of our students. Provincial rules for [Isolation and Quarantine Requirements](#) will apply.

Responding to illness

Should a student become ill while at school, we will follow the same protocols as last year where we will have the student don a mask and isolate in our sick room until parents are able to come and take them home.

Prevent the Spread

Cleaning

VPE will ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces within the school. All soft surfaces that are difficult to sanitize (such as classroom carpets and plush furniture) have been removed from the classrooms.

Hygiene and respiratory etiquette

We will continue measures to promote frequent hand washing/sanitizing and good respiratory etiquette. Students will be sanitizing/washing hands upon entering classrooms and other common spaces such as the art room and library. (If your child cannot tolerate hand sanitizer, please let their teacher know and other arrangements can be made.) Because many respiratory viruses (including COVID-19) are airborne, we are hoping to place HEPA filters in each of our classrooms. (This is dependent on the cost and availability of the filters.)

Physical distancing

We will reduce crowding and support physical distancing between all students/staff within the school. This includes staggering our students coming in and out of the school so only a few students are in the boot rooms/entrances /hallways at a time and staggering our dismissals at the end of the day by dismissing bus students first (a few at a time) and then town students (also a few at a time). We will be limiting the number of

students who will be in smaller common areas such as washrooms, etc. Classrooms are currently set up to maximize spacing between desks.

Cohorting

This year, we are able to increase the size of our cohorts beyond just the single classroom. Our cohorts will be based on grade groupings. One cohort will be our K-3 students and our other cohort will be our grade 4-6 students. The students within these cohorts will be able to interact, play and learn with their peers in the other classes within their cohort. Things like assemblies where the whole school body is involved will once again be virtual to avoid having everyone in the same space at the same time.

Non-medical Face Masks

Because we have so carefully structured our school routines to allow us to control the number of students within the spaces of our school, masking will not be mandatory. Those that would like to wear a mask are welcome to do so. (It is up to the discretion of parents whether they would like their child to wear a mask or not.) This is subject to change based on district and provincial guidelines. (Please note that for right now, all students (K-12) riding a school bus must wear a mask while on the bus as per provincial guidelines.)

School Activities

Because there are no restrictions on curricular and extracurricular activities, we will be able to go ahead and run our programs much as we have in the past. This means that for now, extracurricular activities such as after school sports, lunchtime intramurals, etc. will be able to occur. Field trips will also be able to occur. Additional health measures such as ensuring we are sticking within our cohort system (K-3 and 4-6) and sanitizing/washing hands before and after participation in the activities will occur to ensure the safety of students and staff. These activities also are subject to change based on current restrictions and guidelines. We will also be able to have visitors and volunteers come in to the school but these are by appointment only and they will continue to be required to complete the Alberta Health Daily Checklist and sign in.

Conclusion

We understand these guidelines may be too strict for some and not strict enough for others. Please know that we have kept the best interests of our students in our hearts and minds as we created these plans. We carefully considered the feedback we received from parents as well as district and provincial guidance. We tried to balance the risks along with the benefits of keeping and removing some of the restrictions. These plans will be a working document should things change locally and provincially. We are looking forward to an exciting year filled with many amazing and positive learning opportunities and fun experiences for everyone.