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September 15, 2021

Dear Prairie Spirit families:

I am sending this communication as a follow up to the new masking requirement for all students that came into effect in Prairie Spirit schools on Tuesday, September 14.

I cannot stress enough that the health and well-being of our students and staff is of the utmost importance. In addition to supporting safety, our COVID-19 measures – including masking for all students and staff – will help keep students learning in person and without interruptions due to COVID-19, as much as possible.

Safety measures implemented in our Division are dictated by information from our medical experts and local COVID transmission data. The informed decision to implement protocols, including masking, is an operational decision communicated and led by the Division’s senior leadership team and myself, as Director.

There is currently no provincial health order requiring indoor masking in the province. However, the provincial government has directed school divisions to work with their local Medical Health Officers to plan safety measures for students and staff, based on their local context. Our Medical Health Officer advised Prairie Spirit to move to required indoor masking for all students.

There will be regular mask breaks during the day, including time outdoors and at lunch, as well as other natural, brief breaks for students when physical distancing is possible, preferably outdoors.

Cases in Prairie Spirit schools

Prairie Spirit has had approximately 30 cases of COVID-19 reported in 17 schools since classes started on September 1. The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) is confirming these cases as quickly as they can. These case numbers reflect the COVID activity in the province at this time, with record daily COVID numbers being reported.

As a comparison, the Division had 39 incidents where a positive COVID case was identified as a public health concern in a class over a four month period last year (September 2020 to January 2021).

SHA process for reporting a case in a classroom

When there is a case in a classroom, the SHA provides all communication and direction for students and staff. If you have questions about this process, please contact the SHA. The Division and the school do not have any more details about the case and cannot give any additional direction outside of what the

SHA has provided. If we receive more information, we will share it, as we are committed to transparency in our communications.

Parents may choose to inform the school of a positive COVID-19 case for their child prior to the SHA providing confirmation. This notification helps us coordinate a timely response with the SHA for possible communication to the school community.

If your child is directed to self-isolate by the SHA, please communicate with your school so your child's teacher can offer supports for learning at home for that period of time.

Case in a class:

1. The SHA will notify the school division of an exposure in the classroom and send the Division a Class Exposure letter to send to the students in the impacted classroom(s) and bus, if applicable.

Please note: the SHA is not currently providing an exposure date in their letters.

2. The school community will be informed of the positive case in the school.
3. Public Health will continue to monitor COVID activity in schools and identify transmission/ outbreaks in the school setting. If an outbreak is identified in a school setting, the MHO will communicate with the school and may provide additional recommend

The Ministries of Health and Education are currently reviewing COVID-19 case and contact management in schools. If there is a change to our current process, we will share an update with families.

Communication between the home and school is very important as we continue to support our learners and work together to keep our school community safe. All staff and students are asked to stay home and report any absences if they are not feeling well. Please note the symptoms of COVID-19 as described on the Government of Saskatchewan's Self-Monitoring [page](#).

Through everything we are currently experiencing, there is a need to focus on what is important in our schools: learning. I encourage all of us to support one another and support our students.

Sincerely,



Darryl Bazylak
Director of Education