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October 15, 2021

Dear Prairie Spirit families:

I hope you enjoyed the Thanksgiving long weekend. We have been very thankful for the exceptional weather we've enjoyed up until now and expect a beautiful weekend ahead! We are also very thankful for your support and understanding as we navigate the challenges of this school year.

As always, our focus is on supporting student learning. We are all working together to minimize the spread of COVID-19, keep each other safe and support our students learning in person at school, as much as possible.

Teacher priorities

This is the third consecutive school year that has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Our teachers and school staff have developed new ways to deliver curricula to students and connect with parents during these years. It has been both rewarding and challenging.

We want to support our teachers as they work with students and families, both in-person and at home. This support includes ensuring teachers have the appropriate resources and time to provide quality learning experiences for all students.

If parents choose to keep their child home for a short period of time or take their child on vacation, support for learning at home will be limited, as teachers must focus on face-to-face instruction and supporting those students who cannot attend due to medical reasons (e.g., the student has tested positive for COVID and cannot attend school during the isolation period). We will do our best to support students when they return to class.

Learning options for families

Our schools provide rich learning experiences for students. We are very thankful for our teachers and school staff who are so committed to their students and their learning.

Prairie Spirit has a responsibility to provide quality educational programming for all students, including those who choose to step away from in-person learning for a semester or term. We want to provide the best options for your child's educational programming and to ensure an appropriate and rigorous learning environment.

We have developed a new *Learning@Home* program for Kindergarten to Grade 9 students who choose to learn from home for the remainder of the semester. With this low technology (or no technology) program, a dedicated Prairie Spirit teacher supports students who are learning from home. This program provides a bridge for students to transition back to their school when they are ready. This is a strong

option for families who want their child to learn from home for a semester or term. If you are interested in [Learning@Home](#), please talk to your school administrator for more information.

Prairie Spirit's Kindergarten to Grade 12 online school, *Spirit eLearning School*, provides an excellent program for families interested in an online option. Students are invited to enrol in Spirit eLearning for a semester at a time. Please speak to your school administrator for more information about [Spirit eLearning School](#).

COVID update

We have had over 170 cases of COVID-19 in our schools since the start of the school year. This level of COVID activity reminds all of us to take extra precautions, including keeping your child at home if they have any symptoms.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) has declared an outbreak at nine Prairie Spirit schools since the start of the school year. An outbreak is defined as: "two or more people test positive for COVID-19 and are all linked to a specific non-household setting (for example, a school or bus) or event within a specified time period."

Please note: only the SHA can declare an outbreak in a school. Prairie Spirit's role is to share Public Health information with families and to communicate with the SHA to support their response with confirmed cases.

The Ministry of Health delivered supplies of COVID rapid testing kits to schools throughout the province earlier this month. These kits are for families to use at home with their unvaccinated children who are 11 years of age and younger. The response to these kits has been very strong. If a school needs more testing kits, they will request more kits from the Saskatchewan Health Authority.

If you are waiting for a rapid testing kit, thank you for your patience. The Ministry of Health determined the supply each school received and will also determine future deliveries.

COVID case in a class/bus

For the 2021/22 school year, the government has prioritized maintaining in-person learning for students who are in a class with a positive COVID-19 case and who do not have symptoms.

When there is a positive case in a class or on a bus, all students in the class (or bus) are considered close contacts. The individual who has tested positive will self-isolate as directed by Public Health.

Fully vaccinated close contacts are not required to self-isolate, but should self-monitor and get tested if they have symptoms.

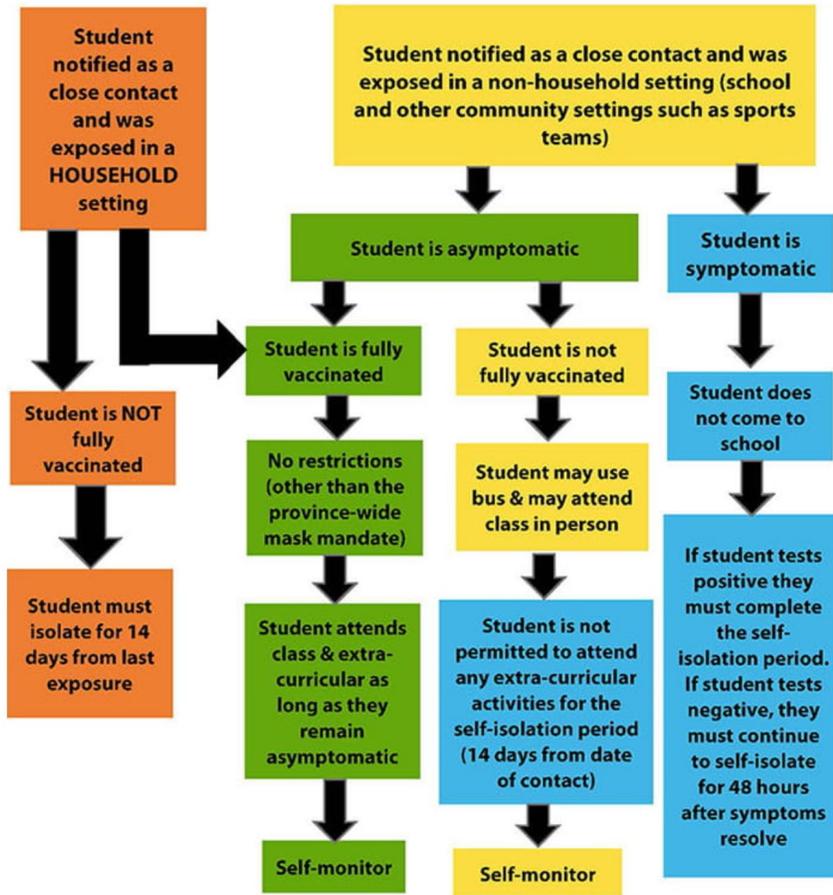
Students who have not been fully vaccinated and do not have symptoms may leave isolation only for the purpose of attending in-class learning, but must isolate from all extra-curricular activities and outings in the community. These students will continue to attend school (and ride the bus), as long as they do not have any symptoms.

The provincial government made a change to the Public Health Order on September 30. If an unvaccinated student is in contact with a positive case **in their home**, they will self-isolate and may not attend school, whether or not they have symptoms. [Public Health Orders | Public Measures | Government of Saskatchewan](#)

I am sharing this graphic from the provincial government as it is important to understand the impact of a positive case in a classroom or household:

Saskatchewan Schools: Students Close Contact Protocol

Province-wide mask mandate applies to all students per new masking order



[COVID-19 Case and Contact Management in Schools](#) | [About COVID-19](#) | [Government of Saskatchewan](#)

I want to thank you for your support and understanding during these first six weeks of the school year. We will continue to provide regular updates to families.

Sincerely,

Darryl Bazylak
Director of Education