

Welcome back!

**BRSD School Re-Entry Plan
(Fall 2020)**

Released August 13, 2020; Updated September 14, 2020



This plan was prepared based on information that was current to August 13, 2020 and updated September 14, 2020.

We acknowledge that, as circumstances in Alberta change, our plan may continue to change as well.

A message from the Superintendent:

Hello everyone!

Just like every year at this time, we are getting ready for back to school. But there has never been a year quite like this one!

On July 21, 2020 the Alberta Minister of Education announced that students and staff would be returning to classrooms in September, after several months away from schools. You can read the provincial school re-entry plans [here](#).

Battle River School Division is committed to supporting students, parents and staff in feeling safe and comfortable at school, so they are able to focus on the important work of learning and teaching.

In addition to the overall plan set out by the province, we want to share some important details about what is being put in place for our Battle River schools this fall. From extra safety measures to wellness programs; from a step-by-step look at what to expect at school to details on both in-person and at-home learning opportunities, we hope you will find this plan helpful.

If you have specific questions about how to meet the needs of a specific student, please contact the Principal of your child's school directly.

If you have other questions that haven't been answered here, please be in touch with us! We'll do our best to provide answers. Direct your questions to Diane Hutchinson, Director of Communications, dhutchinson@brsd.ab.ca

We know that, especially right now, things can change quickly. Please watch the [BRSD School Re-Entry \(Fall 2020\)](#) section of our website for ongoing updates.

BRSD also has comprehensive plans in place to support a transition to more home-based learning models, should that become necessary at any point in the future.

*Rita Marler
Superintendent of Schools*

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Wellness

We know this has been a difficult spring and summer for families. Stress levels and anxiety are high for a number of reasons.

Battle River School Division has a dedicated Wellness Support Team who will be supporting students, families and staff to stay well.

The BRSD Wellness Support Team includes, but is not limited to:

- BRSD Family School Liaison team.
- BRSD Mental Health Capacity Building Team

It is the goal of the BRSD Wellness Support Team to help all students and staff feel safe, calm and connected at school. Every school will have ongoing access to a member of the BRSD Wellness Support Team. In collaboration with school administrators, the Wellness Support Team will assess what supports are required at each school. This will guide the services provided for students and also for staff. Students who are learning at-home will also have access to programs and support

Using research and best practice strategies, the BRSD Wellness Support Team will provide guidance to navigate a positive re-entry into school. Approaches may include:

1. Classroom or small cohort sessions
2. Collaboration with staff
3. Individual support for students as required

If a student under the age of 14 is requiring on-going support, caregivers will be contacted by the FSLW team. Parents and caregivers can reach out to the Wellness Support Team for referrals to 1:1 in-school mental health support or access to community agencies.

Even before school begins, the BRSD Mental Health Capacity Team offered to support parents, by hosting three online sessions that provided ideas and guidance on helping children prepare for back to school in this most unusual year.

All parents were welcome and encouraged to sign up.

Watch for more activities and events designed to support student wellbeing throughout the year.

Safety Measures

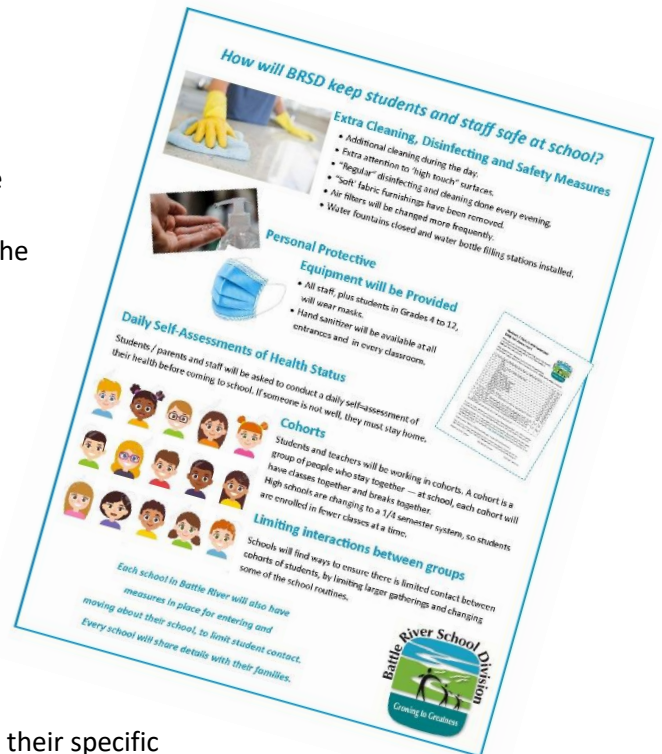
The provincial school re-entry plan does not depend on one single strategy, but includes **many strategies that work together** to create the safest environment possible within the school community.

These strategies include:

- Extra Cleaning, disinfecting and safety measures
- Personal Protective Equipment (Masks and more)
- Hand Washing and Hand Sanitizing
- Screening for Illness every day
- Strict Illness Protocols
- Cohorts and physical distancing
- Limiting contact between groups of students

You can find details about [safety measures](#) on the BRSD website.

Individual schools will also have measures that are in use at their specific building, such as asking children to enter through different doors depending what grade they are in. Please check your school's website for details of what is in place at each school.



Health Protocols

Schools have strict protocols about health. Families must complete the [Daily Self-Assessment](#) each morning, with everyone who is going to school. Anyone who is not feeling well must stay home and is asked to use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) on the Alberta Government website to determine their next steps. In some cases this will mean booking a COVID-19 test and in other cases it will mean simply remaining at home until symptoms resolve.

If a student or staff member shows Covid-related symptoms during the school day, they will leave the school as soon as possible and be isolated in the meantime.

When a student is sick, the student will continue to wear a mask if they can do so safely.

School staff who supervise the student will also wear a mask and limit entry into the isolation room:

- Staff will bring the student to a private area away from others, if possible, or keep them at least two meters away from others
 - schools have been provided contactless thermometers for use as a tool when a student is not feeling well.
- Staff will contact parents or guardians to pick up their child immediately.
- Staff will follow health protocols around PPE and cleaning/disinfecting the area.

Note: All families must provide updated parent/guardian contact information and a minimum of three emergency contacts (including parents).

Any individual with COVID-related symptoms must contact AHS to arrange for testing. If the test result is positive, Alberta Health Services will notify the school division. The school division will work with the school and AHS to undertake whatever next steps AHS directs.

Alberta Health Services has provided information to answer parents' health-related questions. This is posted on the government website and available [here](#).

What to expect at school

Students and parents are wondering what a school day might look like in the fall of 2020. What will be the same as usual? What will be different?

School Calendar

There have been adjustments made to the [calendar](#) for the 2020-2021 school year. These changes allow BRSD staff to have a few extra days of preparation before students return.

In-person school starts on Thursday, September 3.

At-home learning programs begin Tuesday, September 8.

Before Leaving Home Each Morning

All students and staff must complete the [Daily Self-Assessment](#) with questions developed by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health. (A copy of this form was shared with families in June. The form was revised over the summer -- an updated version is available on our BRSD website.)

Families are **not** required to submit the form to the school each day. Students who have any symptoms noted on the questionnaire cannot attend school.

Schools must keep record of children's known pre-existing conditions. A [form](#) has been provided by the school to families of students with pre-existing conditions to identify their baseline. The form is also on our website. This information should be available to all school staff so that they are aware of these conditions.

On the Bus

About 2/3 of students in Battle River School Division ride the school bus each day.

All bus drivers, as well as students in Grades 4 to 12, are required to wear a mask on the school bus. We encourage younger children who are comfortable wearing a mask to do so. If students are at a bus stop with others from beyond their own family, masks should be in place while waiting for the bus to arrive.

- Buses will be equipped with hand sanitizer. Students will be advised to clean their hands when boarding the bus.
- Students will be assigned seats and a record of this seating plan will be kept in order to assist with contact tracing if a student contracts COVID-19. Students who live in the same household should be seated together.
- Students will not be permitted to eat or drink while riding the bus.
- The BRSD Transportation Department has developed procedures to align with those of the Provincial Transportation Relaunch Committee that include:
 - physical distancing of 2 metres between all persons (except household members), when possible.

- When reasonable, children/students will load the bus from back to front. Students should unload from the front of the bus to the back. Students must remain seated until it is their turn to exit the bus.
- Where possible, students will sit by windows to further physical distance from the aisle.
- If a child becomes symptomatic during the bus trip, the driver will contact the school to make the appropriate arrangements to have the child/student picked up.
- The first row of seats directly behind the driver will remain open.

Note: Transportation services may be provided to non-eligible students if there is room on the buses. The Transportation Department will work with the handi-van service provider to determine the level of service that can be provided, based on cleaning and social distancing requirements.

Arriving at School

Adults bringing students to school / picking them up are to stay in their vehicle or outside the school, and maintain a safe physical distance between themselves and others.

Those who need to enter the school must book an appointment with the school office. Individuals without an appointment will not be able to enter the school.

- Parents and guardians of children who have complex needs and require support to enter the building must contact their school to develop a plan that is safe for both students and staff. BRSD has created a document with basic Inclusive Education information for families, that is posted on our website or available [here](#).

Every school has specific strategies for drop-off/pick-up that support physical distancing where possible between all persons (except household members). Strategies include staggering drop-off and pick-up times and locations, or other protocols to limit contact between staff /parents/guardians/ children/students. Please watch your school’s website for details about your school.

On the first day of school, students in Grades 4 to 12 were greeted outside by staff who gave them a package of two re-usable masks that are being provided by the Alberta government. It is mandatory for students in Grade 4 and up to wear masks when in hallways and common areas at school. If your child has a health condition that makes it inappropriate for them to wear a mask, please talk directly with your school administration.

At School

Hand sanitizer and handwashing

Students and staff are required to wash, and/or sanitize their hands throughout the day, including:

- every time they enter or exit that school
- when they enter classrooms
- before and after they use shared equipment
- before eating or doing food prep
- after they use the washroom

Lockers

Lockers are available for student use. Schools have procedures to ensure safe access.

Breakfast Programs

Students will be able to access breakfast at school. However, food items must be individually packaged and supplied by a commercial kitchen or food supplier. At this time, breakfast programs cannot have community volunteers coming in to the school.

Lunch

- **Microwaves and vending machines will not be available to students.**
- Schools cannot accommodate family members who want to drop off lunches. If a student forgets their lunch, families should phone the school to work out a solution.
- All students must wash their hands before eating, and eat only their own food. Students are not permitted to share food under provincial health guidelines.
- Elementary students will remain in their cohort to eat lunch.
- Junior high and high school students who stay on campus will be assigned to an area of the school for lunch. If the school is using a common lunch area, cohorts of students should eat in staggered shifts and the space will be cleaned and disinfected between each cohort.
- **Schools cannot support any food being brought into the school through a food delivery service for individuals, classes, staff or students.**
- School cafeterias and canteens must follow the Alberta government's strict COVID-19 health guidelines.

Food in Schools

There are clear provincial guidelines around food in schools during COVID-19. As a result, treats cannot be sent from home for birthdays or other special days, and teachers will not hand out food or treats in the classroom. Potluck events, barbecues, food trucks or special lunch days (e.g. hot dog day) are all postponed at this time. Classes that teach food preparation may occur as long as students do not share the food they prepare with other students or staff.

Hallways and Common Areas

Schools will use a variety of visual cues (posters, arrows, standing-dot floor makers, etc) to help students remember to physically distance within the school.

Schools have measures in place to promote physical distancing in spaces such as foyers, learning commons or T-intersections of hallways. Measures include:

- grade 4 to 12 and staff wearing masks
- limiting the number of students allowed in certain areas at certain times
- requiring students to walk straight through some areas so they don't crowd together in groups
- having staff supervise high-traffic areas and remind students and staff to adhere to physical distancing
- staggering start and end-times for classes and breaks, if possible.

Classrooms

Seating: Students will follow assigned seating plans throughout the day in the classroom, including lunchtime. Teachers will maintain copies of seating plans to support the need for contact tracing.

School supplies, learning materials and shared equipment: Students should have their own personal supplies that are stored separately. Teachers will plan learning activities to reduce or minimize the need

to share equipment, textbooks or materials. Classroom based regulation or sensory items (i.e wiggle cushion) that are shared will be disinfected prior to and after the use by each individual user. Equipment that must be shared must be cleaned and disinfected using methods and frequency outlined in the BRSD Pandemic Cleaning /Disinfecting Guideline. We continue to promote the use of chromebooks in the classroom as it models the use of technology in the learning, avoids the sharing of paper materials, and can be easily cleaned after use. Students should wash or sanitize their hands both before and after using the shared item.

Washrooms

Washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected several times throughout the day. There will be a maximum number of students permitted in the washroom at one time. Depending on the size of the school and the location of washrooms, schools may assign students to specific washrooms.

Water Bottle Filling Stations

Water fountains have been taken out of service. Water bottle filling stations have been installed at every school. Every student should bring a clearly labelled water bottle to school for their personal use.

Recess and Playground Equipment

Students will remain in their assigned learning cohort for recess activities. Schools will ensure each cohort has an area outside that promotes play and physical activity. Schools may stagger break times or assign student cohorts to specific areas of the schoolyard. Schools will not be assigning staff to supervise playground equipment before and after school – playground equipment will be off-limits at that time.

School-based Activities

Open vs closed campus

Junior high and high schools will work with their school community to decide if students will be allowed to leave campus during lunch breaks. If students are permitted to leave the school building, they must:

- exit through their assigned door
- respect physical distancing and all other COVID-19 health protocols when off campus
- assess whether they have any symptoms of illness before they re-enter the school—students with newly developed symptoms will not be permitted to return to school
- re-enter the school through their assigned door

Additionally, high schools will need to determine if students may leave campus and return to the school building during a spare period. Schools will also need to identify a space or spaces in the school where students on spares can be accommodated while physical distancing.

School Council Meetings

School council meetings for the 2020–2021 school year may go ahead. Schools will support their school council members to determine if they will hold in-person meetings or online virtual meetings. Any in-person meeting must adhere to COVID-19 health and safety protocols for social gatherings as well as the safety protocols and expectations outlined in both the provincial School Re-entry Plan and this COVID-19 Division Re-entry Strategy.

Volunteers and Visitors

In-person visitors and volunteers will not be allowed in Division schools at this time. This includes but is not limited to parents, guest speakers and performers and artists in residence. Individuals are encouraged to communicate with the school through email or by phone. Currently, parent volunteers are not permitted in the school building. However, we are optimistic that we will find ways to work with parent volunteers later in the school year.

Assemblies, Grads and Other Ceremonies

Gatherings that bring multiple cohorts of students together are not permitted at this time. This includes such things as performances, awards nights, book fairs, guest speakers, school dances, in-person meet-the-teacher events and group fundraisers. Virtual assemblies may be held within the school community.

Many of the Grad Classes of 2020 are still hoping to host a more traditional graduation event. They must follow the provincial [guidelines for graduation ceremonies](#).

At this time, the Division has not made a decision about traditional graduation ceremonies for the class of 2021. Schools may begin to plan celebrations for the class of 2021. These plans must include a COVID-19 contingency plan.

Field Trips

All field trips requiring group transportation/students riding a bus are postponed as per Alberta Health's directive. Virtual field trips, in-class/classroom trips and socially distanced community walking trips that follow COVID-19 health and safety protocols are permitted.

Extracurricular Activities (including athletics and music)

Schools will evaluate whether they can offer extracurricular activities that follow COVID-19 protocols, and let families know which activities are available. Students will be able to participate in those activities regardless of whether they choose in-person or at-home learning. [The Alberta Schools Athletics Association released new guidelines for sporting activities on September 9. BRSD schools will be following these guidelines whenever possible, but competition will continue to be against students from the same school. We will not be permitting students to travel, nor will there will be spectators at events.](#)

Community coaches may enter school buildings to coach extracurricular sports, outside of school hours, only after they have received Agent of the Board status and have been trained by an Administrator in the safety protocols required within BRSD buildings.

Community Use of Schools

All community use of indoor school space, except for OSCAR, is suspended. This is required to support the proper cleaning and disinfecting of the school facility and to limit access to the school by individuals who are not regular members of the school community. The Division will work with joint use partners on an ongoing basis to work toward safely reopening school spaces for community use.

School fields, tennis courts and ball diamonds will remain available for community.

School Photos

No school photo sessions will be scheduled until 2021, to ensure we have the appropriate safety measures in place.

Learning

All schools in the Province of Alberta are returning to in-school classes for the fall of 2020. However, we recognize that, due to their specific circumstances and concerns, there are families whose children will continue to learn at home. BRSD has plans in place to support those students.

We also recognize, that as this global pandemic continues, there may be a need to switch from the current in-school learning plan to a more at-home scenario. For this reason, our school division's learning plan is designed to ensure a smooth transition between in-school and at-home learning if it becomes necessary. In September, Battle River School Division will offer two options:

1. **In School Learning** - Students will be invited back to attend their regular school in person.
2. **Teacher-Directed At Home Learning** - For the 2020-21 school year, families will have the option to keep their students at home full-time with a program developed and delivered for them by a BRSD teacher. Students who participate in At-Home Learning will be assigned to a class with a classroom teacher supporting their learning. For those students who choose not to use technology there will be the option of print resources.
Unlike emergency at-home learning that took place in the spring of 2020, at-home/on-line learning requires students to meet all the outcomes in the Programs of Study.

- **Grades 1-6** will be taught by generalists and the curriculum for English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies, Physical Education, Health and Wellness along with Music and Art will be integrated in these four courses.
- **Grades 7-9** will be taught by subject specific teachers. Science, Math, English Language Arts and Social Studies will be offered as well as Physical Education, Health and Wellness, while Fine Arts opportunities (Art and Drama) will be integrated within these six courses.
- **High School** will offer courses in the Sciences, Math, English Language Arts and Social Studies, as well as Physical Education 10 and CALM. Courses offered will be based on student demand. Complementary courses offered will be based on student demand and available space and resources.
- If families choose to have on-line learning with technology they require a device and wireless Internet access available in the home. If available, a school chromebook may be loaned to a family upon receipt of a \$100 deposit.

Quarter System Alignment

At four key times during the school year, families will be able to decide if their child will attend school in person or choose to learn through at-home/online instruction. To offer this choice, Battle River School Division is organizing the school year into four instructional quarters (two-month periods of learning)

- Quarter 1: September 3 to November 10
- Quarter 2: **November 18** to January 29
- Quarter 3: February 1 to April 20
- Quarter 4: April 21 to June 29

Grade 12 Diploma Exams are scheduled for the end of each quarter.

Coordination of Essential Learning Outcomes

BRSD is coordinating the 2020-21 teaching and learning to ensure students across the Division learn key themes or units of the curriculum at the same time during the school year. This will ensure that students who shift between home and school can do so without disrupting the continuity of their learning. Cross division coordination will also help keep students on track if they need to miss school due to illness or to self-isolate.

Division-wide use of Google classroom

BRSD expects that teachers ensure that their students are familiar with the Google Suite of tools (docs, meet, sheets, slides, classroom) at the outset of the school year in the event that some students may transition to at-home learning over time.

Reporting

Teachers will assess students throughout the school year, for both in-person and at-home learning. Student progress will be reported to parents at four key times throughout the year. At the end of each learning quarter, families will receive the following information about their child's learning growth and progress:

2020-21 Report Card dates for BRSD:

At the end of each learning quarter, families will receive the following information about their child's learning growth and progress:

Kindergarten

- February 1, 2021: a mid-year progress report indicating achievement across all subject areas
- June 29, 2021: a final progress report indicating year end achievement for all subjects

Grades 1 to 9:

- November 10, 2020: an interim report summarizing growth and progress
- February 1, 2021: a mid-year progress report indicating achievement across all subject areas
- April 20, 2021: an interim report summarizing continued growth and progress
- June 29, 2021: a final progress report indicating year end achievement for all subjects

Grades 10 to 12:

Students will receive a report summarizing achievement and providing a final course grade at the end of each instructional quarter:

- November 10, 2020
- February 1, 2021
- April 20, 2021
- June 29, 2021

At this time, all parent-teacher conferences will be arranged through Google Meet/Telephone.

Physical Education

Schools will continue to provide physical education instruction. Delivery of programming outside is most desirable, and activities that support physical distancing, such as badminton, are recommended. Staff will need to follow the [Guidance for Outdoor Recreation](#). Sharing equipment should be discouraged. Equipment that is used must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use. Students should perform hand hygiene before and after using equipment.

Art

Students will have their own personal materials. If the art instruction space is a shared classroom, the room must be cleaned and disinfected between each cohort of students.

Music

Learning experiences involving in-person singing, cheering or shouting or playing wind instruments are postponed at this time, unless the school can put in place administrative procedures or PPE to ensure staff and students are protected.

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).

If music instruction is provided in the music room, the room must be cleaned and disinfected between each cohort of students. [The Chief Medical Officer of Health has recently announced that band classes including wind instruments may be possible, if students are able to:](#)

- be the sole user of an instrument and mouthpieces
- be physically distanced
- use a covering for the open-end of wind instruments
- follow guidelines for cleaning of spit-valves, etc.

Work Experience

Work experience may resume as long as the risk of infection is mitigated for all participants. If the work experience placement is in a workplace, the student is expected to follow health rules set out by the workplace. The time that individuals are in close contact should be kept to a minimum and work experience must include the use of the [BRSD Daily Self-Assessment Screening Questionnaire](#).

Provincial Exams Across the Scenarios

Exam	Scenario 1	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Provincial Student Learning Assessments Grade 3	Cancelled in BRSD	Cancelled in BRSD	Cancelled Provincially
Grades 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement tests	Cancelled in BRSD	Cancelled in BRSD	Cancelled in BRSD
Grade 12 Diploma exams	Mandatory (30% towards final grade)	Mandatory (30% towards final grade)	Province will determine

Diploma Exams are scheduled for the end of each quarter.