

Dear All,

Please be advised of the latest updates re: mandatory masking.
We have updated the divisional plan according to the latest information.



NewsRe

August 19, 2020

**PROVINCE MANDATES MASK USE FOR GRADES 4 TO 12
WHEN PHYSICAL DISTANCING NOT POSSIBLE**

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**Committed to Keeping
Students Safe: Premier**

Out of an abundance of caution and based on the input of public health experts, educators and parents, the province is now mandating the use of masks for grades 4 to 12 when physical distancing is not possible, Premier Brian Pallister announced today.

“We are committed to keeping our students safe as they return to school during this challenging and unprecedented time,” said Pallister. “We have listened to the concerns of parents, teachers, administrators, staff and students, and we believe that greater clarity and confidence is necessary for the safe return to school this fall. We are taking these additional measures to ensure the health and well-being of our children, as they are our most precious resource.”

With the updated guidance, masks will be required for students in grades 4 to 12, teachers, school staff and visitors when physical distancing of two metres is not possible at school. Parents and caregivers will continue to choose whether younger students should wear a mask. Further guidance on exceptions will be available soon

regarding specific mask-free time and for those not recommended to wear a mask.

“Wearing a mask offers an extra layer of protection, especially for indoor public spaces where physical distancing cannot be maintained,” said Dr. Brent Roussin, Manitoba’s chief provincial public health officer. “We all have a role to play, and we want to be sure that we take every step we can to ensure the return to school is a safe one. This will help ensure there is consistency across the school system.”

The province is developing resources to help children, along with their parents and caregivers, learn how to safely put on, wear and remove a mask.

All students in Grade 4 and up and bus drivers will also be required to wear non-medical masks on school buses. Masks should be put on before loading and taken off after off-loading.

Today, the premier and Roussin also launched the #RestartMB Pandemic Response System, a new online tool that provides clear, timely information for Manitobans about COVID-19. It helps translate public health indicators and decision-making into a simple, colour-coded system that helps everyone understand what is expected of them, what they can expect from others and the measures that may be put in place to protect everyone. It also includes specific information for schools to help families, teachers, administrators and the school community understand the risks and provincial response to the pandemic. For more information, visit www.manitoba.ca/restartMB.

Manitoba Education’s *Restoring Safe Schools: Guidelines for September 2020* will be revised to reflect the latest guidance on this issue and posted at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html. The EngageMB website at <https://engagemb.ca/welcoming-our-students-back-restoring-safe-schools> remains the best forum for parents, caregivers and students to post questions for response throughout the return to classroom learning.

The province will continue to work closely with Public Health, education

stakeholders, school divisions, independent schools, parents, caregivers and students as part of its response to COVID-19 and the safe return to school.

- 30 -

For more information:

- Public information, contact Manitoba Government Inquiry: [1-866-626-4862](tel:1-866-626-4862) or [204-945-3744](tel:204-945-3744).
- Media requests for general information, contact Communications Services Manitoba: [204-945-3765](tel:204-945-3765).
- Media requests for ministerial comment, contact Communications and Stakeholder Relations: [204-945-4916](tel:204-945-4916).

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