



PORTAGE LA PRAIRIE SCHOOL DIVISION: RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

2020-2021

[Abstract](#)

PLPSD Return to School Plan for the 2020-2021 School Year

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Introduction

In July and August 2020, PLPSD's senior leadership team along with principals from all Portage la Prairie School Division Schools will continue to refine the plan for the reopening of schools in September and then update the information on the division website. Staff will return to schools on **September 2, 2020** to review the information and expectations for restarting school (according to the directives of Public Health and Manitoba Education) and finalize their school's preparedness plan.

Our 'new reality' means that schools around the world will be operating with much uncertainty for the next while and therefore patience and ongoing planning will be a continued requirement. Please be reassured that the PLPSD will be doing everything possible to mitigate risk until a vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 is available.

In the first six weeks, school staff will make it a priority to work with students and families to review what Recovery Learning needs are required as we begin the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

Staff should refer to a recently published document: [Recovery Learning in PLPSD: Planning for Student Success Upon the Return to School](#). The document articulates some initial planning considerations for school leaders and teachers.

Manitoba Education's [framework](#) to resume in-class learning in 2020-2021 identifies three re-opening scenarios:

Scenario 1

- In-class learning resumes for all; near normal with public health measures

Scenario 2

- In-class learning resumes with additional public health measures
- In-class learning resumes, five days per week, for students in K-8, students with special needs (all grades) and students who require additional supports
- Schools may increase in-class learning for Grades 9-12 to five days per week if they can maintain physical distancing and limit interaction between different groups of students
- If not, Grades 9-12 will participate in blended in-class and remote learning, with a minimum of two days in class per week

Scenario 3

- Limited use of schools (Implemented June 1, 2020)
- In-class learning is suspended
- Teacher-led remote learning for all K-12 students

The province will confirm which scenario will be followed in the fall on or before August 1, 2020.

Schools will need to be prepared to roll-back in-class learning based on public health advice.

All scenarios need to support continued learning and well-being during the pandemic. The PLPSD is anticipating a Scenario 2 start and is looking at this as its focus.

In July and August, the PLPSD administrators will continue to revise, update and plan for **Scenario 2** and refine our approach in **Scenario 3** as outlined in the provincial [framework](#).

Scenario 1 would have September 2020 looking more like September 2019 with in-class learning resuming in a 'near normal' situation still requiring some public health measures.

One important exercise this June has been a thorough audit of spaces in all PLPSD schools that account for adequate 'distancing' and 'cohorting' of students and staff in schools as outlined in Scenario 2.

What is a Cohort?

According to Manitoba Public Health, where 2 metres of physical distancing cannot be achieved consistently due to the size of the classroom, officials permit the establishment of learning cohorts where distancing restrictions can be reduced to 1 metre. This means that smaller groups of students are established into cohorts (groups) with limited contact with other students. For example, a grade 3 class may be reduced in number based on the classroom's physical size and their contact with other students is limited to those in the same grade level. Cohorting will mean that there is no contact with other cohorts during the school day. The grade 3 cohort would be given a specific recess time, entrance/exit door, with set washroom break times to prevent their cohort from coming into contact with others. This strategy limits any potential spreading of the virus to the broader school community, should an outbreak occur.

These two requirements compel us to reimagine how schools are organized so that smaller learning cohorts of students can be accommodated.

Ensuring adequate space is available in all our schools will pose a challenge in some cases, so our efforts will be made to find appropriate solutions to achieve 'distancing' and 'cohorting' of students and staff in our schools.

These two concepts will also require us to reimagine several 'realities':

- the use of all spaces in relationship to smaller learning cohorts of students – accessing specialty classrooms and using them for different purposes i.e.: multipurpose rooms as classrooms, music rooms as classrooms, gyms as classrooms
- teachers and educational assistants in relationship to smaller learning cohorts of students
- the relationship of scheduling and timetabling in relationship to 'cohorting' and 'blended learning'

We use the word 'cohort' rather than 'classroom' purposely. In Scenarios 2 and 3 of [Manitoba's framework to resume in-class learning](#), one of our 'new realities' will be to manage the circulation and mixing of students outside of their small learning cohort and to consider all available spaces for these small learning cohorts when they come together in a school.

Given that all of schools have different realities i.e. physically small or larger but nearing capacity, the temporary relocation of some of these learning cohorts to other schools and/or community buildings may be necessary in order to safely accommodate the greatest number of students.

Creating and nurturing a sense of community for each of these cohorts in September will be essential to ensure that students and staff thrive in 2020-2021, no matter the scenario we find ourselves implementing when classes resume.

School Attendance

Unless an underlying health condition prevents a student from being at school, regular attendance is mandatory. The PLPSD strongly encourages students to attend regularly according to their schedules.

Similarly, barring exceptional circumstances, students are expected to engage fully in remote learning if/when it is required.

However, it will be essential that parents and students monitor and self-assess their health prior to coming to school. Coughing, sneezing, sore throat, body aches are all signs that a student should remain home and contact Health Links. Please review the self-assessment protocols that will be shared by your school principals in September.

School Calendar

Manitoba Education has communicated the following:

- The school calendar will have three additional days added prior to the Labour Day weekend, meaning the school year will start Wednesday, September 2, 2020 for teachers and staff.
- Students will return to class on Tuesday, September 8, 2020.
- September 2, 3 and 4, 2020 will be mandated non-instructional days, one of which will be considered as an administration day and two as professional development days. Schools are to use this time to prepare physical spaces, educate staff on public health protocols, and engage collaboratively on approaches to recovery learning.
- School divisions will schedule the seven remaining non-instructional days.
- All professional development days should be focused on COVID-19-related priorities and response, including the province-wide professional development day on October 23, 2020.

Non-instructional Days in PLPSD for 2020-2021

- Wednesday, September 2, 2020
- Thursday, September 3, 2020
- Friday, September 4, 2020
- Tuesday, October 6, 2020
- Friday, October 23, 2020
- Friday, November 13, 2020
- Friday, November 27, 2020
- Monday, February 1, 2021
- Friday, April 16, 2021
- Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Winter Break

- Last Day of School: Friday, December 18, 2020
- School Re-opens: Monday, January 4, 2021

Spring Break

- Last Day of School: Friday, March 26, 2021
- School Re-opens: Monday, April 5, 2021

Last day of school in 2020-2021

- Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Opening Day Conferences

Rather than Opening Day Conferences, students, staff and parents/guardians, in grades K-12, can anticipate staggered entries into schools in order to best prepare for the changes that will be implemented. The week of August 31, schools will communicate the schedule of staggered entries to start on September 8.

Provincial Assessments

An update from Manitoba Education on the provincial tests and assessments schedule for the 2020-2021 school year:

Grade 3 and 4 Assessment and Middle Years Assessment

The provincial data collection associated with the Grade 3 Assessment in Reading, Lecture and Numeracy and Grade 4 Assessment in French Immersion Lecture, as well as the Middle Years Assessment of Key Competencies in Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, Expository Writing, and Student Engagement will be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year.

Schools and school divisions are encouraged to continue to use the assessments as one of many tools to help identify students' strengths and needs in key competency areas in order to guide instructional planning.

Grade 12 Tests

A decision regarding the status of the Grade 12 provincial tests will be made as more information becomes available regarding the return to school in the fall.

Institutional Preparedness

As mandated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#), PLPSD shall ensure institutional preparedness by:

- Preparing school facilities to accommodate physical distancing, including increased sanitation, hand hygiene and other public health provisions
- Following the guidelines for re-opening school facilities. These will be updated regularly to reflect new public health orders and guidance
- Posting information about physical distancing, cleaning, and other public health measures to help schools prepare for in-class learning
- Planning for adjustments to transportation routes and schedules for all stages of re-opening, including asking parents to transport their own children where possible
- The PLPSD has already purchased specialized sanitation equipment and developed increased cleaning protocols in preparation for the resumption of in-school learning. These efforts came into practice June 1, 2020 during the limited reopening phase

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that PLPSD will implement to achieve these goals.

Health and Safety of our Community

According to Manitoba Education, "current evidence indicates that staff and students can return to school while protecting individual health and minimizing risks from a public health perspective."

As schools plan for the return of staff and students, a balanced focus on maximizing people's health and well-being while mitigating risk is our paramount goal.

Contact Tracing

If a student or staff member reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The principal will immediately advise the superintendent

The superintendent will contact public health officials, seek advice, and collaborate with health officials. Any information about positive test cases will be communicated through Public Health and not the PLPSD. Health Information is considered private, therefore information about positive cases in the PLPSD will not be shared publicly by the division.

To facilitate contact tracing, schools must:

- record student attendance in school and on buses regularly and accurately
- maintain a log of all visitors and itinerant employees that access the building
- keep groups of students (regular classes in scenario 1 and smaller cohorts in scenario 2) together and avoid interactions between groups - If there is a case of infection in a school, this practice can help with contact tracing, but also limit potential exposures and drastically reduce the potential number of exposed staff and students

Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for other students or staff who would be considered "close contacts" of the individual that received a positive test result.

Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools must not communicate such information without specific direction from the superintendent and public health officials.

Recovery of Learning:

- An "Individual Recovery of Learning Plan" was required if a student had limited to no engagement with learning between Mar. 23 and June 29, 2020. It is intended to support planning for individual student learning at the next level
- Plans have been shared with the student's next year's teacher(s)
- The plans will guide the teacher in the fall to "recover" the missing outcomes, for each student
- Targeted interventions should emphasize literacy and numeracy skills and concepts
- All K to 7 students had the opportunity to meet with their next years teacher in June 2020.
- In September, there is planned PD for all teachers that focus on recovery of learning and re-engaging students

Manitoba Education has noted the following considerations:

- Some students will need minimal re-orientation to the school environment, relationships and routines, and academic review, as per usual September
- Others will need a longer time to re-orient, re-establish relationships and routines, and engage in learning experiences that would have occurred during the suspension of in-class learning

PLPSD K-8 INDIVIDUAL RECOVERY OF LEARNING PLAN

***For students who had limited to no engagement in learning
between Mar. 23 and June 29, 2020**

Student: _____ **Program:** _____ **Grade:** _____

Course: _____ **Teacher:** _____

1. Degree or level of student's overall participation in learning since school closure:

None Limited (<5) Sometimes (some classes) Regular (most classes)

2. If you selected "none" or "limited" what reasons were given or suspected.

3. What significant/priority learning targets were achieved since Mar. 23?

4. What significant/priority learning targets were not achieved since Mar. 23?

5. Learning Behaviour Comment added to report card:

9-11 and 11+ INDIVIDUAL RECOVERY OF LEARNING PLAN

*Credit is not achieved

*The Individual Student Plan created by Student Services will supplement the Recovery of Learning Plan

Student: _____ Program: _____ Grade: _____

Course: _____ Teacher: _____

1. Degree or level of student’s overall participation in learning since school closure:

None Limited (<5) Sometimes (some classes) Regular (most classes)

2. If you selected “none” or “limited” what reasons were given or suspected.

3. What significant/priority learning targets were achieved since Mar. 23?
What significant/priority learning targets were not achieved since Mar. 23?

4. Learning Behaviour Comment added to report card:

- Divisional strategies for re-engaging students who have not participated in remote learning:
 - Students that had difficulty with remote learning will be prioritized for intensive recovery of learning and expected to be in attendance daily
 - The alternating A/B high school schedule would not apply to the identified students until essential outcomes were met
 - An Individual Recovery of Learning Plan was developed for each student identified and will be followed in the fall.

Safety and Health Protocols

PLPSD has developed procedures to ensure the safety and health of staff, students, and other community members that access divisional facilities. These procedures are continually reassessed, revised and disseminated according to the most current public health orders and guidance. Staff should ensure that they are aware of the most current procedures and that they implement them faithfully. Asking questions and checking in with the school principal, PLPSD Health and Safety Officer and Workplace, Safety and Health school representatives when questions arise will ensure that staff are informed. Professional development around safety and health protocols will be scheduled from September 2 to 4, 2020 for all staff.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

PLPSD will continue to provide support for mental health and wellbeing as staff and students return to work in September, survey results indicate that staff and students have found the pandemic to be particularly stressful time for a variety of reasons, so mental health supports will be incorporated in to the return planning.

Mental Health Promotion

PLPSD Student Services Department will be providing mental health support programs in coordination with school counselors. The PLPSD will also have the additional support of a Registered Psychiatric Nurse (RPN) as part of a provincial pilot program, this individual is trained to engage in mental health supports for youth. These teams will be helpful to promote positive mental health in schools upon re-opening.

Mental Health Promotion is about creating environments that promote and sustain positive mental health for everyone. Activities, supports and learning opportunities are designed to enhance protective factors and minimize risk factors. Schools are an ideal setting in which to promote mental health for children and youth, providing an opportunity to reach large groups of children during their formative years of cognitive, emotional and behavioural development.

Mental Health Promotion in schools focuses on enhancing protective factors that contribute to the social and emotional growth of children and youth and decreasing the risk factors that impede psychosocial development.

Re-Opening and Schooling Scenarios

The Manitoba Education [framework](#) identifies three re-opening scenarios:

1. In-class learning resumes for all; near normal with public health measures
2. In-class learning resumes with additional public health measures
3. Limited use of schools (Implemented June 1, 2020)

The province will confirm which scenario will be followed in the fall on or before August 1, 2020. Schools will also need to be prepared to roll-back in-class learning based on public health advice.

Navigating the pandemic and its uncertainties in the 2020-2021 school year will require us to reimagine many of our practices and conceptualizations from timetabling and the use of space to curriculum and its delivery.

PLPSD applauds Manitoba Education efforts to prioritize in-class learning in 2020-2021. The province recognizes that our public schools are essential "to the mental health and well-being of children. Planning should focus on returning as many students to in-class learning as possible while following public health advice and subject to available physical space and resources."

Manitoba Education has made full-time in-class learning a priority for "students in K-8, students with special needs (all grades), and students who require additional supports who benefit from face-to-face interaction with educators and who may have difficulties navigating remote learning independently. Their return to school also provides parents and caregivers with a greater ability to return to work."

Rethinking Spaces in Schools

Manitoba Education has explicitly stated that resuming in-class learning still requires a level of physical distancing:

- Schools will need to implement strategies to avoid crowding in hallways, entrances and other non-instructional spaces
- Schools will need to limit nonessential visitors and stagger drop-offs, pick-ups, class times and breaks to the greatest extent possible
- Schools will not schedule assemblies and gatherings that exceed public health advice
- Schools will look at alternative sites if necessary to increase physical distancing where space in the current school is not available

Manitoba Education recommends keeping groups of students together (cohorting), and preventing circulation and exposure between cohorts where possible, to limit exposure to and spread of COVID-19 while pandemic restrictions are in effect.

Cohorting is recommended but not required if two-metre spacing between students is possible.

The extent to which cohorting will occur will depend on available space, age of students, and students' developmental ability to follow safety protocols school configurations and staffing requirements.

We are planning to meet the requirements for physical distancing and cohorting of students by analyzing and implementing the completed space audit of schools to determine how appropriately sized cohorts of students can be spread out across a school's footprint and in some instances require satellite locations in other school and buildings.

Rethinking Learning and Teaching

The three scenarios will require us to reimagine teachers and educational assistants in relationship to smaller learning 'cohorts' of students and a holistic approach to learning and teaching.

- Some staff assignments will need to change temporarily
- In all grades, K-12, our focus should continue to strengthen student-centered instructional practices that advance deeper-learning (play-based in the early years, project-based in middle and senior years)

Manitoba Education makes explicit that 2020-2021 will require school systems to continue to refine their 'Blended Learning' strategy.

What is Blended Learning?

- Blended learning is teacher-directed remote learning that will be an essential component of K-12 education as the pandemic continues. It includes asynchronous learning (students working independently on their own) and synchronous (working with their teacher in real-time)
- Remote learning plans will be developed for students with underlying health conditions that prohibit them from returning to in-class learning (before broad access to a vaccine) and students in 14-day quarantine or isolation

PLPSD will continue to

- monitor students that require support to obtain access to devices and the Internet
- enhance staff access to technology (devices, software and systems) to ensure the ongoing development of its 'blended learning strategy'
- refine its 'blended learning strategy' (by meaningfully engaging staff, students and parents/guardians)
- co-create the strategy
- develop their technical proficiency and capacities
- Provide ongoing professional development for staff about remote learning

Online and Technology Capacity

PLPSD will continue to leverage technology (Google Classroom and SeeSaw) to support teaching and learning for all three of the planning scenarios. Since the beginning of the pandemic our priorities have been:

- Ensuring students have access to the internet and laptops
- MiFi devices have been distributed to provide better remote internet access
- Remote hotspots have been set up at Oakville School and Portage Collegiate Institute for free Wi-Fi access

- Laptops / tablets have been distributed for home use
- Offering professional development for teachers to transition to an online teaching environment
- PLPSD teachers have taken part in online professional learning regarding the use of technology to support online learning
- PLPSD offers an EdTech mentorship program that allows teachers to collaborate with a mentor colleague
- Technology and its use to support distance learning will continue in the 2020/2021 school year for our teachers
- Enhancing technology in the classroom for staff and students
- PLPSD is continuing to enhance the availability of technology for both teachers and students as well as looking for new technologies to assist in teaching and learning in our schools

Note: Parents requesting devices (laptop / tablet/MIFI) should contact the school principal where their child attends, to request a device.

Student Transportation

Student transportation on buses will be the greatest challenge for school divisions in the fall due to the physical distancing requirements. On June 25, Manitoba Education released [Guidelines for Transportation to Schools](#) for the 2020-21 school year.

PLPSD is working diligently on the student transportation plan that will align with the public health recommendations.

Two PLPSD Transportation Surveys indicated that approximate 64% of respondents could provide transportation for their child/children if necessary – this will be very important in September as in class learning resumes.

School bus transportation to and from the school is an integral part of the plan. Based on the June 25, 2020 guidelines, the school buses will be operating at 50 per cent capacity or less due to physical distancing requirements. In order to meet the needs of approximately 1,600 students who get to school on one of our busses, we will need the support of families to find alternative means of transportation in 2020-2021.

We are currently considering a range of temporary options to reduce the number of students on buses. Some of our thoughts include the following:

- Extending the minimum walk zone boundary from 1.6 kilometres to either 2.0 or 2.5 kilometres
Students living outside the walk zone boundary will be eligible for school bus transportation
- Requiring masks and hand washing prior to boarding buses
- Alternative scheduling
- Prioritizing elementary and middle school ridership with alternate days for high school students (scheduled A/B days, resulting in fewer PCI students riding buses daily)

In order to better assess the needs of our transported students, parents served by our transportation department will receive important correspondence in August. We understand that any decision to reduce our regular ridership will impact many families, but our goal is to ensure school bus transportation is provided to those students who have no other means of getting to and from their school.

Following the August 1, 2020 announcement from the province, parents and students who regularly ride school buses will be informed of the 2020/2021 Transportation Plan.

Student Services and Clinical Services

Student Services and Clinical Services staff are also preparing for a 'new reality' in 2020-2021 school year that may include smaller student cohorts, remote learning, ongoing disruptions to on-site learning due to student health and pandemic restrictions, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other changes required to adapt to pandemic restriction requirements.

PLPSD Schools regularly engage in student-specific, classroom and school-level student services planning. PLPSD will strive to support students with additional needs in school settings where and when possible. As part of our Limited Reopening of Schools Strategy, the PLPSD placed emphasis on connecting with families of children with complex learning needs as a priority.

It is expected there may be an ongoing need for some remote learning due to possible changes in provincial public health restrictions or more frequent student health barriers to onsite learning. During pandemic restrictions, which may increase or decrease quickly, school student services and clinical teams will need to navigate various contexts for student support including small cohorts onsite and remote learning. It will be important that student-specific planning include continual capacity building for remote learning and use of technology for communication and learning where possible, to mitigate disruptions in learning when students are not able to attend school. Please see important additional information from Manitoba Education: [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#).

Priorities

- Wellbeing of students, families and staff
- A focus on equity for our most vulnerable students
- Maintaining connections between school staff and students

Guidelines

Student specific resources/ supports and services can be effectively provided remotely if necessary

We will continue with our service delivery models as is possible. However, ongoing capacity building (identification and preparation) for remote and small cohort learning opportunities will be important

Remote learning comes in many forms and is not always online learning

Engagement and dialogue with families is key

Schools and families have local contexts that they must navigate

Planning and time for planning are key. Plan ongoing necessary training for staff to work safely with students including:

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PLPSD will provide PPE and staff training as required on the use and care of PPE to keep students and staff safe and will implement the Manitoba Education [Guidelines on Supporting Students Who Require Interventions or Supports that Cannot be Delivered from a Distance](#)

Communication

It is essential to connect with parents/guardians to understand their circumstances and needs, to establish a communication plan, and share information to inform student-specific planning whether at school or at home.

We need to provide notice to families regarding specific tier 1, tier 2 and tier 3 supports that student services will provide to their children remotely if necessary.

- Arrange regular, ongoing check-ins with families by teachers, administrators and outreach facilitators (phone, email, online tools, etc)
- Use check-ins to discuss resources, supports and services, prioritize learning needs, problem-solve learning and behavioural issues at home, and customize the daily schedule for students
- Help to overcome individual obstacles to accessing materials and resources
- Scheduled times with students and families is recommended
- Consider office hours and staff accessibility
- Specific hours in the day parents can sign-up for ahead of time and touch base with a specific person at the school

Guiding Student Services Teacher Service Delivery During Remote Learning

- Co-plan inclusive, developmentally appropriate learning activities with teachers and develop learning resources for parents/students
- Provide student-specific planning support for teachers and families
- Support student-specific planning implementation
- Support outreach for students at-risk and struggling to engage in remote learning easily
- Support understanding of each child's remote learning environment and current considerations for student-specific plans
- Support teachers in the identification of students' learning recovery needs upon return to school
- Domains of Remote Service Delivery (where necessary)
- Providing Supports and Resources for remote learning activities
- Providing remote instruction and services (small group and individualized)

Student Specific Plans

- Learning should be enjoyable and promote relationship, communication and well-being
- Student specific goals must consider new learning environments and supports available
- Consider greater use of outdoor spaces
- Move from student-specific programming to cohorts of students with common needs where possible to reduce social isolation and staff circulation/distribution of resources and needs for spaces
- Inclusion must be meaningful and purposeful, not merely physical/social
- Assets and resources available to students will vary
- Co-planning and co-constructing using a team approach with parents/guardians and older students is even more essential
- Whether curricular or student-specific, goals should be developmentally appropriate and relevant and appropriate for onsite or remote learning contexts
- Focus on making curriculum learning accessible (accommodation, adaptation, modification if the student is eligible)

The Role of Support Staff Working with Students During Pandemic Restrictions in PLPSD

PLPSD recognizes the value of its support staff and their contributions in supporting the inclusion of all students in our community schools. During the pandemic period, the learning environment has changed to include remote learning and learning in schools in smaller cohorts with public health restrictions. As a result, the context and possibilities for meaningful work for support staff working with students have changed.

PLPSD support staff will play an important role in supporting the transition of students back to schools and greater supervision responsibilities as we work to organize students into smaller cohorts needed to respect physical distancing requirements. Support staff who work with students will experience changes in expectations and assignments as required to supervise and support students in their cohorts.

However, the distinctions between the roles and responsibilities of support staff and professional staff have not changed. The norms for roles and responsibilities, and the requirement for professional staff to plan for and assess learning, provide initial instruction to students and support staff, and to schedule and manage communication between staff, students and parents/guardians, remains in effect. For clarity on roles and responsibilities please see the document [Educational Assistants in Manitoba Schools](#).

The following applies to engaging support staff in work with students:

- Support staff may have increased responsibility for supervision and support of student learning planned by professional staff
- Remote student engagement is to be scheduled and supervised by the teacher/supervisor in Outlook/Skype/MS Teams/Google Meets/SeeSaw in collaboration and as planned with students, staff and parents/guardians

- It will be understood that professional staff will join and supervise/participate in the remote or onsite learning activities with a frequency and duration as they deem appropriate and necessary depending upon the learning task, the staff/student relationship and familiarity with each other, the learning task, and other factors which may require more direct support
- Professional staff will be available to support as needed
- Support staff will communicate student progress or other feedback to supervising professional staff daily and not to parents/guardians
- Only professional staff will communicate with parents regarding students as per normal protocols

Childcare and Before- and After-School programs

PLPSD and its Early Learning and Childcare partners have intentionally worked together to develop a strong planning partnership by building a bridge between the two systems to support a seamless transition for young children as they move from childcare to school.

The arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic did not put our collaboration on hold. The PLPSD and Early Learning and Child Care partnership has continued and has been paramount to ensuring a safe and consistent approach to opening spaces for children in childcare centers located in the division – Wee World (NMS) - opening Fall 2020, Short Stop (ECVS) and Tiny Tots (OVS)

The ongoing collaboration helped support the transition from the closure of childcare services to providing childcare for essential workers to expanding accommodation for all workers and, finally, to opening childcare centers at full capacity, all while adhering to public health safety guidelines. This will continue as we collectively navigate responsively to Public Health mandates during COVID-19.

Reviewing Emergency Preparedness

At the beginning of each school year, principals conduct a review of their school-specific emergency response plan (see *ED - Emergency Situations and Preparedness - Crisis Response Plan*). At this point, public health orders do not require physical distancing requirements to be respected during evacuations or lockdowns. The need for emergency procedures to be expedient, effective, and consistent outweighs the risk that COVID-19 would pose during these situations. That said, students should be encouraged to respect physical distancing once they have arrived at the muster point.

School Board Meetings

The PLPSD board of trustees will continue to meet regularly throughout 2020-2021 (the Board shall continue to meet on the second and fourth Tuesday in each and every month, September to June, inclusive, in the Board Room at eight (8:00) o'clock p.m. or at such other times or places as the Board may from time to time designate.) Should a public health order restrict physical gatherings, meetings will occur via electronic means. Public participation is welcome, with advance registration required.

Should restrictions be imposed on gather sizes, the PLPSD Board of Trustees would resume meeting via Google Meets, and will continue to broadcast their meetings live via YouTube.

Divisional Direction

The PLPSD remains firmly committed to its Purpose, Mission and Values, and its policies. By articulating PLPSD's foundational principles, these documents provide clear direction. With all the uncertainty brought on by COVID-19, such clear direction is even more important. The Division calls on all members of the school community – staff, students, and parents/guardians – to keep these documents top of mind as they engage in their daily work in 2020-2021 and beyond.

Our Purpose, Mission, and Values

The Portage la Prairie School Division is committed to providing excellent educational programs to help students learn and mature.

The Division believes strongly in the concept of community and promotes the provision of appropriate programs to meet the varied needs of students in regular classrooms from neighbourhood schools.

The PURPOSE of The Portage la Prairie School Division is:

To provide, or make provision for, appropriate schooling opportunities for students eligible to attend The Portage la Prairie School Division.

The MISSION of The Portage la Prairie School Division is:

To recognize the individual needs and potential of our students and to provide these students with the opportunity to undertake schooling experiences that will contribute to the development of their full potential. Schooling experiences will consider the future demands that will be placed upon society by our rapidly changing world.

The following VALUES have been identified as a high priority and are therefore expected to be incorporated into the decision-making and behaviour of the staff and students of The Portage la Prairie School Division.

- *HONESTY*
- *COOPERATION*
- *COMMITMENT*
- *DIGNITY*
- *EQUALITY*
- *COMPASSION*

Facility Use Permits

Permits for evening and weekend facility use are suspended until further notice. The suspension will accommodate increased cleaning requirements and afford schools greater flexibility to repurpose gyms and multipurpose rooms for other types of instruction.

Managing New Registrations

Mobility is a part of life for many families in Canada, and while there has been less mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic, some families will still choose to relocate for better housing, work opportunities, and many other reasons. We can expect that families will continue to relocate within the province of

Manitoba, between cities and provinces across Canada, and internationally. Furthermore, relocation will continue to happen throughout the school year, meaning that students new to our Division can arrive at any time.

To guide the safe and successful welcoming and registration of new students, the following guidelines apply:

- Families new to PLPSD must contact the school by phone or email to arrange a registration appointment. Families who are uncertain of which school to contact the Board Office for assistance
- The school will arrange an appropriate time and mechanism for registering new students (in-person, online, or other)
- If the family is relocating from a region that warrants a mandatory quarantine or isolation period, they may be asked to verify their travel dates, and quarantine dates and plans. New registrations will only occur after any mandatory quarantine or isolation period has been completed
- Scheduling and timetabling of new students may require additional time to comply with distancing and cohort limitations. Families will be advised that this may take several weeks or more

Out-of-Province Student and Staff Travel

All out-of-province student travel is suspended for the remainder of the 2020 calendar year. A similar suspension of any PLPSD-related staff travel is likewise in place. The travel ban will be reviewed no later than September 30, 2020, regarding any trips intended for the period from January 2021 to June 2021.

The rationale for the suspension of travel is as follows:

- The obvious concern for student and staff safety and well-being
- Continued uncertainty about predicting the spread, impact, and potential second wave occurrences of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Travel restrictions and quarantine requirements vary across regions and countries
- Significant and unpredictable insurance issues regarding both medical and liability insurance for travelers and the Division
- Unpredictable cost projections due to uncertainty regarding the availability and cost of transportation, variability of currencies and exchange rates
- Reducing the financial impact on families by cancelling trips with as much advance notice as possible

Staff Services – Leaves

- The following paragraphs present additional information on employee leaves and [recent amendments](#) to the Employment Standards Code – Bill 55, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Leaves

As a result of COVID-19 if an employee cannot work because they are providing compassionate care to a family member or they are needing to provide childcare due to school/daycare closures:

- An Employee is to submit an unpaid leave request stating his/her need to provide compassionate care/childcare due to the impact of COVID-19
- The employee will email in writing his/her unpaid request or submit a Leave Form to the administrator/supervisor who will forward the request to superintendent
- The employee applies to the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)
- Unless further notified by the division, we anticipate staff will return to work for the start of the 2020-2021 school year

If the employee is instructed to go into quarantine by Manitoba Health Links or self-isolates:

- Sick days will be used for absences, and "illness" is reported in CIMS (*PLPSD Human Resource Online Portal*)
- When all sick days have been used or if no sick days are available, the employee will be placed on an unpaid sick leave
- For long-term unpaid sick leave, employee should apply to CERB
- Teachers only: if no available sick days, may be eligible for short-term or long-term benefits

If the employee is home because of an ill partner or unwell children:

- Depending on the symptoms and situation related to the illness, the employee is to call Health Links and follow their directive
- Family Leave should be used as defined in the Collective Agreement and reported in CIMS
- Pending the situation, sick days may be used for absences and reported in CIMS
- If all sick days have been used or if no sick days are available, the employee will be placed on an unpaid sick leave
- For long-term unpaid sick leave, employee should apply to CERB
- Teachers only: if no available sick days, may be eligible for short-term or long-term benefits

If the employee is ill:

- Depending on the symptoms related to the illness, employee is to call Health Links, and follow directive given by Health Links
- Sick days are to be used for absences, and illness reported in CIMS
- When all sick days have been used or if no sick days are available, employee will be placed on an unpaid sick leave
- For long-term unpaid sick leave, employee should apply to CERB
- Teachers only: if no available sick days, may be eligible for short-term or long-term benefits

If administrator/supervisor is concerned an employee is ill, and/or his/her exposure to others:

- Administrator/supervisor will send employee home
- Depending on the symptoms related to the illness, employee is to call Health Links, and follow directive given by Health Links
- Sick days should be used for absences, and illness reported in CIMS
- When all sick days have been used or there are no sick days available, the employee will be placed on an unpaid sick leave
- For long-term unpaid sick leave, employee should apply to CERB
- Teachers only: if no available sick days, may be eligible for short-term or long-term benefits

Refusal to work

If an employee, whose assignment requires him/her to be at school/work location, and refuses to report to work because of an immune-compromised partner or child who cannot leave the home:

- The employee should contact Health Links and if Health Links instruct the employee to stay home:
 - Sick days should be used for absences, and illness reported in CIMS
 - When all sick days have been used or there are no sick days available, the employee will be placed on an unpaid sick leave
 - For long-term unpaid sick leave, employee should apply to CERB
 - Teachers only: if no available sick days, may be eligible for short-term or long-term benefits

If an employee, whose assignment requires him/her to be at school/work locations and refuses to report to work and stays home for reasons that have not been discussed or confirmed by Health Links:

The employee should follow Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) process for refusal to work due to health/safety concern. Employee Right to Refusal Work Procedure

Medical Notes

Bill 55, [The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act](#) has suspended the requirement of a physician's certificate or medical note for the following employee leaves: maternity; compassionate care; unpaid leave organ donation; critical illness; long-term serious injury or illness; public health emergency leave.

Student and Family Preparedness

As mandated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#), PLPSD shall promote student and family preparedness by:

Identifying students with disabilities and those who are vulnerable to disengage from school, develop and implement strategies to re-engage them and prioritize these students for five days a week in-class learning, where possible

Refer to [Resources Supporting Students with Special Needs](#) for principles and practical resources to assist with planning

Communicating expectations for in-class attendance and participation in remote learning

Students are expected to attend in-class learning. If remote learning is included as part of their learning plan, students will be expected to participate

Students who are unable to return to school due to personal or family health risks factors related to COVID-19 will be supported in remote learning

Developing comprehensive strategies for regular communication with families to raise awareness of the health and safety measures implemented at the school

Ensuring the understanding that students may not attend school when sick or exhibiting symptoms of illness.

Refer to the online COVID-19 screening tool to develop materials

Signal that in-class learning may be increased or suspended on short notice in response to changing public health advice

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that PLPSD will implement to achieve these goals

Modifying Behaviours that Mitigate the Risk

There are many uncertainties about the COVID-19 pandemic that may cause us to feel stress. How long will the pandemic last? How long will I have to work from home? How long until I can return to school full time? Will I or my loved ones get sick?

We are not in control of the answers to these questions and spending too much time worrying about them may make us feel worse. Some things that you CAN control daily:

- **Stay home if you show any cold or flu-like symptoms** (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue)
- Wash hands regularly
- Exercise every day
- Spend time outside
- Take time to focus on breathing
- Treat others with kindness
- Focus on schoolwork
- Talk with friends or family members on the phone or online

Student Screening and Self-Assessment

Students must be in good health to attend school. Before leaving for school parents/guardians are to use the [Manitoba COVID-19 Screening Tool](#), using the following guidelines:

If a student shows any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue) he/she should remain at home.

If a person in the household has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province, the person is required to consult with [Health Links](#) prior to attending school and follow their directions.

Reporting and Contact Tracing

In the event of a student or member of the same household reports that they have received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The parent/guardian will immediately advise the school principal
- The school and division will work with public health officials

To facilitate contact tracing, schools will record attendance regularly and accurately. Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for other students or staff who would be considered "close contacts" of the individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools will not communicate such information without specific direction from the superintendent and public health officials.

Personal Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Students will use hand sanitizer or wash their hands immediately upon entry into the school
- Students will be instructed to follow all floor signage such as directional arrows or physical distancing spacing at all times within the school building
- Personal hygiene practices that minimize the risk of virus transmission must be followed at all times, these include:
 - covering the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow
 - immediately disposing of used tissues in a garbage container
 - washing hands frequently, particularly after coughing or sneezing without a tissue, touching frequently used surfaces such as door handles or taps as well as before and after eating
 - avoiding touching eyes, nose, or mouth

Cleaning and sanitizing of shared spaces will be a priority in PLPSD schools and facilities. Washrooms will be cleaned on a regular basis according to health and safety guidelines.

Communication

Since the onset of the pandemic, PLPSD has gathered feedback by surveying stakeholders including:

- Teachers/Support Staff
- Transportation Surveys
- Parent survey regarding the remote learning experience
- School leaders regarding student and staff engagement
- School / Outreach contact with each family to assess needs

Our divisional website (<http://www.plpsd.mb.ca/>)will continue to provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information for students and families. Regular email and social media updates will also continue to be provided. Important information and links will also be sent out via the PLPSD Facebook and Twitter accounts.

School Staff Preparedness

As mandated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools](#), PLPSD shall ensure staff preparedness and compliance with Public Health orders and guidelines in all our schools and workplaces by:

- Orienting staff to new public health protocols that must be followed in the school, before resuming in-class learning
- Including all staff in orientation, including bus drivers, custodial staff, etc.
- Providing orientation to volunteers, if they are on site in a limited way, to ensure they receive orientation when they begin
- Using the online [COVID-19 screening tool](#) to inform staff orientation
- Presenting information on self-monitoring, managing a suspected case of COVID-19, managing shared spaces, etc.
- Identifying staff who may need to work at home due to underlying health concerns that make them more vulnerable to exposure to COVID-19, and making any necessary adjustments
- Planning for health and safety training that may be required, and also ensuring that professional learning focuses on COVID-19 pandemic priority areas, including recovery learning, collaborative planning, mental health and wellbeing and remote learning strategies
- Professional Development for all professional staff on recovery of learning, blended learning and student re-engagement.

The following paragraphs detail specific measures that PLPSD will implement to achieve these goals.

Modifying Behaviours That Mitigate Risk

To ensure the safety of the work environment for all, staff will adhere to the [safe work procedures](#) and keep abreast of updated procedures and protocols.

In the event that a family member of the staff person in the same household reports that he or she has received a positive test for COVID-19:

- The staff member will immediately advise their direct supervisor
- The school and division will work with public health officials
- Staff Screening and Self-Assessment
- Staff members must be in good health to attend work
- Before leaving for the worksite all staff are to use the [Manitoba Health COVID-19 Screening Tool](#), using the following guidelines:
 - Any cold or flu-like symptoms (cough, fever, sore throat, runny nose, muscle ache, headache, nausea, fatigue) they should remain at home

- If a person in the household has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is in close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, or if anyone in the household has travelled out of the province, he/she is required to consult with [Health Links](#) prior to attending school
- As indicated by Manitoba Education in [Welcoming Our Students Back – Restoring Safe Schools](#), arrangements will be needed for teachers, administrators and school staff who may be at higher risk of COVID-19 due to underlying health conditions or other risk factors
 - This topic will be considered in July and August 2020 as PLPSD's senior leadership team (SLT) continues to refine the plan for the reopening of schools in September

Reporting and Contact Tracing

To facilitate contact tracing, staff attendance will be tracked through the Attendance Management System (CIMS).

Visitors to schools and itinerant Divisional Employees will upon entry to each work site, sign-in on the Entry Log with the date, name, and entry time, and the location(s) being accessed in the building. Staff will need to sign-out their departure time on the Entry Log.

Upon request by public health officials, schools will provide contact information for staff who would be considered "close contacts" of any individual that received a positive test result. Public health officials are responsible for communicating with "close contacts" and for advising the wider school community. Schools will not communicate such information without specific direction from their liaison superintendent and public health officials.

Personal Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

It is especially important to clean your hands:

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for a sick person
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands, or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser

Physical distancing [measures](#) to reduce your risk of infection:

- Minimize prolonged (more than 10 minutes), close (less than two meters/ six feet) contact between your co-workers and other individuals in public
- Where possible, meet with colleagues online or via telephone instead of in person
- Avoid greetings that involve touching, such as handshakes

- Avoid travel, crowded places, and events, especially if you are at higher risk (e.g., seniors and those with underlying medical conditions)
- Disinfect frequently used surfaces in your workspace.

Follow public health advice related to self-monitoring and self-isolation if you have been exposed to COVID-19 through travel or contact with someone infected with COVID-19.

Safety-Related Adaptations to Teaching and Learning

The Province of Manitoba has issued the following directives for learning and teaching safely during the current public health situation:

- [Sports Guidelines](#)
- [Guidelines for Vocalists and Instrumentalists](#)

PLPSD is committed to ensuring that all staff are aware of such guidelines and that all guidelines are implemented faithfully. As more guidelines are developed and approved by the Province, PLPSD will communicate them to staff and support their implementation.

Professional Learning

The following professional learning norms (articulated in policy) shall guide our professional growth as we prepare for the return to school and respond to the ever-evolving public health situation.

- Student learning informs professional learning
- Professional learning is most efficacious when it's personalized, differentiated, job-embedded and collaborative
- Professional learning is a continuous, collaborative inquiry:
 - designed to incrementally improve practice;
 - informed by student learning data;
 - grounded in current research; and
 - guided by both the school's and division's multi-year strategic plans
- Professional learning must be framed by continuous cycles of assessment, planning, and action that measure the impact of collective teaching practice on student learning and lead to greater collective efficacy.

Communication

Since the onset of the pandemic, PLPSD has strived to communicate with staff through:

- Emails
- Memos
- Social media
- Updates posted on divisional website
- Announcements in pertinent Microsoft Teams channels
- Presentations by principals/supervisors at staff meetings

In addition, PLPSD has sought to gather feedback from staff through various surveys and direct consultations with principals.

Our divisional website will continue to provide the most up-to-date and comprehensive information for staff. Other forms of communication will be used, as deemed appropriate.

PLPSD will continue to engage staff as we prepare to return to schools in the fall. Up-to-date plans and procedures for re-entry will be shared with all staff. Staff are encouraged to check their email prior to returning to school.

It is anticipated that public health orders may change suddenly, prompting an immediate change to existing practices. It is essential that staff stay informed. Staff are expected to check their email regularly. Should the need arise, schools will activate their emergency phone tree to ensure timely communication with staff when class is not in session.

Staff must advise their supervisor immediately should they learn that they or a member of their household has tested positive for COVID-19 or that they or a member of their household has been in close contact with someone that has tested positive for COVID-19. Staff should note their supervisor's contact information so that such communication can occur after school hours, if necessary.

PLPSD would like to thank Louis Riel School Division for the permission to use information and content from the LRSD Recovery of Learning Document.