

Questions and Answers about School Re-Entry - July 31, 2020

The answers to frequently asked questions below are based on what we know today. The Alberta government announced that we will re-enter school in Scenario 1 this fall. It is important to note that between this date and the beginning of the school year we may receive different direction from government. We are committed to providing you with updated information through updating this and other documents in a timely manner.

Who decides which scenario we will re-enter school in?

The Alberta government has made the decision that Scenario 1 will be in place in the fall (near normal operation). If there are changes, they will be directed by Alberta Education. In the coming weeks the Minister of Education may issue new direction with respect to public health measures or programming. If the rate of infection increases in our region, we may be directed by the Minister of Education to move to scenario 2 or 3 with little notice. More information can be found within the [Alberta Government Requirements and Guidelines for School Re-Entry Planning](#) document.

What is required before I send my child to school?

All parents and guardians will be asked to sign a declaration affirming their commitment to using the [Pre-Screening COVID-19 Checklist](#) prior to sending their child to school. Parents take the responsibility to determine each day whether their children are healthy and able to attend on-site classes using the pre-screening criteria.

You can find information to share with children below:

- [Alberta Education Video- Returning to school safely \(Elementary students\)](#)
- [Alberta Education Video- Returning to school safely \(Junior high and high school students\)](#)
- [Alberta Education COVID-19 Information for Kids](#)
- [Use of Hand Sanitizer](#), [Washing Hands with Soap and Water](#), and [Cover Your Cough](#).

What is the purpose of staggered entry?

To support children with a strong understanding of changes in school operation and a strong start to the year with the revised health measures. By having half of the children in attendance on September 1 and half in attendance on September 2, teachers will be able to work with small groups to develop clear understanding and comfort with new routines.

Does my child have to wear a mask?

Students and staff are free to wear masks at any time but need to have one for instances when teachers deem it desirable for them to wear them for example when they are transitioning. (The MOH is currently reviewing the research and evidence around the effectiveness of mask use to mitigate risk for students. This information will help inform any needed revisions to our procedures.) Please refer to [AHS Mask Information Documents](#) for more information about masks.

What school supplies does my child need to bring?

In addition to your previous [2020/21 School Supply List](#), please ensure your child has the following:

- Water bottle
- Earbuds or headphones (with attached microphone if possible)
- Face mask or gaiter labelled with your child's name

Of note, use of shared supplies will be limited.

Does my child need to bring hand sanitizer?

No. The school will supply hand sanitizer due to student and staff sensitivities. The product is approved by Health Canada and will be readily available throughout the school.

Will parents be permitted in the school?

No. Generally, parents will not be permitted in the school. Visitors and volunteers who are required will be carefully scheduled and monitored to ensure health measures are followed. Any exception needs to be approved and could include:

- Pre-planned meetings with staff members where a virtual meeting is impractical.
- Private lessons during non-instructional hours using hand hygiene and masking protocols.
- Emergency student pick-up.

How is drop off and pick up of students to be arranged?

Please refer to the drop off and pick up procedures and maps within the [Suzuki Charter School Re-Entry Plan](#) and review with your child in advance.

When will I know my child's homeroom teacher?

You will be provided with the name of your child's homeroom teacher in mid August via email so that you can review and plan for pre-determined morning drop off and after school pick up locations. All students will be assigned to a homeroom teacher whether they are participating in on-site or at-home learning. The classroom teacher will be the primary contact between parents, students, and the school.

If my child(ren) begins the fall term with at-home programming, can I change to school attendance?

Yes. Absolutely. You are a Suzuki family member and we respect your choice. At-home programming does not have to be long-term. As COVID conditions and personal family circumstances change parents may decide to join the on-site program at any point in the school term.

What happens if I decide to enrol my child(ren) in a cyber/virtual school program with another division or choose to enrol in a home-schooling program? Will my spot at Suzuki Charter School be available post pandemic?

Parents cannot enrol their child(ren) in more than one Alberta school system/program at the same time. To register in programs outside Suzuki Charter School you would have to withdraw your registration at Suzuki Charter School first. If there are applications from new families for the available spaces at Suzuki you will lose your space. We welcome you back if we have available space!

How long will my Grade K-7 child's school day be?

To date, there are no changes to our regularly scheduled school day from 8:25am - 3:10pm.

Will my child be required to sit at a desk all day?

No. "Near normal" return to school means students will be able to move around their classroom and work with their classmates. Our staff will make every effort to maintain physical distancing when reasonable to do so. Part of why classes are being kept together as much as possible is to create (within the school day) a "cohort" where students and staff can work together in as normal a way as possible including at recess.

Will there be recess?

Yes. All students will be given a morning and lunch recess break. Recess procedures will include hand hygiene before going out for recess and upon return to the classroom, and students will be encouraged to play within homeroom cohorts during recess. Increased number of entrance and exit doors will be used, and staggered entrance and exit times will decrease non-cohort congregation. Strict physical distancing on the playground is impractical. [Research from the SickKids Research Institute](#) supports how important it is for children and their mental health to have close interactions when they are playing outside, which is where the cohorting strategy comes into place. Students will be encouraged to play within their classroom cohorts.

What will the music program look like?

The Suzuki music program will continue, however provincial guidelines do not permit singing or active use of wind or brass instruments in the school at this time. The school will provide alternative activities for students.

What will private music lessons look like?

Private lessons will continue with attention to health measures and facility protocols. Contact your private music lesson teacher directly if you have questions about your child's private lessons.

Will there be physical education?

Yes. There will be modifications to meet the direction of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

What about Grade 7 Options?

Grade 7 Options will proceed as scheduled.

What about hallways and transitions?

We have set procedures to limit the number of transitions and the number of students in the halls at any given time. In the event that physical distancing is not possible, mask use will be strongly encouraged. To meet the guidelines of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, measures include assigned entry and exit doors for classes, the use of directional arrows for hallway movement, and providing French and General music classes within homeroom classrooms.

Will there be general assemblies and concerts?

General assemblies and concerts are suspended, following the direction of the Minister of Education. Plans for school events that involve gatherings will be altered if possible, for example, virtual parent/teacher meetings, or streaming or videotaping assemblies.

What about field trips and extracurricular activities?

For the most part, field trips (off-site activities) will not be permitted, as the direction from government is to avoid activities that require bus transportation. Additionally, we are concerned about taking students to other environments away from the school building where we are taking steps to mitigate the spread of the virus.

We are awaiting direction and guidance from the Alberta government with respect to extracurricular activities including Grade 7 athletics.

In all cases, significant limits on spectators and their actions (cheering and yelling) are expected to be in place for some time.

What if someone becomes symptomatic at school?

1. If a child becomes symptomatic, the teacher will call home or emergency contacts to pick up the child and any siblings as soon as possible, and parents will seek health advice from Alberta Health Services (AHS).
2. The child will be isolated as much as possible, either in a designated isolated space or in the classroom.
3. The student can return to school following MOH guidelines including screening, and testing if directed by AHS to identify and mitigate risk.

4. In the event that a student is diagnosed with COVID-19, AHS will direct and consult with the family and school to mitigate and manage risks within the community on a case-by-case basis.
5. No one directed home due to the onset of symptoms will be permitted to return until they confirm a negative COVID-19 test. (*The Chief Medical Officer of Health is currently developing a toolkit to support clarity of criteria and process for schools.*)

If your child has a known, pre-existing condition that causes COVID-19 symptoms, they should be tested to confirm that COVID-19 is not the cause of the symptoms and to establish a “baseline” for staff.

Should two or more members of a cohort develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19, we will initiate the “outbreak notification procedure” that is to be provided by Alberta Health Services prior to the beginning of the school year.

What will happen if someone tests positive for COVID-19? How will parents be notified?

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, a public health team will investigate to determine when symptoms developed and support the school to minimize transmission. The Zone Medical Officer of Health will work with the school to quickly identify cases, identify close contacts, create isolation measures when needed, and provide follow-up recommendations.

While each case will be addressed based on its unique circumstances, a COVID-19 case will not automatically lead to school closure. It is anticipated that in most cases only the group of students and staff who came in close contact will likely be required to stay home for 14 days, and not the entire school population.

Parents will be notified if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed at school and public health officials will contact those who were in close contact with that person. We will support students and staff to learn or work at home if they are required to self-isolate.

If there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in a community or school, health officials will work with Alberta Education and impacted school authorities, to make any decision to potentially transition to partial in-class learning or at-home learning. Decisions will be based on multiple factors including the number of cases in a community or school and the risk of ongoing transmission.

What if my child's teacher gets sick?

We have a list of qualified substitute teachers familiar with Suzuki Charter School procedures that we access in the event that teachers are sick.

What if my child is required to stay home or is forced to self-isolate as directed by AHS?

The school will provide families with at-home learning support.

Do you have thermometers and PPE at school?

We have infrared thermometers, limited PPE for staff, and masks for student or staff use as needed.

How will hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and disinfecting be promoted and supported in the classroom?

Teachers will educate students on appropriate hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and disinfecting in the classroom. In addition to classroom sinks, hand sanitizer will be available at building and classroom entrances throughout the school and hand hygiene will be performed regularly including when entering and exiting the school and classrooms, and before and after eating or using common items. Students will be reminded of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette by staff and through the use of age appropriate information including [Use of Hand Sanitizer](#), [Washing Hands with Soap and Water](#), and [Cover Your Cough](#).

Regular, enhanced, and as-needed cleaning will be performed by custodial staff, as will monitoring to ensure all necessary supplies are available. Daytime custodians will disinfect contact surfaces and high contact areas. Evening custodial staff will thoroughly clean all areas.

What is enhanced cleaning?

Custodial staff will be engaged in frequent cleaning with disinfectants approved by Health Canada, and engage in frequent cleaning protocols as outlined in the provincial re-entry planning guidelines. Daytime custodians are present so that ongoing cleaning of “high touch” surfaces (doorknobs and so on) and common spaces (bathrooms) can be conducted frequently throughout the day.

Students will be grouped by cohort or class for activities. This, coupled with strictly limiting the sharing of space and materials will reduce the need for frequent cleaning of student workspaces. That said, students (where age appropriate) and staff will all have to do their part to clean personal workspaces.

How do COVID-19 health measures impact the operating budget?

In June 2020, funds were redirected to support the procurement of cleaning supplies, hand sanitizer stations, signage and information posters, and personal protective equipment for staff.