



Dear Everyone,

The Fort Vermilion School Division has been in direct contact with Alberta's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Hinshaw. Dr. Hinshaw has given new direction to our schools that will be effective Monday, March 16, which we want to share with our families. The most significant change is this:

Zero Tolerance policy: If children or staff have any respiratory symptoms, they do not ride the bus and do not come to school.

Parents/guardians of students/children should be informed that there is zero tolerance for children with any respiratory symptoms attending school. Teachers will be asked to closely monitor their classrooms, and if any student is having respiratory symptoms such as cough or symptoms of a mild cold, the steps below will be followed. The same steps will be followed if a staff member begins to experience respiratory symptoms.

- If a student, child or staff develops respiratory symptoms while at school, they will be removed from the school environment.
- Schools will promptly separate the student/child or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, and including symptoms that may seem like a mild cold) in an area separate from others, with adequate supervision until they can go home.
- To help prevent transmission, **the most important steps are to reinforce strict respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene practices and to have the ill student/child or staff stay two meters away from others.** If possible, the student should be placed in a separate room from other students/children with a closed door.
- Masks provide a level of protection when worn by a symptomatic person. It is acknowledged that it is neither practical nor feasible to have schools procure masks at this time, therefore adhere to strict respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection.
- **School will notify parents/guardians if their child begins to experience respiratory symptoms while at school and arrange for immediate pick up.**
- Students/children or staff who develop respiratory symptoms should be kept home for 14 days after the start of the symptoms.
- If students/children are tested for COVID-19, those who test negative will be advised individually by Alberta Health Services about returning to school settings.

FORT VERMILION SCHOOL DIVISION
"Our Children, Our Students, Our Future"

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Parent Teacher Interviews:

- Parent teacher interviews, schools will provide opportunities for conversations that do not involve the congregation of large groups.

Student extracurricular:

- All extracurricular events planned will currently be postponed until further notice

So far Alberta Health Services has not closed schools. If that situation changes, we will notify parents immediately. For now, we are continuing to ask parents to do the following:

- Please keep your children at home if they are sick
- Encourage them to wash their hands regularly and follow cough and sneeze etiquette (we are continuing to do this at school too)
- If you are returning from out-of-country travel, please self-isolate for the recommended 14 days
- If you or any family members are experiencing symptoms, please call [Health Link 811](#) for next steps
- Self-Assessment Tool <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>
- Guideline for schools <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid19-alberta-guidance-for-schools-and-child-care-programs.pdf>

We appreciate the leadership of Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's Chief Medical Health Officer and Alberta Health Services. They are continuing to monitor this situation very carefully and we are following the precautions they recommend.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact your child's school or our division office.

Michael McMann
Superintendent of Schools

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