

Welcoming Students Back

2020–21 Parent & Community Information



*This plan is dynamic. The division will continue to re-work and make adaptations as new information and guidelines become available.
(A record of updates is on the inside cover)*

This is a living document and will be updated regularly to ensure it remains current.

RECORD OF DOCUMENT REVISIONS:

August 17, 2020

Initial publication

August 20, 2020

Version 1.01

Updated Sections: School Access, Community Use & Entry Process, Transportation, Use of personal protective equipment (PPE), Protocol for Students who Exhibit Symptoms, Timetable, Lunch Hour, Volunteers, Subject Areas & Specialist Classes

August 27, 2020

Version 1.02

Updated Section: Transportation

September 1, 2020

Version 1.03

Updated Section: Transportation (Mask Requirement)

Message from our Superintendent

On July 30, 2020 Manitoba Education announced the plans for the reopening schools in Manitoba:
https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/covid/k-12-reopeningplan-stage-2.pdf

The plan reflects the importance of safety, health and well-being, while ensuring reasonable plans are in place to minimize the risk of transmission and exposure to the virus in schools.

With the acknowledgement that we will be living with COVID-19 for the foreseeable future, it is in the best interest of children to be in school, and we must lessen the risks of COVID-19 for students and families to ensure that learning continues for all.

Manitoba Education, along with River East Transcona School Division, will continue to work closely with public health, parents, caregivers and students. The provincial, and divisional, plans are based on policy and public health directions that have been approved by the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer.

In RETSD, and across Manitoba, in-class learning will resume on September 8, 2020.

- Kindergarten to Grade 8 students, and all students with additional needs in all grades, will return for five full days of in-class instruction per week.
- Students in Grades 9–12 will return for up to five days per week of in-class instruction.

Schools in RETSD are planning for a safe return to learning for all students and staff. We know that families have many questions and concerns regarding the start of school. Some of these questions will be best answered by your school directly as each school may have some school-specific information for parents and students. This information will be shared prior to school starting on September 8, 2020.

As well, Manitoba Education has created a website to answer many of the questions parents may have:
<http://edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html>

RETSD is committed to working with parents and caregivers as we navigate the return to school. You are entrusting us with your most valuable commodity, your child. By working together, we are confident that your child will experience the best possible return to school. We are looking forward to having your children, our students, back with us on September 8, 2020!



Kelly Barkman
Superintendent/CEO
River East Transcona School Division

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SCHOOL PREPAREDNESS

School Access, Community Use & Entry Process

Restricting access to buildings is a strategy to reduce the probability of an infected person entering the school. All RETSD buildings are implementing a monitored access system for the start of school. This means all **parents or visitors MUST report to the office upon entering the school**. All parents or visitors are expected to use the self-screening tool prior to coming to the school. To help protect the health and safety of everyone, masks are mandatory for any parent or visitor who needs to enter the school when physical distancing of two metres is not possible.

Whenever possible, parents, visitors or caregivers are asked to email or call the teachers, school or administrators when you need to talk as opposed to coming to the school.

Access to the school is limited. **Clear directions will be provided in each school for entry, exit and movement within the school.**

Everyone who enters an RETSD facility MUST monitor for symptoms and exposure. This responsibility resides with the person or their parent/caregiver. Monitoring is to be done using the COVID-19 Shared Health Screening Tool at: <https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

Hand sanitizing stations will be set up at the main entrances of schools. Everyone entering the school should sanitize their hands.

Keeping potentially sick or infected or symptomatic people out of the building helps reduce the probability of community-based transmission of the virus. **Any person who exhibits signs and symptoms of illness are asked not to enter the facility and to seek applicable health testing.** Additionally, all schools have an identified space to isolate students who display COVID-19 symptoms.

Given that Manitoba Education has made it clear that the community use of schools is to be suspended, all community programming is being reviewed. Most programming will be suspended at this time. Specific details regarding each program will be communicated to the organizers and the schools involved.

Classroom Transition, Cohorts, Student Movement Plans

The movement of people within a school will be minimized and it is critical to maintain physical distancing as much as possible. Whenever possible, staff will change rooms and students will remain in their cohort in the assigned area.

Cohorts involve keeping groups of students together and avoiding interactions with other groups or cohorts. Physical distancing within the cohort is required to the greatest extent possible, including separation between desks. However, it is recognized that strict physical distancing at all times, particularly with young children, is not practical in the school setting. The purpose of cohorts is to limit the mixing of students and staff so that if a child or employee develops an infection, there are fewer possible exposures and contact tracing can be more easily done. The maximum cohort size is 75 students.

All pedestrian traffic inside the facility should follow the same concepts as the “rules of the road” and the directional markers. People briefly passing one another in hallways without six feet of physical distance is not considered high risk, but will be minimized by staggered/staged starts and exits at each school. As well, different entry/exit times are being scheduled. Students are to enter the school upon arrival to ensure they are staggered and will be released in a similar manner at the end of the day.

COVID-19 Signage

Manitoba Health has provided a variety of signage that is posted in all schools to communicate public health best practices. See them at: <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>

Transportation

We understand that the provinces guidelines for school bus transportation will impact many families. RETSD will schedule bussing according to provincial guidelines while also ensuring physical distancing requirements are in place.

RETSD school buses will be operating at **less than full capacity due to physical distancing requirements.**

To meet our **obligations**, our plans include the following:

- Supporting transportation for students with additional needs who require individualized programming support
- Supporting transportation for students living outside the City of Winnipeg perimeter in the municipalities of East St. Paul and St. Clements as there is no access to public transportation
- Suspending our Fee-for-Service school bus transportation
- Assigning as many students as possible, under the public health guidelines, to buses. The details of each bus route will be posted on the parent portal the week of August 31, 2020.
- The division will be asking parents who are not intending to have their child(ren) use their allocated seat on the bus to contact transportation so that we can reallocate the seat to other eligible students.

All school bus passengers, as well as the driver, are required to wear a non-medical mask. These masks should be put on before getting on the bus and taken off after exiting the bus, if removal is appropriate for the setting.

Students will sit in assigned seats. These seats will be the same seats used every day. Where possible, students will be seated one student per seat. If this is not possible, students from the same household or in-school cohort can be seated together.

To assist in making student drop off and pick up as safe as possible when we welcome our students back in September we are asking all parents to follow the school specific directions and consider having their child walk to school or ride a bike. Most schools in RETSD have bike racks. If you need to drive your child to school, please consider talking to your child about a regular pick up or drop off location that is two blocks away from the school.

Guidelines for Transportation to Schools: <https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/reopening/transportation.html>

Self-Screening, Symptom Monitoring Process & Personal Hygiene

Students must stay home if sick or displaying symptoms. Monitoring for symptoms and exposure is to be done using the COVID-19 Shared Health Screening Tool. Symptoms may include:

- Cough
- Headache
- Fever/ chills
- Muscle aches
- Sore throat/ hoarse voice
- Shortness of breath/ breathing difficulties
- Loss of taste or smell
- Vomiting, or diarrhea for more than 24 hours
- Runny nose
- Fatigue
- Nausea or loss of appetite
- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Skin rash of unknown cause

<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>

Public health orders are to be followed in all schools. To reduce the risk of infection from COVID-19, students and visitors are expected to take common prevention measures, including regular handwashing with soap and warm water for at least 15 seconds. Dry hands thoroughly. An alcohol-based hand cleanser can be used if your hands are not visibly dirty and soap and water are not available.

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

You should also cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, or you can cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash your hands or use an alcohol-based hand cleanser.

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/prepareandprevent/index.html>

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Masks offer an added layer of protection. Students in Grade 4 and above, as well as teachers and staff, are mandated to wear a non-medical mask in common areas throughout schools and when physical distancing of two metres is not possible. Younger students can wear masks too. All school bus passengers, as well as the driver, are required to wear a non-medical mask. These masks should be put on before getting on the bus and taken off after exiting the bus, if removal is appropriate for the setting. Extra masks will be made available at all schools throughout the school year for those who do not have their own.

Parents are strongly encouraged to talk to their children about how to wear a non-medical mask.

To put on a mask safely, perform hand hygiene. Place the mask on the face carefully so it covers your mouth and nose, handling it with the strings or elastic ear loops as much as possible, and mould the nose bridge to ensure it does not move while it is on. Avoid touching the mask once you have put it on. If the mask needs to be adjusted, hands should be cleaned before and after adjusting the mask. **Never pull the mask down below the nose, mouth or chin. Never dangle the mask from one ear or both ears.**

To remove the mask safely, remove it from behind using the strings or elastic ear loops. Do not touch the front of the mask. Perform hand hygiene after removing the mask.

Non-medical masks should be laundered daily.

Some students might require specific interventions or supports that cannot be delivered from a distance. Precautions related to these types of supports vary depending on the needs of the individual student. School staff will be in contact with the families of students who may require this support while at school. Staff may wear PPE as appropriate and where physical distancing can not be maintained in order to support additional student needs.

Protocol for Students Who Exhibit Symptoms

If a student develops symptoms while at school, they will be isolated in a predetermined isolation space. Where a separate room is not available, students will be kept at least two metres away from others. A mask will be provided for and worn by the child exhibiting symptoms. The student's parent/caregiver will be notified to come and pick them up immediately and instructed to call Health Links at 204.788.8200 or 1.888.315.9257.

A sick child can return to the school once it has been determined that it is safe to do so by their health care provider or public health. If that child has a positive test, further direction will be provided by public health.

Protocol if there is a Positive Case in the School

In the event of a confirmation of a case of COVID-19 connected with a class, public health will lead the response and provide guidance. Public health will advise staff and students if they have been in close contact, if they need to self-isolate or self-monitor and when they can return to school.

Decisions about school or class closures will be made on a case-by-case basis with public health leading the response and providing guidance.

Classroom teachers will support the development and provision of at-home learning packages for students who are isolating or quarantined as directed by public health.

Cleaning & Sanitization Schedule

RETSD has worked diligently to develop a cleaning and sanitizing plan for the re-entry of students. School custodial staff are aware of and are implementing this plan.

To increase cleaning and sanitation, we are:

- Hiring additional custodial aides to ensure more frequent cleaning during the day when students are present
- Suspending facility and community use permits to accommodate increased cleaning requirements
- Providing hand sanitizer in all offices and entrances of school buildings
- Ensuring adequate supply of liquid soap and hand towels in all locations. Ensuring all air hand dryers are in working order
- Procuring disinfectant wipes for IT equipment to ensure shared devices are cleaned in between users

SCHOOL ROUTINES

School Physical Setting

As per the messaging from the Chief Public Health Officer of Manitoba, schools are safe. Each classroom has been provided with necessary cleaning supplies to help ensure cleanliness through out the day. Additionally, soap and water are readily available throughout the schools. Common spaces are subject to more frequent cleaning by school custodial staff. In order to help maximize safety, water fountains that are not touchless are closed off or bagged so that they cannot be used. Bottle re-fill stations will continue to be available. Students must supply their own bottle, and these should not be shared.

All schools in RETSD, have completed a school specific RETSD COVID-19 Safety Plan document. This document supports school-specific plans for the safe return of students.

Student Attendance

Students are expected to attend in-class learning and fully participate even if remote learning is required at some point. Each school will work collaboratively with parents/caregivers to support learning for students who are medically advised not to return to school and provide the required medical documentation.

Families who choose to educate their children at home can find more information about homeschooling by contacting:

Homeschooling Office

Manitoba Education and Training

1567 Dublin Ave.

Winnipeg, MB R3E 3J5

Phone: 204.945.8138

Email: homeschooling@gov.mb.ca

Timetable

The below noted time table descriptions are general in nature. School specific information will be available from your child's school after August 28, 2020.

Early Years

For the most part, timetables will stay as is. This schedule respects the required cohorting of students. Schools will provide all students as much time as possible for structured physical activity, outdoor experiences, and arts education.

Teachers will move classrooms while the students remain, for the most part, in their designated room or with their cohort.

Staggered/staged starts and exits are expected. Different entry/exit times will be scheduled. While it is strongly discouraged, students who arrive at school prior to the designated entry time are to wait /play, using physical distancing, on the schoolyard in their cohort's assigned area. Staff will bring students into the school based on their staggered entry plan.

Middle Years

Timetables may need to be adjusted to reflect the programming, curriculum, and safety guidelines. Schools will provide all students as much time as possible for structured physical activity, outdoor experiences, and arts education. Scheduling may necessitate timetable changes to ensure cohorts of students stay together for applied arts and creative arts.

Student initiated timetable changes will not be possible.

Teachers will move classrooms while the students remain, for the most part, in their designated room or with their cohort.

Schools are planning to use different entry points for each grade/class. Different entry/exit times will be scheduled. While it is strongly discouraged, students who arrive at school prior to the designated entry time are to wait, using physical distancing, on the schoolyard in their cohort's assigned area. Staff will bring students into the school based on their staggered entry plan.

Senior Years

The senior years schools are working on adjusting timetables to reflect the provincial programming, curriculum, and safety guidelines. Students will need to be scheduled in cohorts to maintain physical distancing measures. This approach will increase safe daily attendance and limit cohorts from mixing. Students, parents and caregivers must be aware that this approach will limit student course options. Learning will likely be extended through some remote/at-home work and, where possible, some courses may be offered online. In many cases, teachers will move classrooms while the students remain, for the most part, in their designated room.

Student initiated timetable changes will not be possible.

Schools are planning to use different entry points for each grade/class. Different entry/exit times will be scheduled. Students should not arrive before scheduled classes and they should leave immediately following their last scheduled class. In the event students arrive at school prior to the designated entry time, they are to wait, using physical distancing, on the schoolyard in their cohort's assigned area.

Recess & Locker Breaks

Early Years

Recess is an important part of child development. Play, structured and unstructured, is central to student well-being. Recognizing this, recess will be maintained. To ensure the additional physical distancing measures and cohorting are supported, staggered recess schedules have been established at each school to ensure safety. An outdoor space has been designated for each class. Additionally, each class will have its own bag of equipment specified for them for recess, which will be cleaned at the end of the day. These individual bags will be stored in the classrooms.

Middle & Senior Years

Respecting the need to ensure additional physical distancing measures and cohorting, locker breaks, in the traditional sense, will not be permitted. Recognizing the importance of breaks to overall student well-being, schools will build in breaks which ensure students stay in their assigned cohorts or move directly to the next assigned class following the directional markings. Hallway traffic will be monitored to mitigate congestion. Students will not be permitted to linger in the halls or at lockers. If locker use is not discontinued, it must be significantly limited and monitored. Students are strongly encouraged to keep all personal belongings with them as much as possible.

Lunch Hour

Students who normally go home for lunch will continue to do so. Upon returning to school, students will follow the appropriate school guidelines for accessing the schoolyard, designated areas, and school entry.

Students who stay at school for lunch will eat lunch in their cohort classroom. Food must not be shared, and students are to supply their own food and utensils. Microwaves will not be available. Outdoor times will be scheduled for all cohorts.

Students are strongly discouraged from going off site at lunchtime and congregating at local establishments. Parents are encouraged to speak with their child about this important precaution.

Lunch Supervision Programs (Early Years)

User pay lunch supervision programs will continue to operate. Programs will exercise a higher degree of attention to cleanliness. Students will eat lunch in their cohort classroom.

School administration and parent lunch committees are in regular contact to co-ordinate plans and support student safety.

Hot Lunch Programs/Canteens/Cafeterias

Hot lunch programs, as well as cafeteria use/sales, is suspended until further notice. These changes are being made to support the additional physical distancing measures and cohorting that is required while also reducing congregation and access to shared materials/supplies.

Breakfast & Snack Programs

Recognizing the important role that schools play in the overall health and well being of students, where possible, breakfast and snack programs will continue. Schools will not have outside organizations or volunteers coming in to assist with food preparation or distribution. School staff could distribute prepackaged food or fruit provided. (One person from the external group can drop off items provided they are use the self-screening tool prior to coming to the school).

Play Structures

Public health advises that playgrounds and play structures are low risk for transmission. There are no specific requirements for cleaning play structures. All play structures and swing sets are open.

Assemblies

In order to ensure the additional physical distancing measures and cohorting that is required, assemblies and large gatherings are not permitted at this time.

Field Trips

While educational **day** field trips can take place providing that public health guidelines can be met, given the logistical complications (distancing, transportation and the unknown variables off-site) the division is strongly recommending that day field trips not proceed at this time.

Any day field trips that cannot accommodate physical distancing must be cancelled. Physical distancing requirements must also be maintained on transportation. Cohorts can not mix while on a field trip.

Overnight camps or stays are not permitted until further notice.

Out-of-School Education Excursions

Beginning in September 2020, the division is directing the cancellation of all international and interprovincial travel up to December 31, 2020. This may be extended for the foreseeable future.

If your child was scheduled to take part in an international or interprovincial out of school excursion during the first half of this school year, the school will be in contact with you.

Volunteers

In order to ensure schools are as safe as possible, the division is limiting access to the school building. In most situations, volunteers and guest presenters are not permitted to attend school in-person. For the most part, access is being prioritized to those supporting implementation of public health measures and activities that benefit student learning and well-being. All visitors and volunteers must adhere to self-screening, physical distancing, and recommended hygiene practices. Visitors or volunteers with any symptoms consistent with COVID-19 should not enter the school. Schools will keep a list of all visitors. To help protect the health and safety of everyone masks are mandatory for any parent or visitor who needs to enter the school consider when physical distancing of two metres is not possible.

TEACHING, LEARNING & WELL-BEING

In-Class Learning

As has been directed by Manitoba Education, in-class learning will occur with additional public health measures. While the educational programming will continue to be best practice, some logistical changes may be necessary. These changes will include:

- Group work, group projects: Teachers will continue to prioritize collaboration between students. This will include using digital platforms to maintain social distancing
- Limiting shared resources
- Maintaining social distance and hygiene within the classrooms
- Cohorting students where possible

Recovery Learning

Recognizing that students are returning to school with more varied learning experiences than usual, all schools are planning to support students with recovery learning as needed.

Recovery learning is not a one-time event. It will be viewed as an ongoing process throughout the school year. Learning gaps will be identified and monitored. To support recovery learning, your child's teacher will employ the following approaches:

- Initial assessments will be conducted to provide a starting point for teachers; however information will continue to be collected
- Teachers will plan for instruction using this information
- Students will be provided with a variety of opportunities to learn and to demonstrate understanding
- Teaching will be focused on goals of building independence and self-motivation so that students have the skills to move to remote learning if required
- Recognizing the uncertainty of the situation, teaching will be planned to ensure that learning continuity is in place for students should further disruptions arise
- The focus of recovery learning will be on understanding, not assignments

The Possibility of Remote Learning

Students and families need to be prepared for a blended learning model that allows transition of teaching and learning from in-class to remote with as little disruption as possible. Should this arise, schools will be in contact with parents to communicate next steps.

Assessment & Reporting

Students' learning will be assessed on an ongoing basis to ensure that next steps are being appropriately planned for. Learning that occurs in classrooms or remotely will be assessed using good assessment practices that focus on the essential understandings of the curriculum. Additionally, students and parents/caregivers need to be aware that reporting continues to follow the guidelines and policies established by Manitoba Education and reflected in the following RETSD policies:

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/IKAB.pdf>

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/IKA-R.pdf>

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/IKAF.pdf>

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/IKAG.pdf>

Subject Areas & Specialist Classes

All curriculum areas are important and build students' literacy and numeracy knowledge. Schools will continue to offer all subjects, to the greatest extent possible.

Electives may be scheduled when possible and maintaining cohorts of students. In senior years, students and caregivers need to be aware that there might be fewer electives and graduation plans will need to be revisited.

For students in Technical Vocational programs, courses will be planned to maximize hands-on learning when students are in class and move theoretical learning to digital platforms where possible.

After reviewing the Manitoba High School Athletics Association return to School Sport Plan, the division is delaying the start of **all** extra-curricular sport. We have made the decision based on the on the following:

1. Our focus is on ensuring that schools are open and students, staff, and families are feeling confident with our new routines.
2. We need to insure that all sport can adhere to our health expectations including cohorting, the use of volunteer coaches, the use of changerooms, and the extension of the school day.

Additionally, at this time, in RETSD there will be:

- No cross cohort practices or activity
- No practices or competition outside of the school day

Please know that we value the physical, mental and emotional health benefits of sport and will work diligently to ensure that our students can have access to those benefits. Schools will be working to build physical activity into the school day.

Music programming is an important part of a well rounded education. Music programming in RETSD will follow all public health and education advice. Singing is not presently permitted in school. Taking this into account music programming will continue with consideration given to physical distancing, proper hygiene, reducing shared supplies and proper cleaning and sanitation. Band programming will look different with students being asked to do more instrumental practice at home while in class learning focuses on the many other aspects of music education. When instruments are used, teachers will ensure that health precautions are adhered to. Since public health advice does not permit singing, choral programs will be focusing on other musical elements and providing practice opportunities for home where appropriate.

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/music-guidelines.html>

Student Specific Programming

As is the case for all students, students with additional needs from K-12 will be receiving in-class learning as prescribed by the province. Programming for students with additional needs may include a student specific plan, such as an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or an Adapted Education Plan (AEP). This collaborative planning will be led by the school team and, as needed, supported by divisional staff. If students with additional needs are not able to physically distance, provincial and divisional protocols will guide the necessary next steps.

Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)

To support the use of technology in teaching and learning, Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) guidelines will be in place for **all** students.

Encouraging students to use personal devices in classrooms:

- Supports the transition between in-class and remote learning
- Extends teaching and learning opportunities using technology
- Provides opportunity for modeling and teaching digital literacy practices that will be required for in-class and remote learning
- Limits the use of shared technology resources

Teachers, students, and parents should be aware of the BYOD guidelines and the related RETSD policies. This DOES NOT mean that student must have their own device. This approach allows students who have their own device to leverage its use in-class under the direction of the teacher.

RETSD BYOD Parent Guidelines:

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/Lists/Publications/BYOD%20Parent%20FAQ%20Aug%202020.pdf>

RETSD BYOD Student Guidelines:

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/Lists/Publications/BYOD%20Student%20guidelines%20Nov%202017.pdf>

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/GBEE.pdf>

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/IJND.pdf>

Student Access to Devices & the Internet

To ensure all students are ready for a possible move to remote learning, **based on need, each school will identify students** who would benefit from being provided with loaner devices that are to be returned at the end of the school year or before.

Students who were provided with a loaner device are given the opportunity to purchase the loaner device at the end of the school year.

To ensure all students are ready for a possible move to remote learning, **based on need, each school will identify students** who would benefit from the opportunity to have the school division provide home internet access through BELL/MTS.

Parents/caregivers are advised to contact the school for support.

Protocol for Shared Equipment

Wherever possible, schools will limit the use of shared resources. When this is not possible, adequate, and appropriate cleaning will be required. To support these practices, your child's teacher will:

- Carefully assess the classroom layout and shared spaces
- Remove materials that are harder to clean and sanitize
- Consider how to offer materials for individual use
- Have students bring their own equipment if possible
- Have a system for returning materials that allows additional time out of circulation
- Create schedules that allow for social distancing and cleaning between use
- Clean following specific disinfecting guidelines

Well-Being, Wellness & Supports Checks

Student mental health and well-being is a core element of the re-opening planning. It is foundational in ensuring a return to a welcoming environment that supports learning. To this end, RETSD schools will utilize the expertise of parents/caregivers as it relates to their own children. Parents and caregivers know their children the best. To support all the adults supporting children, schools will consider these points:

- Communicate that no one has all of the answers about the impact of the pandemic, but that as a team, we can steer through the pandemic together
- Acknowledge that we need collaboration from adults to support the social-emotional impact of the pandemic on students
- Be open to the concept that students are returning to school with the weight of experiences that they might not have shared yet
- Understand that students will only be as healthy as the adults around them
- Collaborate with parents/caregivers as a coordinated system that gives students hope

As adults we need to remember that children want to be heard. They do not need detailed information about events, but they do need to talk about their feelings. Let them know they can ask questions. We should answer questions honestly, but make sure that the information is suitable for their age level. If answers are not known, it is okay to say so and to look for resources together that can answer their questions.

Remember that children are often listening when others are talking about COVID-19. Adults should consider this and minimize discussions of COVID-19 that are not related to the specific setting. It is important for adults to correct any misinformation as they become aware of it.

We all need to reassure children that our schools are safe for children when they are consistently following preventative practices, including environmental cleaning, frequent hand hygiene, and routine screening.

Parent and student resources can be found at:

UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/supporting-your-childs-mental-health-during-covid-19-school-return>

World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/healthy-parenting/english-tip-6-covid-19-parenting.pdf?sfvrsn=232558c1_8

Kids Help Phone: <https://kidshelpphone.ca/>

Stress Hacks at: <https://stresshacks.ca/>

COMMUNICATION

Microsoft Teams

All RETSD schools use Microsoft Teams as our teaching, learning and communication platform. Your child's teacher will be working, in the first weeks, to ensure that your child can access Teams so that should schools move to remote learning, your child is positioned to continue their learning. Parent information on supporting your child with Teams is forthcoming and will be shared shortly.

Stay Informed

RETSD and your child's school are committed to keeping the community informed and engaged. At a divisional level, several structures have been established to support this communication:

Divisional Website—The RETSD divisional website has a section for COVID-19 updates that is clearly visible and regularly updated with any communication and documents. Parents are referred to the website through school communication.

<https://www.retsd.mb.ca>

Divisional Social Media Accounts—Current information is provided in a timely manner through Twitter and Facebook.

<https://twitter.com/RETSDschools>

<https://www.facebook.com/retsdb>

Divisional Letters—Regular information is provided to all families through letters that are branded with the divisional letterhead and signed by the Superintendent. These letters are distributed through the schools electronically or hard copies can be provided to families who request/require them.

Two-way communication—Parents and community members can provide feedback/questions/comments through the division or school websites Contact Us feature, Twitter and Facebook comments, regular surveys, through the school administrator and/or their elected school trustee.

At a school level, the following structures support communication:

- School websites
- School social media
- School letters
- School telephone dialers
- Teacher/family communication

Concern Protocol

Your child’s school will always try to make the learning experience a positive, safe and happy one for its students. However, if you have a concern or an issue, please don’t hesitate to let the school know. Open communication between home and school is very important to us. In the event you have a concern, please follow the process below:

- a. Talk to the person most directly involved—your child’s teacher. If you must leave a message, provide a day and evening phone number where the teacher can reach you.
- b. If talking to the teacher doesn’t resolve the issue, talk to the principal.
- c. If you’ve talked to the principal, but the issue has not been resolved over a period of time, call the superintendent’s department at 204.667.7130 or email communications@retsd.mb.ca.
- d. If you disagree with the decision of the superintendent’s department, you can make an appeal in writing to the board of trustees.

Policy KE–Concern Protocol: <https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/KE.pdf>

Policy KE-R–Concerns and Complaints Process: <https://www.retsd.mb.ca/yourretsd/Policies/Documents/KE-R.pdf>

creating student success

589 Roch St., Winnipeg, MB R2K 2P7 | Tel: 204.667.7130 | Fax: 204.661.5618 www.retsd.mb.ca
For questions and comments, please contact the RETSD communications department. ©2020

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