The River East Transcona Division Plan can be found at Return to School Plan. As the COVID-19 situation is evolving, ensure to visit up-to-date information and resources from the Manitoba Government and RETSD webpage regarding current public health guidance and COVID-19 protocols for schools. https://manitoba.ca/covid19/restoring/rss-practice-guidance.html.

**RETURN TO SCHOOL**

*In-class learning will resume for students at Valley Gardens Middle School on September 8, 2020.* School attendance is mandatory for children aged 7 to 18 in Manitoba. All students are expected to participate fully in learning, even when remote learning is required. All Students in grades 6, 7, 8 will be in class full days, 5 days per week.


Division level remote learning will be in place for students who have been medically advised not to return to in-class learning due to COVID-related risk factors.

**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 to Valley Gardens 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, schools 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 must 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, Valley Gardens will have an identified space to isolate students who display COVID-19 symptoms.

**Facemasks/Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Students in grades 6-8 are required to wear a facemask when physical distancing is not possible and while in common areas in the school setting (unless there are medical issues or required accommodations that prevent the student from wearing a mask).

[https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/prepareandprevent.html](https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/prepareandprevent.html)

Students in grades 6-8 will be provided with masks if they do not have one. All Staff are required to wear a mask when physical distancing is not possible and while in common areas in the school setting. As the public health situation evolves, this may change. Please see [https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html](https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html) for mask wearing information.

**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 case

**Symptom Screening**

Screen for symptoms every morning. If your child has COVID-19 or flu related symptoms, keep them at home.

An up-to-date list of symptoms can be found at:

[https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/about.html](https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/about.html)
Valley Gardens Middle School Return to In-Class Learning Plan- September 2020

Use the [Self-Assessment tool](#) to check if your child should be tested for COVID-19. Call Health Links at 204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 if you notice symptoms or if you need more information.

All visitors (e.g.: parents/caregivers, divisional staff) are required to wear a mask upon entering the building.

**Individuals with Symptoms**

If symptoms develop while at school, the student will be isolated or kept 2 metres in distance away from others. A space will be designated in the school. The student will be provided with a medical facemask (unless there are safety issues that prevent that person from wearing a mask).

Parents and/or caregivers will be notified to come pick up their child immediately. Make sure the school has your current contact information and a back up to call in case you can not be reached.

Students with symptoms are advised to immediately isolate and consult [Health Links – Info Santé](#) or their health-care provider. Those with symptoms should be tested. If the test is negative for COVID-19, they can return 24 hours after symptoms resolve. If individuals do not get tested, they should isolate for 14 days from symptom onset, and they may return if symptoms have resolved at that time.

A chronic stable cough, sneeze, runny nose or nasal congestion that is unchanged and clearly linked to a known medical condition such as asthma or allergies, is not an absolute requirement for exclusion. Changing or worsening of chronic symptoms require isolation and contacting Health Links – Info Santé. Staff will exercise judgment based on the symptoms, but when in doubt, err on the side of caution by isolating the child and advising the parent or caregiver to contact Health Links – Info Santé or their health-care provider.

**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 and 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.

**Hand Hygiene**

Hand Sanitizer and hand cleaning solutions will be available at access points throughout the school and in classrooms. Staff and students will clean their hands frequently at the following times:

- at the start of the day and before going home
- after going to the washroom
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- before preparing food
- before and after eating
- after getting hands dirty
- after wiping noses or handling dirty tissues
- after coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose
- before and after putting on and taking off a mask
- after cleaning tasks (staff)

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:

- 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

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 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 Valley Gardens will 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.

Cohorts involve keeping groups of students (e.g. classes) together and avoiding interactions with other groups. Physical distancing within the cohort is required to the greatest extent possible. Whenever possible, students and staff will remain together with the same cohort throughout the day, including lunch breaks and recess. Schedules and transitions will be staggered to reduce mixing cohorts in shared spaces (such as hallways and the gym).
The movement of cohorts will be minimized when possible, teachers and staff will move between classrooms instead of students. Daily records will include names of students, staff and visitors who were in contact with each cohort.

Physical Distancing
Two metre physical distancing is required to the greatest extent possible. Signage and floor markings will indicate where lines form and where to stand both inside and outside of the school building. It is recommended that learning will take place outdoors as much as possible.

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

Drop-off Traffic at Schools
Due to the anticipated higher traffic at drop-off and pick-up at schools, schools it is imperative that everybody adheres to the Drop off and Go practices in place. No vehicles are to enter the parking lot between 8:30 – 9:30 AM or between 3:00 – 4:00 PM.

Bus 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
- Suspending our Fee-for-Service will be suspended
- Extending the minimum walk zone boundary from 1.6 kilometres to 2.5 kilometres. Only students living outside the walk zone boundary will be eligible for school bus transportation until further notice.

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.
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

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 throughout the day. Additionally, soap and water are readily available throughout the schools. Common spaces are subject to more frequent cleaning by school custodial staff. 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.

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 Avenue, Winnipeg MB, R3E 3J5, Phone: 204.945.8138
Email: homeschooling@gov.mb.ca
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Timetable
Literacy, Numeracy and Positive Mental Health Literacy will make up the Core curriculum and will be prioritized for the return to in-class learning for the month of September. Timetables will be adjusted to reflect the shift in programming that will have students focus for the month of September on Literacy, Numeracy and Positive Mental Health Literacy. Teachers will move classrooms while the students remain, for the most part, in their designated Homeroom within their cohort.

Grade 6 Cohorts – Starts September 8th

6A & 6B - Ms. Nanka, Ms. Sharpe, Mr. Derksen
6C & 6D – Ms. Ward, Ms. Lang, Ms. Asmundson
6E & 6F – Ms. Stromberg, Ms. Dawes, Mr. Lischka
Resource Teacher Support for all grade 6 cohorts is Mr. Staples

Grade 7 Cohorts – Starts September 8th

7A / 7B / 7C – Ms. Baluk, Ms. Brar, Ms. Klassen, Mr. Ivison
7D / 7E / 7F – Ms. Kawaler, Ms. Edwards, Teacher TBA, Mr. Buckinx
Resource Teacher Support for all grade 7 cohorts: Ms. Aronson, Ms. Bilenky, Mr. Klassen, Ms. McClarty

Grade 8 Cohorts – Starts September 8th

8A / 8B / 8C – Ms. Sookermany, Ms. Schaefer, Mr. Deviet, Mr. Del Pino
8D / 8E / 8F – Mr. Nevasca, Mr. Wallace, Ms. McLeod, Ms. Janzen
Resource Teacher Support for all grade 8 cohorts: Mr. Armstrong, Ms. Ennis

Homeroom teachers 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 once those classes are scheduled to being in October. Due to the multi-layers within timetabling it is important to note that Student initiated timetable changes will not be possible.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>ABC Cohort</th>
<th>DEF Cohort</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gather</td>
<td>8:40 AM</td>
<td>8:50 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohort Teachers will be outside with Students</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cohort Teachers will be outside with Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entry</td>
<td>8:50 AM</td>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At each entry time, cohort teachers will bring classrooms into the building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 1</td>
<td>8:50 – 10:15</td>
<td>9:00 – 10:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Emotional Learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>10:15 – 11:40</td>
<td>10:15 – 11:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>11:40 – 12:35</td>
<td>11:40 – 12:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outside first half</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eat in cohort rooms first half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat in cohort room second half</td>
<td></td>
<td>Outside second half</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>12:35 – 2:00</td>
<td>12:35 – 2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:20</td>
<td>2:00 – 3:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Emotional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers will escort classes out of the building</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are expected to leave property immediately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staggered Entry / Exit Plan
To maintain safety and to adhere to social distancing recommendations, we 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.
Lunch Hour
Lunch hour will also be staggered. ABC cohorts will be outside for first half of lunch, in a designated area with supervision. They will return to their cohort classrooms to eat during second half of lunch.
DEF cohorts will eat in their cohort classrooms first half of lunch and will then proceed to designated areas, with supervision, for second half of lunch.
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Mental Health and Well-Being
Mental health literacy through the focused use of effective mental health strategies in the school environment to help create the conditions for student success and well-being. Continued Schoolwide focus on Self-Regulation and Active Learning; which we believe will support students by teaching positive mental health strategies aimed at helping students manage their Energy, Thinking, Moods & Feelings, Connections with others and Understanding of others. Data collection from 2019-2020 showed that through Interactive Start and work within Self-Regulation students demonstrated; Increased attendance, levels of motivation and engagement Reduced anxiety and improvement in abilities to self-regulate and co-regulate with students and staff, Growth in imaginative play, creativity and innovation Improved relationships between students - students and between students - staff

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

Physical Education / Music / Art / Drama
Physical education classes will be paused for the month of September, students will have opportunities for daily physical activity within their Cohorts, students will continue with necessary modifications for physical distancing. When possible, it is likely that this will occur outside.

After reviewing the Manitoba High School Athletics Association return to School Sport Plan, the division is delaying the start of all extra-curricular sport. This will include any cross cohort practices or activity as well as any practices or competition outside of the school day.

Focus will be on ensuring that schools are open for students and staff, to support families in feeling confident with new routines. We will need to ensure that all sport can adhere to provincial outlined health expectations. We will continue to dialogue how we can address
cohorting, the use of volunteer coaches, the use of changerooms and the extension of the school day.

For the resumption of league play to occur, the governing sports organizations must have received return to play approval from public health. See Manitoba's Restoring Safe Services Sports Guidelines.
https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/sports-guidelines.html

Band and Guitar
Band and guitar programs will be paused for the month of September. During this allocated instructional time, students will receive additional numeracy, literacy support, and mental health programming. Once Music programming starts up in October it will follow all public health and education advice. 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.
https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/restoring/music-guidelines.html

Art and Drama
Art and Drama programs will be paused for the month of September. During this allocated instructional time, students will receive learning opportunities that will integrate Art/Drama perspectives within Cohort teaching and learning lessons.

Applied Arts: Home Economics, Graphics, Clothing, Woodworking
Applied Arts programs will be paused for the month of September (e.g.: Home Economics, Graphics, Woodworking, Clothing). Alternative programming will be offered during this instructional time focused around Literacy, Numeracy and Mental Health & Wellness.

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 for school entry. 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 remain in their assigned areas at all times.
- Canteen access: Will be suspended until further notice. These changes are being made to support the additional physical distancing measures required.
- Microwaves will not be available for use, students are to bring lunch that will not require their use.
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- Lunch Break will be staggered throughout the day, students will be kept together with their class or cohort during these breaks.

Breakfast Program will continue in a modified manner. Breakfast Program will not run before the school day starts, a mobile cart with individually wrapped food items will visit classrooms during first period to provide nourishment for those students in need. A no-sharing practice will be adopted during this period.

Shared/Common Spaces
Entrances and Exits will be assigned to student groups (e.g. cohorts, grade levels, student names) to a maximum of 75 students per entry/exit time.
If cohorts are together in a larger space, 4 metres of distance will be maintained between each cohort. Cohorts of 75 in common areas (e.g.: allowing 3 classroom cohorts sharing an outdoor play area) will be considered in the future. At this time, class cohorts will remain 4 metres apart.
Washrooms will be disinfected regularly. Washroom access will be staggered to the greatest extent possible.
Water fountains are closed. Students are to bring personal water bottles to school each day.
Students are encouraged to use the Water Refill Station as needed throughout the day.
School Library: School libraries will be closed for the first four 6-day cycles in September.

Locker Breaks
Lockers: Will be suspended until further notice. Students will store their backpacks in their Homeroom classroom throughout the school day. Students will not leave any personal belongings in their Homeroom classrooms, all personal belongings will travel home with the student each day.
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.

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.

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

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. These can be found at:
https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/support/supports_non_distance.html
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

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:

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
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- Separate containers of physical education equipment for each cohort which will be cleaned regularly
- Zones will be marked outside to manage group sizes and to avoid contact among groups

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:
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
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learning. Parent information on supporting your child with Teams is forthcoming and will be shared shortly.

Stay Informed
RETSID 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/retsd

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
The Staff at Valley Gardens will always try to make the learning experience a positive, safe and happy one for all of our 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:
• 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.
• If talking to the teacher doesn’t resolve the issue, talk to the principal.
• 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.

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-R–Concerns and Complaints Process: