

Aberdeen Elementary School

Restart Q and A



Below is a list of common questions that have been asked by parents/guardians. We hope that this helps:)

Can asymptomatic students and staff go to school if someone else in their household is sick?

Asymptomatic students and staff can still go to school if someone else in their household is sick unless someone from public health has stated otherwise. If someone has been diagnosed with COVID-19, public health will ask their household contacts to stay home and self-isolate.

Anyone who feels sick should consult the self-assessment tool, call 8-1-1, or consult their health care provider. Children do not need to stay home from school while another family member is awaiting COVID-19 test results.

What should staff and students do if they get sick while at home?

Use the self-assessment tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19> or call 8-1-1 to assess symptoms and determine if testing is required.

Those diagnosed with COVID-19 must be excluded from work and stay home as advised by public health. This exclusion is a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms, until symptoms improve, and the person no longer has a fever.

Parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they are assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19.

Schools do not need to notify students, parents, caregivers and staff if someone is diagnosed with COVID-19. Information about any potential or confirmed cases should be treated as confidential. All necessary notifications will be done by public health. (We follow the direction of Interior Health).

Who must stay at home, even if they are not sick?

If someone has travelled outside of Canada, they must self-isolate for 14 days upon return. Returning travelers who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during this time period should go for testing but will still be required to complete their 14 days of self-isolation if they test negative. Those who test positive will be advised on further isolation by public health. If someone was told by public health or a health care provider that they are a close contact of a COVID-19 case, self-isolation is required for 14 days from the day of last contact.

What should happen if staff or students become sick while at school?

Staff should follow the plan created and approved by the Ministry of Health, found here in Appendix B. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf>)

<i>If a Student Develops Symptoms of COVID-19</i>	<i>If a Staff Member Develops Symptoms of COVID-19</i>
IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:	IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:
<p>Parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have resolved.</p>	<p>Staff must be excluded from work and stay home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have resolved.</p>
IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL:	IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK:
<p>Staff must take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area. 2. Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible. 3. Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth. 4. Provide the student with tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene. 5. Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene. 6. Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene. 7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas). 8. Contact the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input. <p>Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p>Staff should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p>If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others. 2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. 3. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up. 4. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas). 5. If concerned, contact the local public health unit to seek further input.
<p>If a student or staff member is assessed by their family physician or nurse practitioner and it is determined that they do NOT have COVID-19, they may return to school once symptoms resolve.</p>	

Should students or staff with seasonal allergies stay home?

Students and staff with seasonal allergies don't need to stay home. If the allergy symptoms are the same as they usually are during this time of year (e.g. itchy eyes, runny nose) and can be relieved with antihistamine or allergy medication, then no specific action is needed. If students or staff are unsure if the symptoms are related to allergies, they should stay at home and contact their health care provider, use the self-assessment tool at bc.thrive.health or call 8-1-1 to assess symptoms and determine if testing is required.

Are masks mandatory for students?

Non-medical masks are not mandatory for elementary school students due to the increased likelihood they will touch their face and eyes, as well as require assistance to properly put on and take off their mask (requiring increased close personal contact from school staff).

Masks will be optional for students to wear and encouraged in common areas where physical distancing is not possible. Each student will be provided with a mask and mask hygiene and use will be discussed and taught in the classrooms. The use of masks in schools will continue to evolve as we learn more.

Are staff members required to wear masks?

Non-medical masks are required to be used in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their learning group or household. Staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a nonmedical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., itinerant teachers/specialists interacting with multiple learning groups). Staff can also wear a mask, a face covering or a face shield within their classroom or learning group if that is their personal preference.

Aberdeen Staff who work in multiple cohorts (support staff, prep teachers, resource teachers, etc.) will be required to wear a mask if physical distance is not possible.

Is it safe for students to play together on the playground?

Playgrounds are a safe environment for students to play together. Focus will be more on minimizing physical contact between each other rather than staying 2 meters apart. No cleaning or disinfection is required for playground structures. All students should practice hand hygiene before and after play. Cohorts of children will be playing together and will be regularly reminded to maintain physical distance. Students will be playing in assigned areas outside during recess and lunch periods.

Is it safe to share books and other paper documents?

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

Can students share sports equipment?

Yes, students can share sports equipment. However, students should wash their hands before and after play.

Can friends or siblings play together at school if they are in different cohorts?

Students will remain in their cohorts during recess and lunch times. Our students can socialize with a friend or sibling in a different cohort only when playing outside in their designated area and only if their friend/sibling is designated to the same play area. Students will also be requested to maintain physical distance as appropriate while playing outside. To help against the fight against COVID, staff will have students wash their hands both before and after playing outside.

Will parents be permitted to drop things off (ex. lunches) for their children?

Please call the school and let us know you will be dropping something off. After school has begun, the main school entrance will be the only entrance parents will be allowed to use. This is one area where we will continue to monitor to find the best practice for the school.

Are parents still required to walk each child to their classroom for drop off?

No. Although this was the process in May/June, the expectation is that parents and caregivers will complete the daily health screening at home and keep their child home if they have symptoms. Children can walk to their classrooms on their own (as per what families would do in a more typical routine). Please note, that the health check form required by all students for the first day at school takes the place of verbally needing to ask students on a daily basis. We do request that students arrive and are picked up as close to their arrival/pick up time as possible.

How will daycare providers pick up and drop off?

Daycare providers will drop off and pick up as they would in a typical year. ----unsure if this is necessary here

How will bus students be supervised?

Before school: Students will wait outside and maintain physical distance until they are able to enter their classrooms.

After school: Unless it is a thoroughly rainy day, students will meet at the play court and check in with the CEA supervisor. Students will be required to maintain physical distance. On rainy days, students will be assigned to the gym to wait for the bus and check in with the CEA supervisor.

Will personal hand sanitizers be permitted?

Yes. But please ensure your child has practiced the safe use of such products (limited scent or scent-free products only) and understands that this is something to be used responsibly. And of course, these are not to be shared. If you are sending in one with your child, please ensure it is labelled with your child's name.

How does the recess and lunch playtimes work?

Due to our large and varied play areas, all students will be outside at the same time. However, they will be only able to play in designated play areas. Students will only be allowed to play with students in their assigned area and must maintain physical distance from students who are from outside their cohort.

Outside Zones	
Zone Number	Area Outside
1	Playground
2	Lower Soccer Field
3	Upper Field & Tarmac
4	Diamond, Tetherball, Four Square

Will fun activities still occur for students?

We completely understand that these events are a key part of a school community but activities such as PAC events, and assemblies are on hold right now. We will continue to find opportunities to create fun ways to connect as a community while staying in the learning cohorts. Most extracurricular activities including sports, arts and special interest clubs can only occur if physical distance can be maintained between members of different cohorts or if reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same learning group.

Small gatherings, assemblies and concerts can only occur within a cohort. Large gatherings such as whole school assemblies and concerts will be occurring virtually.

All inter-school events including such things as cross-country running, volleyball and basketball will not occur at this time.

How are the cohorts determined? How many cohorts per grade? Why are students being placed in cohorts/learning groups?

We have tried to keep similar grade classes together in cohorts. As we have variables to work with including the size of the class and the number of the students in the grade (along with a maximum of 60 people including staff), we are not able to have all students from one grade in one cohort. Some cohorts will include only one grade level but others may include two grade levels (or three for those that include Montessori students). In addition to minimizing physical contact with others, cohorts provide a range of benefits for students including more in-class learning time, increased peer interaction and support, and decreased feelings of isolation.

If parents want to send masks, how many should they send?

At this time, parents can send a mask (if they choose). Students will have a mask that will be given to them at school as well. As a staff, we will be discussing teaching and care of the masks so this can be done in the safest manner possible.

Is Distributed Learning (DL) an option?

Yes. Please check out @KOOL as they offer Distributed Learning which involves learning online. We understand that parents choosing this option may have concerns regarding keeping their child(ren) connected to us here at Aberdeen. We are working on plans to still keep connected to all of our students and their families throughout this school year.

Will my child lose their spot at Aberdeen?

No. Your child's spot will be held for this year awaiting their return next September. Even if your child is on a waiting list, your spot on the list will be held.

Will the school campus be closed?

- Families are encouraged to promptly leave the campus in a timely fashion after school so that students are not able to mingle among other cohort students. Parents/Guardians accessing the school will need to contact the office to set up an appointment (250 372 5844).

What will the flow of traffic be inside and outside the school?

- Students are expected to enter and exit the school from designated classroom access points only.
- Traffic inside the school will be minimalized.
- The District has provided arrows and floor markers to indicate traffic flow and to encourage physical distancing among staff and students.

Will there be a blended model like there was in May/June for our child(ren) to access?

No. But we want to work with our families to stay connected and be supportive. We will continue to include you in our regular newsletters and we will be encouraging our students to still participate in School Spirit days (i.e. if you send us photos we will put them up on our classroom bulletin board ☺).

How will cohorts work at Aberdeen Elementary?

Classes will be placed in cohorts that cannot be any larger than 60 – this includes staff and students. There are no exceptions to this. Cohorts will largely be together only outside during recess and lunch times. More often than not, students will learn in their own class. Cohorts will be assigned specific play spaces during recess and lunch and will not be able to move between cohorts. Before school students are to line-up at their classroom door and to not mingle or play on the playground where other cohort students may be. After school, students are to leave immediately for home, and again, not stay to play on the playground where other cohort students may be.

How are personal items being stored and will lockers be used this year?

At this point, lockers will not be used. Staff are working on ways to store personal items within the classrooms.

Can we expect hand cleaning/sanitizing stations are being set up in each classroom and around the school?

The vast majority of our classrooms have sinks and sanitizing stations will be available in those rooms that do not have a sink. There will not be hand sanitizing stations set up in addition to the classroom and bathroom sinks. Washing hands with soap is the #1 way of limiting the transmission of germs of any kind. Staff will review the expectations that were in place in the Spring and it is expected that students will wash their hands before and after transition times i.e. going outside for recess or lunch; going to music or library.

Will students be entering from common entry points or individual classroom ones?

We are requiring classes with outside doors to use these instead of common entrance doors so that each class has their own separate entrance and exit to help out with spacing. Classrooms without outside entry points have clearly marked and spaced entry areas. A map of these entry points is on our school website. Staff are being encouraged to take classes outside and do outside learning as much as possible.

How will moving throughout the schoolwork for each class on a daily basis?

Classes will be moving through the school only for scheduled times such as gym, music, library. All students are able to wear masks if that is where their comfort is at all times. Staff who move between cohorts must wear masks if they are not able to maintain physical distance from other staff or students.

Are the grade 6 & 7's going to be wearing masks in common areas or areas where physically distancing cannot take place since they fall in the 10+ year old category?

Grade 6 & 7's will be encouraged to wear masks in common areas i.e. when they are outside their cohort. However, there will be exceptions as some students may have different health concerns in which wearing masks is not the safe way to go. All students will be provided 2 non-medical masks.

How are school supplies in the classroom going to work this year as past years have included shared supplies amongst the children in the class?

Students will be strongly encouraged to not share their supplies and be extra responsible in keeping their supplies in their pencil boxes. Regularly cleaning of high touch surfaces (door knobs, desks, etc.) will be occurring throughout the day.

Will I be able to volunteer in my child's class/in the school?

Unfortunately, no. We need to limit the number of people in the building to ensure the health and safety of our students and staff.