



Education

Deputy Minister

Room 162, Legislative Building, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3C 0V8

October 22, 2020

To: Superintendents of School Divisions
Principals of Independent Schools

Dear Colleagues:

Pandemic response planning for schools has focused on the safety and health of students, staff, and families while ensuring reasonable measures are in place to minimize the risk of transmission and exposure to the virus in school settings.

With six weeks of experience behind us, and in the face of increasing cases in some regions of the province, we can reflect on the effectiveness of the policies, processes, and public health measures that have been implemented, and apply the following learnings to our ongoing planning and decision-making:

- There has been minimal school-level transmission among the K–12 schools with confirmed cases.
- Cohorts and other public health measures have been effective in mitigating the risk of transmission and informing contact tracing.
- Schools and administrators have implemented the public health measures consistently and have handled confirmed cases in schools with responsiveness, confidence, and a great deal of professionalism.

As of Monday, October 26, 2020, schools in the Winnipeg Metro Region, Northern Health Region, and in Churchill will be operating in the Restricted level (Orange) of the #RestartMB Pandemic Response System. While minimal transmission is occurring in schools at this point, these additional public health measures are critical to ensure that the schools respond to the current risks and conditions given rising community transmission.

Schools in Restricted level (Orange) must implement the measures outlined in this letter. Manitoba Education and public health officials continue to monitor the situation closely and will continue to advise if additional measures are warranted and/or when the Pandemic Response System level returns to Caution level (Yellow).

Based on the experience to date and public health advice, the following measures will be in place for schools under the Restricted level (Orange):

- Schools must ensure two metres of physical distancing to the greatest extent possible, and adjust classroom space as necessary; excess furniture must be removed from classrooms to create additional space; other spaces within schools must be repurposed to accommodate more distancing (e.g., multipurpose rooms, empty rooms, shared spaces, common areas, and libraries).
- Extracurricular activities are only permitted if all learning and distancing requirements have been met. If these activities continue, established guidelines must be followed and, in the case of sports, participants should maintain distance when not active.
- Teachers and staff who move across cohorts of students, including substitute teachers, are required to wear medical masks. Medical-grade disposable masks have been issued to all schools. N95 masks are not required.
- Indoor choir and the use of wind instruments are not permitted.
- All field trips must be postponed or cancelled.
- Blended learning (in-class and online) for grades 9–12 where distancing cannot be achieved will continue as per status quo.
- K–8 students may be offered a temporary remote learning option for the duration of the Restricted level (Orange).
- All other public health measures are still in effect.

Thank you once again for your commitment to keeping schools open, ensuring learning continues for all, and responding to the evolving conditions.

Sincerely,



Dana Rudy
Deputy Minister
Manitoba Education

- c. Honourable Kelvin Goertzen, Minister of Education
Sarah Whiteford, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate and Education Services
Lynette Chartier, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, K–12 Education
Manitoba School Boards Association
Manitoba Teacher's Society
Manitoba Association of School Superintendents
Manitoba Association of School Business Officials
Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools
Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre
Manitoba First Nations School System