

November 26th, 2020

Dear Parents:

We hope this letter finds you and your families well. As the COVID-19 situation changes in the province, we are updating protocols in schools throughout Prairie South and wanted to take the opportunity to communicate with you today.

There has been a change in direction provincially related to mask protocol in schools. Beginning Monday, November 30th all students and staff in Prairie South will need to be masked at all times when they are in school or on the school bus unless they are eating or drinking. This isn't a significant change for some of our students, however this will be the first time that masks are required in all situations for PreK to 3 students and for all students while in the gymnasium. We have attached the updated mask protocol for your review. This protocol will be in place until the Christmas break, and we will re-evaluate this in time for the start of school in 2021.

To date we have had 19 positive cases in total in our schools and we've had some parent inquiries about what the process looks like when we have a positive case. When a student or staff member tests positive for COVID, we receive notice from Public Health at the school and school division at the same time. The school principal and superintendent work together to provide contact tracing documentation to Public Health, and staff from the Saskatchewan Health Authority begin to contact parents of students who might be considered close contacts. The classroom teacher is interviewed by Public Health and will provide information about mask compliance and student movement in the classroom.

When a positive case is identified, there are 4 ways that parents might receive information:

- If your child is determined to be a **close contact** and needs to self-isolate for a period of time, you will be called by Public Health directly.
- Depending on the cohort, other students may be designated as **contacts**, and will also need to self-isolate. When a student is identified as a contact, the school will notify parents.
- Parents with children in the same cohort(s) as the positive case are notified by letter from Prairie South that a case has been identified in that cohort.
- All parents in the school will receive a general letter from the school principal.

Everyone in Saskatchewan is currently self-monitoring, so the only people who need to do something different are those who are COVID positive or those who are identified as contacts or close contacts. We have learned that every instance is unique in some way, but this general process has happened consistently in the cases we have had until now.

We know this has been a stressful time for families and staff but a break for Christmas is just over the horizon. We'll figure out 2021 together when it arrives!

Thank you,



Anthony D. (Tony) Baldwin
Director of Education



Robert Bachmann
Chair, Board of Education

Prairie South Schools Mask Protocol Updated 30 November 2020

Preamble

This update to the Prairie South mask protocol is based on information received from the Government of Saskatchewan, the Saskatchewan Health Authority, local Public Health staff and a review of safety process compliance.

Continuing with students in cohorts, hand hygiene, cleaning and limited physical contact are critical elements of school safety in 2020-2021 regardless of mask protocol. Mask protocol represents a minimum expectation – visitors, staff and students may mask in other circumstances.

For the purpose of this protocol, only non-medical and cloth masks that fully cover the face from below the chin to the bridge of the nose are allowable. “Gaiter” masks, bandanas and hard plastic masks are not acceptable.

Protocol

Group	Mask Protocol
Grades PreK -12 Students	Masks are required in all classrooms and other learning spaces including gymnasiums, during indoor transitions (hallways, bathroom visits, etc.) and on the school bus. Teachers may choose to offer “mask breaks” when all present in the classroom are working independently at their desks.
All School Staff	Masks are required in all classrooms when students or other staff are present and during indoor transitions (hallways, bathroom visits, etc.).
Visitors to the School	Masks are required at all times.
Outdoors	Masks are not required outdoors.

Exemptions

1. In circumstances where students of any age require additional support, PPE may be used at the discretion of the student support team planning for that student.
2. Students or staff with a medical condition that makes mask use inappropriate or unsafe may be exempt from this protocol with written permission from their doctor.
3. In the case of Practical and Applied Arts curricular spaces masks are required unless the use of a mask creates a safety hazard.