



Aurora Middle School staff are excited to welcome you back for the 2020-2021 school year! We know you have a ton of questions about what re-entry looks like, so we've compiled some information specific to AMS!

Here's what you need to know about returning to school:

## Staggered Entry

We want to help students get oriented to the new routines and safety precautions and we can give your child more attention and support by having only half the students attend for our first two orientation days. Last names A through J will attend on Tuesday September 1 and last names K through Z on Wednesday September 2. All students can return to school on Thursday. There's lots of changes and this will help us practice what distancing and safety routines will look like in your child's class and moving through the building. One particularly disheartening piece is that we will not be able to have all our parents enter the school to bring their child and their school supplies into the building to their classrooms on the first day. *The exception will be with our Grade 4 parents.* We originally planned to have no parents on these days, but we believe the staggered start will allow us to accommodate our Grade 4 parents; we know the transition to middle school can be distressing for parents of our Grade 4s, so if a Grade 4 parent is masked and sanitizes their hands upon entry, they can bring their child to their teacher. You will not be able to stay in the classroom because we must avoid congestion. Please avoid touching surfaces where possible, and recognize there will be other parents, and physical distancing still applies even while masked. If you are unable to drop off your Grade 4 student in person, note that we will have many caring staff assigned to safely escort your child to their classroom where the teacher will help them get organized and oriented. We apologize that we cannot accommodate this for all parents due to concerns over congestion in hallways and classrooms. This is not the transition we would hope for, but please be mindful that our precautions are in place for the safety of all students and staff.



### SELF-SCREENING FOR COVID-19

PARENTS, GUARDIANS, AND STUDENTS MUST USE THIS SCREENING TOOL DAILY TO DECIDE IF THE STUDENT SHOULD ATTEND SCHOOL

Does the attendee have any new onset (or worsening) of any of the following symptoms?		
• Fever	YES	NO
• Cough	YES	NO
• Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	YES	NO
• Sore throat	YES	NO
• Chills	YES	NO
• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
• Runny nose/nasal congestion	YES	NO
• Feeling unwell/fatigued	YES	NO
• Nausea/vomiting/diarrhea	YES	NO
• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
• Muscle/joint aches	YES	NO
• Headache	YES	NO
• Conjunctivitis (commonly known as pink eye)	YES	NO
Has the attendee travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
Has the attendee had close contact* with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
Has the attendee had close contact with a symptomatic** close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	YES	NO

## Screening

Alberta Health Services has provided a self screening tool for all schools to use and it can be found at <https://www.nlpsab.ca/download/292274> . Parents do not need to submit any paper copies of screenings, but should go through the checklist on a daily basis before sending your child to school.

Send your child to school only if they are healthy and exhibit no signs of illness and pass the screening tool's questionnaire. It is absolutely essential to have a pickup plan for your child in the case they begin to exhibit any of the listed symptoms during the school day. Students will be removed from class and isolated with a caring staff member until the parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact can pick up your child. Under no circumstances will your child be permitted to ride the bus home, so a child should never be sent to school without a pickup plan in place. Confirm your emergency contact information with the school, and also inform these contacts that they may be required to pick up your child.

**PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS** All pre-existing illness or health conditions must be reported to the school prior to the start of the 2020-2021 school year. If a student with pre-existing illness or health conditions is exhibiting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 they will be required not to come to school until they have been tested for COVID-19 and received a negative test result. If the result is negative, the student can return to school and does not need to isolate unless the symptoms worsen or new symptoms develop.

**STUDENTS WITH SYMPTOMS** You are legally required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days if you have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition. The mandatory isolation period is 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer.

**TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19** You are legally required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days if you have tested positive for COVID-19. Isolation period is for 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer. You will be required to show proof of a negative test result prior to returning to a school building.

**HAVE SYMPTOMS BUT**

**TESTED NEGATIVE FOR COVID-19** If you tested negative and have known exposure to COVID-19, you are legally required to isolate for 14 days. If you tested negative and have no known exposure to the virus, you are not legally required to isolate. However, it is important to stay home until your symptoms resolve so that you do not transmit your illness to others. Unless you have a pre-existing illness or health condition, you will be required to be symptom free prior to returning to a school building.

**CLOSE CONTACTS OF CONFIRMED CASES** You are legally required to isolate for 14 days and monitor for symptoms if you are a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 (provides care, lives with or has close physical contact without appropriate use of personal protective equipment, or comes into direct contact with infectious body fluids). If you become sick with cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat during this time, you must isolate for an additional 10 days from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.



## Enhanced Cleaning and Sanitization

Aside from the deep cleaning and disinfecting protocols that will occur each evening, Aurora now has daytime custodial staff that will continuously sanitize high touch surfaces throughout the common spaces in the school. Similarly, all staff will ensure that sanitization of desks, chairs, and all equipment will take place before they are used by another student or staff member. Staff have already been working to remove all soft-surface equipment and furniture, as they would be difficult to clean and sanitize regularly. There will be hand-sanitizing stations in all classrooms at all entrances/exits, and everyone is required to use them when entering or exiting the building or moving from one area of the school to another. Part of our teaching process during orientation will be modeling and practicing physical distancing, how to wash and sanitize hands thoroughly, how to sanitize their own learning spaces, and how to properly put on and take off their masks -- all in an effort to keep them safe and healthy.

## Masking

Many of you have already seen messages about mandatory masking for all students from grade 4 through 12. Aurora Middle School requires all staff, students, and visitors to wear an appropriate mask when entering the building or moving through any common spaces where distancing cannot be maintained. We understand that masking is not a foolproof protection, but it is one of our many layers of protection for students and staff.

Students, staff, and visitors will remain masked wherever possible, but there are times when mask removal will be permitted, such as during times of physical exertion and when students are eating their lunch or snacks. We do have a supply of disposable non-medical masks for when the need arises, but there are many other more comfortable options we encourage you to explore. Students will need to wear their masks before boarding the bus on the first day and when entering the school each time, so please send your child with masks on the first day. We also encourage parents to provide a breathable bag (brown paper bags for example) for soiled masks to be placed until they can be taken home and laundered. See this video for more details:

<https://youtu.be/6MojzHFStNs> We understand masking can be uncomfortable for some, and it will be challenging for young children to get used to, but it is nonetheless an important layer of protection; with plenty of teaching and modeling and reminders from our staff, we will endeavour to keep everyone as safe as possible from the moment your child is dropped off at school until they head home for the day.





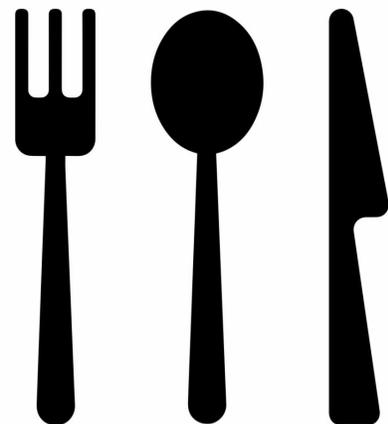
## **Drop Off and Pick-up**

To maintain as much physical distancing as possible while limiting the areas of exposure for your child, there will be some modifications to our practices around busing, dropping off, and picking up students. We ask that parents drop off their child at the cafeteria doors as in years past; however, students who arrive early will not be able to gather in any common space (like the cafeteria or library). Students will need to sanitize their hands and head directly to their homeroom class to await the start of the day; there, they should touch only their own desk area to avoid unnecessary contamination. Because of this, we ask parents avoid dropping off their child prior to 8:20am.

When students are entering the school off their bus, the Grade 4,5,6 students will enter through the main entrance front doors and the Grade 7 and 8 students will enter through the north side entrance doors (close to the caged hockey area). Students will proceed directly to their classroom and sanitize their hands. Pick-up at the end of the day will continue to be outside the cafeteria. Students will be released for their round of buses in staggered fashion; students must wait for their bus round in their class. All students will need to keep their masks on and line up for their bus and remain in the correct line; we cannot have students moving around during bus supervision this year for safety reasons. Students must remain masked until they arrive safely at home.

## **Food Service**

As we cannot safely distance with larger groups in the cafeteria, all students will eat in their homerooms. Please send your child with a lunch and snacks for the first several days of school. We are working with a service provider to re-open our canteen services, but there will be significantly enhanced protocols to ensure the breakfast program and food-for-purchase can continue safely. Parents will receive information through SchoolMessenger once these services resume. One example of a change to this will be that parents will not be able to send cash for last-minute purchases; parents will have to complete an order form in advance for purchased food and drinks and pay through SchoolCash Online. The school nutrition breakfast program will continue, though students will have to eat in their homeroom, as we try to maintain a single cohort for your child.

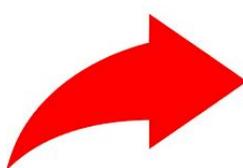


## Cohorting

Typically when we have heard the term 'COVID-19 cohort' – also known as bubbles, circles, or safe squads – we think of small groups of the same people who have been interacting regularly without staying 2 metres apart. Students will be 'cohorted' into homerooms, but will still be required to maintain distancing within those class cohorts, and masking when distancing cannot be maintained. Just like masking, it is not a foolproof measure on its own, but it will serve as another layer of protection for your child by limiting the number of people interacting with your child through the day. Maintaining such cohorts helps reduce the chance of getting sick, and makes it easier to track exposure if someone does get sick. Even within cohorts, we will not be sharing school supplies for safety reasons. Because AHS recommends only belonging to one core cohort, certain activities such as field trips, intramurals, athletic practices, and assemblies will be postponed for now. While we cannot control what our students and families are doing outside of school, we will do our best to maintain class cohorts as often as possible through the day. Grade cohorts on the playground and bus cohorts will still have students interacting with others from different classes, but masking and strict hand washing and sanitizing will be required in those situations. It is safest to limit the number of other cohorts as much as possible in order to reduce the risk of getting sick or spreading COVID-19. Your child's homeroom class will be the main cohort, and in grades 4 through 6, all instruction will be provided by that homeroom teacher. In grades 7 and 8, your child will remain in the same homeroom, and the teacher for each subject will come to them. The only exception for now will be our physical education programming, where the homeroom will move to the gym or outdoor spaces whenever possible for daily physical activity and PE programming. We are taking these steps to reduce the movement of students through the building during the day wherever possible.



## Moving Through The Building



Aside from mandatory use of the hand sanitizing stations when we enter/exit or move to other locations in the building, students will notice directional signage and tape dividing the hallways. This will help with social distancing and reduce congestion. Teachers in grade-alike teams are also staggering movements for recess and other breaks; for example, students will be sent to lockers in turns so that no two students with adjacent lockers need to be there at the same time.



## **Lockers**

At this time, lockers will be assigned but are only to be used for outerwear. All personal items, school supplies, and lunch kits will be stored in the homeroom to reduce the number of times students need to go to their lockers. When they do need to go to the lockers, teachers will have a system of sending out groups of students whose lockers are not adjacent to allow for appropriate distancing (even though they will also be masked). Because of space limitations, students are asked to keep personal belongings at home and bring only outerwear, school supplies, changes of masks, and lunch/snacks.

## **Visitors and Parents in the School**

With the expectation of our Grade 4 parents on their first orientation day, we ask that parents and other visitors do not enter the building without a scheduled appointment time. We strongly encourage you to communicate remotely (phone, email, etc) wherever possible. Phone 780 623 4129 if you require an in-person meeting with an administrator or your child's teacher. You will also notice that visitors to the school must complete the screening tool, be wearing an appropriate mask, sanitize hands, and complete the contact tracing sign-in forms at the front desk. Visitors may only go to the areas approved for their visit by school administration. The doors will remain locked throughout the day, so call the school when you arrive for your scheduled meeting time.



## **Leaving the School During the Day**

Consider Aurora Middle School a mostly-closed campus for safety purposes. We recognize that students sometimes have various appointments and must be picked up early or dropped off late. We require parents to communicate with the homeroom teacher and front desk staff when this is necessary, and we strongly encourage parents to avoid this practice wherever possible. Consider that reasons such as 'taking your child out to lunch' pose an unnecessary risk of increased exposure, and that we want to avoid increasing risk to our school community whenever possible.

## When a Child Gets Sick at School

If a student shows symptoms at school:

- student will wear a non-medical mask and be isolated in a separate room where they can be kept at least 2 metres away from others; the school has several 'infirmary' areas ready for students
- parents/guardians will be contacted to pick up the child immediately; it is imperative that you ensure the school has up-to-date contact information, including current emergency contact information; **you are required to have a pick-up plan each day; students will under no circumstances be permitted to ride the bus home.**

If the school has a confirmed positive case:

- the zone medical officer of health will work with school authorities to quickly:
  - identify when symptoms developed
  - identify and contact people who had close contact with the person who tested positive, offer testing, and set the isolation measures:
    - people are legally required to [isolate](#) for 14 days if they live with or are a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19
    - only people in direct contact with a confirmed case need to isolate
- each school authority will:
  - notify staff and parents if a case is confirmed at school
  - support students and staff to learn or work at home if they are required to self-isolate

If a school has 2 or more cases:

- the school would be considered to have an outbreak
- medical officers will assess the spread and exposure risk to determine if it affects multiple grades and areas, or is confined within close contacts of a confirmed case, and provide specific recommendations – an outbreak will not automatically lead to school closure
- For more information, go to the [Resource guide for COVID-19 outbreaks in schools](#) at <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/covid-19-in-school-k-12-resource-guide-for-schools-before-during-and-after-a-covid-19-outbreak>

Contact the school at 780 623 4129 if you have any other questions about re-entry!