

January 7, 2022

Dear CRPS Families:

As we prepare for in-person learning to resume on Monday, January 10, we have updated the [2021-22 Re-Entry Plan for CRPS Families](#). We are conscious of and concerned about the increased transmissibility of the COVID-19 Omicron variant and its impact on our staff and students. The current COVID-19 rates in the Bow Valley are amongst the highest in the province. As we have stated on multiple occasions, the safety of our students and staff is our top priority.

- CRPS has learned that our shipments of rapid tests and masks do not have a definite arrival date, but we are hoping for the first shipment next week.
- CRPS is already aware that a number of staff and students are either ill or in quarantine. These staff will not be available for work on Monday.
- CRPS is awaiting the update to Alberta Health Services (AHS) guidelines. We have been made aware they are recommending additional safety measures.
- CRPS has had numerous instances where students have been sent to school either with symptoms or having been exposed to a positive case (e.g., a sibling). CRPS respectfully requests that parents keep their children home from school if they have symptoms or if a family member has tested positive for COVID-19. Anyone coming to school sick or with symptoms **will be sent home**. Thank you for your diligence in this matter.

Therefore, due to the above noted factors we have made the decision to strengthen our safety protocols. The following safety protocols will be *temporarily* put into place:

- Mandatory masks for all staff and students K-12 are to be worn at all times, other than when eating or drinking when seated in a designated location.
- Masks (K-12) must be worn at all times on school buses.
- Extra-curricular activities and sports will be temporarily suspended.
- Singing and the playing of wind instruments will be temporarily suspended.
- Indoor field trips will be temporarily suspended.
- When using gymnasiums, students will be able to participate in low exertion activities and will remain masked.
- Foods classes will continue, but any food products will be taken home, and not consumed in class.
- Students will eat lunch in classrooms as a cohort.

- Students will remain on campus throughout the school day. However, K - 8 students (with parent permission) can choose to go home for lunch. High School students (9-12) may go home for lunch.
- Parents/guardians *will continue* to be allowed to enter a school with an appointment made 24 hours in advance (except in emergencies).
- Only essential visitors and essential volunteers *will continue* to be allowed in CRPS schools and/or district-owned facilities, which includes the Central Board Office.
- Support services for students (e.g., occupational therapy, speech language therapy) will continue to be provided by service providers.

These strengthened protocols will remain in place until such time as the risk of infection has decreased within our community. The CRPS administration team will have weekly meetings to monitor the situation and determine when a relaxation of the re-entry protocols are appropriate.

While we are aware these decisions will be challenging, the safety of our students, staff and families are dependent upon our actions now, and we remain steadfast in our resolve to keep our schools and classrooms open for in-person learning.

Earlier this school year, some classrooms and a school needed to close due to transmission of COVID-19 from activities which were run outside of the school division's purview. While it is not our decision whether or not these activities continue to run, they will most definitely impact the school division's ability to function. Our schools are only as safe as our communities. Therefore, we respectfully ask these organizations to temporarily suspend activities until we get through this challenging period.

Alberta Health Services no longer has the capacity to inform parents and students of COVID-19 infections in classes and schools, and outside of unique circumstances, cases at schools will no longer be investigated. Therefore, we would greatly appreciate notification from parents if a child has had a positive test result so we can make informed decisions to keep students and staff safe (e.g., temporarily moving a class to online learning).

We recognize there are many opinions and thoughts on the best way forward, and we are aware that some will be critical of our approach. However, we stand firm in our resolve to do our due diligence in keeping students and staff safe while keeping our students learning. In order that we may focus our attention on the ever-changing COVID-19 situation, we will not be responding to individual opinions expressed through various modes of communication. Our energies will be directed at effectively navigating these challenging times once again.

CRPS staff are looking forward to welcoming your children back to school next week. Thank you for working with us to ensure that our schools remain safe and open for students and staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher MacPhee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C".

Christopher MacPhee
Superintendent of Schools