

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Preamble

All Albertans have a responsibility to [help prevent the spread](#) of COVID-19. We all need to be careful, not only for ourselves but for people around us who are vulnerable.

Public health measures must continue in Alberta schools in order to mitigate the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak prior to it occurring. For more information on standard practice and general public health measures as they relate to school settings, see the [Guidance for school re-entry](#).

Alberta schools refer to public, separate, francophone, charter schools, independent (private) school authorities, independent (private) Early Childhood Services (ECS), and online/distance education programs from kindergarten through grade twelve. This information is relevant to all schools in Alberta including those on reserve, recognizing that First Nation schools on reserve are a federal responsibility. For questions or for reporting purposes, First Nation schools should contact their local Health Centre or Indigenous Services Canada-First Nations or Inuit Health Branch Environmental Public Health Services office in accordance with normal practice.

Purpose

This resource guide is designed to assist Alberta schools in addressing COVID-19 in the school setting. It is divided into sections describing what actions to take depending on the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a school setting.

Status	New Confirmed Cases in the School Population
Standard Practice	None
Symptoms Only	None
COVID-19 in the School	
Alert (1)	Yes (1 case)
Alert (2-4)*	Yes (2-4 cases)
Outbreak (5-9)*	Yes (5-9 cases)
Outbreak (10+)*	Yes (10+ cases)
[Alert/Outbreak] Investigation Over	None

**Note: An investigation is triggered beginning at Alert (2-4). When the number of cases reaches 5+, the investigation will be reported as an Outbreak (5-9) or Outbreak (10+) on the school status map. This does not change or affect any interventions related to the investigation. It is only an indication that there are either 5-9 cases or more than 10 cases related to the investigation.*

This document and the guidance within it is subject to change and will be updated as needed. Current information related to COVID-19 can be found at [Alberta.ca/covid19](https://alberta.ca/covid19).

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General Roles in an Outbreak Response

Alberta Health

Mandate: Alberta Health is responsible for developing and maintaining legislation, policies and guidelines that support the investigation of communicable diseases and outbreaks in Alberta.

Legislation: The *Public Health Act* (PHA) and associated regulations provide the legislative authority in Alberta to respond to outbreaks of communicable diseases.

Role in Alerts and Outbreaks: The role of Alberta Health varies depending on the communicable disease and the size of the alert/outbreak. Alberta Health works closely with Alberta Health Services (AHS), First Nations Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) and other partners to ensure the response is adapted to the outbreak.

Functions:

- Coordinating outbreak-related legislative actions with other Government of Alberta (GOA) ministries
- Providing expert medical, epidemiological and public health advice and/or assistance to partners
- Conducting provincial surveillance activities in collaboration with partners
- Monitoring activities of key partners pertaining to outbreak investigation
- Consulting with national and international public health experts and advisory bodies as required
- Working in coordination with key partners to develop appropriate intervention strategies
- Working in coordination with key partners to develop public health messaging
- Working in coordination with key partners to conduct human health risk assessments
- Leading, coordinating, and/or collaborating on public communications provincially
- Sharing outbreak-related data and information with provincial and federal partners.

Where appropriate, Alberta Health may provide guidance/direction to key partners with respect to certain aspects of the alert/outbreak investigation.

Alberta Health Services (AHS)

Mandate: AHS Public Health staff, including the Medical Officers of Health (MOH), Public Health Inspectors and Public Health Communicable Disease Nurses identify, investigate, manage and report notifiable diseases and communicable disease outbreaks in accordance with the PHA and pursuant regulations.

Role in Alerts and Outbreaks: AHS Public Health staff identify alerts/outbreaks in Alberta through investigation of notifiable diseases and other reports of illness and report these to Alberta Health. AHS has a provincial leadership role in outbreak investigation and response throughout Alberta, except on federal lands, and collaborates with key internal and external partners for outbreak prevention,

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management and control in Alberta. AHS may collaborate with First Nations and Inuit Health Branch for outbreak investigation and response on federal lands in Alberta.

Functions:

- Conduct investigations including inspections, sample collection and enforcement activities at facilities under their mandate
- Collect, collate, analyze and interpret data from multiple sources (e.g., case/contact investigation) to establish the epidemiology of the alert/outbreak in order to determine the source of the outbreak
- Recommend and/or implement alert/outbreak control strategies in order to prevent further transmission of disease
- Monitor alert/outbreak activity through appropriate surveillance measures
- Evaluate effectiveness of control measures
- Report alert/outbreak data to Alberta Health as per legislated reporting requirements
- Communicate to the public as appropriate in conjunction with AHS Communications.

Schools/School Administrators/School Authorities

Role in Alerts and Outbreaks: Teachers and school administrators are important partners in monitoring for the potential spread of communicable disease within school settings. Individual schools ensure the safety of students and staff by assisting to control the spread of illness. This is done through collaboration with internal and external partners, such as Alberta Health Services during an alert/outbreak response.

Functions:

- Collaborate with AHS Public Health teams under the authority of the Zone Medical Officers of Health (MOH) to identify risks and mitigation strategies against COVID-19 alerts and outbreaks, including reporting suspect outbreaks to public health.
- Follow all guidelines, public health measures and legislation from Alberta Health, as well as any additional recommendations from the Zone MOH.
- Work with AHS Public Health to provide information as required for contact tracing.
- Work with AHS Public Health to implement follow-up recommendations and messaging for staff, parents/guardians, visitors and students.
- Maintain communication with parents/guardians and school boards.

Alert and Outbreak Notification Process

School administrations, school authorities, AHS and Alberta Health work collaboratively to effectively address potential COVID-19 alerts/outbreaks in school settings. Please see the COVID-19 school alert and outbreak notification process flow diagram attached in **Appendix A** outlining the alert and outbreak notification process for school administrations/authorities, AHS Public Health and Alberta Health.

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Definitions

<p>Close Contact</p>	<p>a) Provide direct care for an individual with COVID-19 or who had similar close physical contact (i.e., hugging or kissing) <u>OR</u> b) Had close prolonged contact (i.e., more than 15 minutes cumulative and within 2 metres) with a case while they are infectious <u>OR</u> c) Had direct contact with infectious body fluids of an individual with COVID-19 (i.e., was coughed or sneezed on, or shared food or drink). *Regardless of non-medical face mask use by either the case or contact.</p> <p>The entire classroom cohort, including the classroom teacher, may be considered to be close contacts of the case, based on the AHS Public Health investigation. This is a cautious approach to identifying close contacts in order to minimize the risk of transmission. Teachers/staff are assessed on a case-by-case basis. If a teacher/staff consistently maintains a two metre distance from others at all times and has no direct contact with the infected person, they would not be considered a close contact.</p>
<p>Cohort</p>	<p>A COVID-19 cohort, also referred to as a bubble, circle, or safe squad, is a small group whose members are always the same people, and who do not always keep two metres apart. Cohorts in schools will generally be the size of one class.</p>
<p>Confirmed COVID-19 Case</p>	<p>A person with laboratory confirmation of infection with the virus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19.</p>
<p>Epidemiological Link</p>	<p>An exposure at a common setting, presence at a gathering, or time spent in a common location or venue, where there is reasonable evidence that transmission could have occurred between an infectious individual and others.</p>
<p>Isolation</p>	<p>Isolation “separates sick people with a contagious disease from people who are not sick” (CDC, 2020). The current legal isolation requirement in Alberta for people who have COVID-19 or who are sick with the core symptoms specific to their age group is 10 days from when symptoms started or until symptoms have improved AND they are afebrile for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer.</p>
<p>Quarantine</p>	<p>Quarantine “separates and restricts the movement of people who were exposed to a contagious disease to see if they become sick. These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it or they may have the disease and do not show symptoms” (CDC, 2020). The current quarantine requirement in Alberta is 14 days from the last day of exposure to an infectious case of COVID-19.</p>
<p>Symptomatic</p>	<p>An individual who has signs or symptoms of COVID-19 illness. For a full list of symptoms, please refer to Symptoms and Testing.</p>

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Resource Library

General COVID-19 Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alberta's COVID-19 response• Alberta Health Services COVID-19• COVID-19 status map• Symptoms of COVID-19• Alberta isolation requirements• Alberta Health Services Information for Close Contacts of a COVID-19 Case• Alberta Health information posters and fact sheets
School Specific COVID-19 Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance for School Re-Entry – Scenario 1• Implementing School Re-Entry Guidance• 2020-2021 School Re-Entry Plan• COVID-19 school status map• Alberta Health Services Back to School During COVID-19• Back to school during COVID-19: FAQ
Daily Checklist and Assessment Tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adult and Child Alberta Health Daily Checklists• Alberta Health Services COVID-19 self-assessment• Alberta Health Services Guidance for Parents of Children Attending School and/or Childcare
Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alberta Health Services Infection Prevention and Control• Health Canada list of disinfectants with evidence for use against COVID-19• List of hand sanitizers authorized by Health Canada• Guidance for hand sanitizer• Guidance for wearing of non-medical face masks for the general public
General Health Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alberta Health Services• General questions (school staff or parents): Please call Health Link at 811• Alberta Health Services Mental Health Support

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Alberta Health Services Contact Information

Zone Environmental Public Health Contacts

Web portal: <https://ephisahs.albertahealthservices.ca/create-case/>

ZONE	CONTACT EMAIL ADDRESS	PHONE NUMBER FOR MAIN OFFICE
Calgary Zone	calgaryzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Calgary 403-943-2288
Central Zone	centralzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Red Deer 403-356-6366
Edmonton Zone	edmontonzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Edmonton 780-735-1800
North Zone	northzone.environmentalhealth@ahs.ca	Grande Prairie 780-513-7517
South Zone	she.southzoneeph@ahs.ca	Lethbridge 403-388-6689

AHS Coordinated Early Identification and Response (CEIR) Team

The AHS Coordinated Early Identification and Response (CEIR) team is available to school administrators and school authorities who want to reach AHS for guidance or decision making support. If schools do not have an AHS contact who they are currently working with, or are unsure of who to call, the team can be reached at:

ZONE	CONTACT PHONE NUMBER (for school administrators and school authorities ONLY)
All Zones	1-844-343-0971

Please note: This phone number is only to be used by school administrators and school authorities for guidance or decision making support. This number is not to be distributed to be used by parents/guardians, students or staff.

For individual health advice, parents/guardians, students and staff are directed to call Health Link at 811.

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Standard Practice

There are NO confirmed cases and NO symptomatic individuals in your school setting.

Who is involved?

- Schools and School Administration

Guidance and individual school plans:

- Schools and school authorities should have established their own COVID-19 plans. The plans may need updating as local disease risk in the community changes and/or additional public health measures that may have been implemented (see Alberta's [COVID-19 status map](#)).
- Schools are to follow the standard guidelines in the [Guidance for School Re-Entry – Scenario 1](#).

Daily checklist screening:

- Parents/guardians play an integral role in the screening process for the child/student's daily involvement in school. Parents and students must be provided a copy of the applicable checklist for their age group ([Adult Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) or [Child Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)) upon school registration with the expectation that it needs to be completed on a daily basis.
- Before leaving home, staff, visitors and volunteers who will access the school for work or education must self-screen for symptoms each day that they enter the school using the applicable checklist for their age group ([Adult Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) or [Child Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)).

When to involve Alberta Health Services:

- Your Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH) supports school authorities through providing guidance on communicable disease risk. If you have concerns, need specific guidance or have questions about how to apply the measures outlined in the guidance document, please contact AHS Environmental Public Health in your zone for assistance or contact AHS Environmental Public Health using the [web portal](#). For individual health advice, staff or parents/guardians can be directed to contact Health Link at 811.
- In specific contexts (e.g., communal living settings) where a community outbreak poses an increased risk to school staff or students, schools may be directed by local and provincial public health officials to follow additional outbreak control measures. AHS Public Health may notify school administrations and/or superintendents that a community is under quarantine and advise that no outside teachers/staff enter the community.

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Symptomatic Individual(s)

There are NO confirmed cases in your school setting, but there is one or more individual(s) with symptoms.

Who is involved?

- Schools and School Administration
- Alberta Health Services (AHS) – *as outlined below*

Individuals who are sick while at school:

- If the school has students or school staff who are symptomatic, please see Table 1 below for a detailed description of steps to take. Through the daily screening process, the majority of symptomatic individuals should not enter the school.
- However, it is important for the school to have a plan in place to:
 - Safely isolate symptomatic individuals away from others in a designated space that allows for physical distancing of two metres;
 - Have potential supplies on hand (i.e., personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies); and
 - Have the correct contact information for parents/guardians of students so the student may be picked up as soon as possible.
- If there is one symptomatic child/staff/visitor/volunteer not everyone in the class needs to be quarantined. Any individual with symptoms of COVID-19 should be tested as soon as possible, which can be arranged through the [AHS online self-assessment tool](#).
 - Contacts of someone who is NOT a case of COVID-19 or contacts of someone who is awaiting test results, are not required to isolate or quarantine.
 - Please see **Appendix B** for isolation and quarantine requirements.
 - Classroom-based learning may continue and students/staff with no symptoms do not need to be sent home or quarantined if there was a symptomatic-only individual in the school (NOT a confirmed case).

Individuals with pre-existing conditions:

- Some individuals with pre-existing conditions may experience COVID-19-like symptoms as part of their normal baseline health or their known pre-existing condition. Schools must keep records of a student's known pre-existing conditions.
 - The first time a student develops [symptoms](#) that could be caused by COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the student should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that COVID-19 is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to the school. This will be considered the student's baseline health.
 - The student may continue to attend school as long as their symptoms do not change/worsen and they do not develop any new symptoms.
 - Written confirmation by a physician that a student or staff member has a chronic medical condition or that their symptoms are due to a chronic illness is not necessary and should not be requested by the school administration.

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Supporting individuals to isolate and quarantine:

- Schools should have flexibility for student and staff personal circumstances, such as flexible attendance and sick leave for students and staff who are symptomatic or who may have been identified as close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19. The period of time that students and staff members must remain home and isolate is dependent on symptoms and COVID-19 test results. For more information, please see the current requirements for [isolation and quarantine](#) and/or **Appendix B**.

Reporting high rates of absenteeism due to illness:

- If there is an absence rate of 10% due to illness OR there are an unusual amount of individuals with similar symptoms, please report to the AHS Coordinated Early Identification and Response (CEIR) team, regardless of the COVID-19 test results for each individual.
 - The purpose of this reporting is to continue to monitor for other clusters of illness that may not be COVID-19 related and alert AHS to potential outbreaks of other diseases.
 - If there is already an outbreak declared at the school, the 10% absence rate does not need to be reported.
 - Reporting does not need to occur daily, and should only be done when it is initially identified that there is >10% absenteeism from school due to illness.

Accessing health advice:

- Parents/guardians, students and staff requiring individual health advice can call Health Link at 811.
 - Health Link should not be used for questions regarding specific confirmed case and contact management as those will be addressed directly by the AHS Public Health team managing that case.
 - General information for parents and staff can be found at the Alberta Health Services website: www.ahs.ca/covid

When to involve Alberta Health Services:

- If there is only a single individual with symptoms, or a small number of individuals with symptoms, notification to AHS is NOT required.
- Symptomatic students and staff are asked to complete the [AHS Online COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) as noted above.
- The AHS Coordinated Early Identification and Response (CEIR) team is available to school administrators and school authorities who want to reach AHS to report a high absenteeism rate due to illness, or for guidance and decision-making support.

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Table 1: What to do if a Student, Staff Member or Visitor Develops Symptoms?

If a Student Develops One or More Symptoms of COVID-19 (See all COVID-19 symptoms)	If a Staff Member or Visitor Develops One or More Symptoms of COVID-19 (See all COVID-19 symptoms)
<i>If student develops symptoms at home:</i>	<i>If staff member develops symptoms at home:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Direct the student to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary care practitioner or, if needed, 911 for emergency response), and fill out the AHS Online COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool to determine if they should be tested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff must not enter the school if they have symptoms of COVID-19. Direct the staff member to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary care practitioner or, if needed, 911 for emergency response), and fill out the AHS Online COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool to determine if they should be tested.
<i>If student develops symptoms at school:</i>	<i>If staff member develops symptoms at work:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The student should be asked to wear a non-medical mask if they are able. The student should be isolated in a separate room. If a separate room is not available, the student must be kept at least 2 metres away from other students. The student’s parent/guardian should be notified to pick up the student immediately. If the student requires close contact and care, staff can continue to care for the student until the parent is able to pick up the student. The student and staff should wear a mask and close interactions with the student that may result in contact with the student’s respiratory secretions should be avoided. If very close contact is required, the staff member should also use a face shield or eye protection. Students must perform hand hygiene before donning a mask and before and after removing the mask and before and after touching any items used by the student. All items the student touched/used while symptomatic must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the student has been picked up. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 72 hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The staff member should be asked to wear a non-medical mask if they are able. The staff member should go home as soon as possible. If the staff member is unable to leave immediately, they should be isolated in a separate and empty room or maintain a 2 metre distance from others. Staff must perform hand hygiene before donning a mask, before and after removing the mask and before and after touching any items used by the ill staff member. All items the staff member touched/used while symptomatic must be cleaned and disinfected as soon as the staff member leaves. Items that cannot be cleaned and disinfected (e.g., paper, books, cardboard puzzles) should be removed from the classroom and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 72 hours.

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Confirmed COVID-19 in the School Setting

SINGLE confirmed case

If there is **ONE confirmed case** (student, staff member or visitor, with or without symptoms) in your school setting who was present at the school while infectious and/or most likely became infected at the school, the school will be on an Alert (1) status.

MULTIPLE confirmed cases

AHS will initiate an investigation once there are **TWO or more confirmed cases** in the school setting (student, staff member or visitor) within a 14 day period (one incubation period) OR two confirmed cases (student, staff member or visitor) that are epidemiologically linked, who were present at the school while infectious and/or who most likely became infected at the school. The school will be reported as having an Alert (2-4) once there are two cases as per the above criteria.

If additional cases arise in the school, they will be included in the investigation as long as there are not 28 days or more between subsequent cases. The investigation will be reported as follows:

- Alert (2-4): There are between 2-4 cases in the investigation
- Outbreak (5-9): There are between 5-9 cases in the investigation
- Outbreak (10+): There are 10 or more cases in the investigation

AHS begins an investigation in a school to mitigate the risk of further spread within the school community. An alert or outbreak in a school does not automatically identify that ongoing transmission of COVID-19 has been confirmed within the school.

***Note:** Only AHS Public Health can declare a school to be on alert or outbreak. School administrations and/or superintendents cannot declare an alert or an outbreak.*

Who is involved?

- Schools and School Administration
- Alberta Health Services (AHS)
- Alberta Health

Please see **Appendix A** for the COVID-19 school alert and outbreak notification process flow diagram.

Notification received from the confirmed case of COVID-19:

- AHS Public Health receives all positive lab results directly from the lab and investigates these cases to determine where they have been while infectious. AHS is responsible for public health investigation and follow-up with the case(s) and their close contacts, including determining and communicating all isolation and quarantine periods.
 - AHS Public Health will inform school superintendents/designates of single cases or multiple cases of COVID-19 who were present at the school while infectious or may have acquired disease within the school.

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- The superintendent/designate will connect AHS Public Health to the school administration so AHS Public Health can collect information for contact tracing and complete the investigation.
- AHS Public Health may use various strategies for communicating with close contacts of a COVID-19 case, including but not limited to phone calls, letters and/or emails.
- School administrations/superintendents are not required to call AHS to report student cases that they have heard about from members of their school community.
 - In an extenuating circumstance where the school superintendent notifies AHS of a student COVID-19 case in their school setting and AHS had not previously notified the school of this case, AHS will follow up to confirm if there is a case and if an alert or outbreak should be declared.
 - Superintendents (or designates) should call the AHS CEIR line to report school teachers/staff members and bus drivers who test positive for COVID-19 in order to identify these individuals as members of the school community so contact tracing may occur.
 - If a student/staff member/visitor who is a COVID-19 case was in the school while infectious, AHS will follow up with the superintendent/school administration to confirm the COVID-19 exposure in the school.
 - If a student/staff member/visitor notifies their school that they tested positive for COVID-19 but it is subsequently determined by AHS Public Health that the case was not at the school during their infectious period, AHS Public Health should obtain consent from the case/parent/guardian to inform the superintendent/school administration that there was not a COVID-19 exposure in their school.
- For routine case and contact follow-up where the case has not informed the school of their positive COVID-19 test result, AHS Public Health will not contact the school if the COVID-19 case did not attend the school while they were considered infectious and there is no risk of transmission in the school environment. This may mean students/staff from the school are in isolation, however the school is not notified by AHS and no alert/outbreak is declared.
- If a school administration/superintendent/designate has been notified by an individual, parent or guardian that there is a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 at the school and the superintendent/designate is unable to wait until AHS Public Health confirms the exposure or completes their investigation, the **pre-alert notification template (Appendix C)** may be filled in and distributed by the school administration.
 - Superintendents/designates are to communicate to Alberta Education that this notification was sent and provide a copy of the notification.
 - Once AHS Public Health confirms a single case or multiple cases at the school, AHS will provide further direction on all other communications to be sent.
 - School administrations/superintendents/designates are NOT to declare an alert or outbreak in their school.
- The AHS Coordinated Early Identification and Response (CEIR) team is available to school administrators and school authorities who want to reach AHS for guidance or other decision-making support and do not already have an AHS contact who they are currently working with.

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Providing information required for contact tracing:

- Schools are to work collaboratively with AHS Public Health under the authority of the Zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH)/designate in order to manage their alert or outbreak and adhere to any recommendations or orders provided by the MOH/designate. This includes working with AHS Public Health to provide information required for contact tracing, as outlined in the *Alberta Public Health Act*.
- School staff are to ensure all record keeping is complete and communicate with AHS Public Health for contact tracing. The school administration/superintendent/designate will provide the information required to enable AHS Public Health to conduct contact tracing and complete their investigation. Please see the **sample template for close contact information (Appendix D)** for details on information that AHS Public Health may require. AHS Public Health may request this information be entered into a template or spreadsheet by the school administration.
- While schools may be required to share student/staff information with AHS Public Health under the *Public Health Act*, it is important for school staff and administration to protect the privacy of students/staff members. Personal information that may identify individuals who are COVID-19 cases to other members of the school community or to the public cannot be disclosed.

Notifying students, parents/guardians and staff of a single case or multiple cases:

- **Single case:** If there is only one case of COVID-19 in the school, AHS Public Health will direct superintendents/designates/school administrators to fill out the **single case notification template (Appendix E)** and distribute it to parents/guardians, students and staff.
 - Superintendents/designates/school administrators are not to use this template in any other situation and are not to send alert notifications without being directed by AHS Public Health.
- **Multiple cases:** If there are two or more cases of COVID-19 in the school and an investigation has started, AHS Public Health will draft a letter specific to the school, including information on COVID-19 transmission in the school (if available), what actions are being taken and any relevant health advice. See **sample multiple case investigation letter (Appendix F)**.
 - This letter is signed by the Zone MOH (or designate), then provided to the superintendent/designate/school administrator for distribution.
 - Superintendents/designates/school administrators are not to use this letter in any other situation and are not to send outbreak notifications without direction by AHS Public Health.
- Superintendents/designates are to communicate to Alberta Education that this notification was sent, provide a copy of the notification, and include information on the number of students/staff required by public health to quarantine due an exposure to a COVID-19 case in the school.

School alert and outbreak management

- AHS Public Health will monitor for ongoing COVID-19 cases at the school.
- School staff are to review all applicable public health guidance documents and plan to ensure adherence to public health measures to mitigate the risk of additional COVID-19 spread.
- The Zone MOH may make recommendations or provide orders to effectively control the alert/outbreak. These recommendations will be based on the number of active COVID-19 cases in the school and the risk of ongoing transmission, as determined by the investigation. School

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staff are to ensure implementation and strict adherence to any recommendations from AHS Public Health.

- AHS Environmental Public Health may conduct a site assessment if warranted, at the discretion of the Zone MOH.
- The school administration is to advise AHS Public Health of any relevant/related issues or difficulties in following guidance recommendations.
- AHS Public Health will notify Alberta Health of all cases of COVID-19, as well as any schools who have an alert or outbreak declared.
- **Single case:** If no additional cases of COVID-19 occur at the school within 14 days of an Alert (1) being declared, the school will no longer be on an Alert (1). The school will not receive formal notification that the Alert (1) has ended.
- **Multiple cases:** Public health measures for management of multiple cases in the school are at the discretion of the zone Medical Officer of Health (MOH); decisions on the need for alternate instructional delivery (e.g., at-home learning) will be made by Government in conjunction with local officials.

Supporting individuals to isolate and quarantine:

- Schools should have flexibility for student and staff personal circumstances, such as flexible attendance and sick leave for students and staff who are symptomatic and in isolation or who may have been identified as close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 and are in quarantine.
- School staff should be prepared to support continued learning for all students who are at home due to isolation and/or quarantine.
- The period of time that students and staff members must remain home and isolate is dependent on symptoms and COVID-19 test results. AHS Public Health will determine and communicate these time periods for all confirmed cases of COVID-19 and their identified close contacts.
- For more information, please see the [Alberta isolation](#) requirements and/or **Appendix B**.

Responding to information requests from parents/guardians and media

- School administrators may receive questions from parents, the public or media about the alert or outbreak. School administrators can answer general questions from students, parents/guardians and staff. School administrators should discuss media requests with their school authority.
- AHS can answer applicable questions from parents/guardians, the school or other partners involved in the alert, as well as may answer media questions if appropriate. AHS may also support the development of key messages for the school outbreak in collaboration with Alberta Health communications.
- Alberta Health will lead and/or coordinate public communications about the alert or outbreak at the school at a provincial level.

COVID-19 school status map:

- Alberta Health will update the [COVID-19 school status map](#) to include any school that has multiple cases and is under an investigation.
- School case counts are completed using Alberta Health data and updated daily by 4 p.m.

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Declaring an Investigation Over

AHS Public Health declares the investigation over

COVID-19 investigations are typically declared over after two incubation periods, or 28 days, with no new cases. This 28 day period begins from the date that symptoms started in the last case. The Medical Officer of Health or designate makes the decision of when to close the investigation based on their public health investigation. This period may be shorter if there was no ongoing risk of exposure (i.e., when schools are not in session).

Note: Only AHS Public Health can declare an investigation to be over. School administrations and superintendents cannot declare an investigation over.

Who is involved?

- The school/school administration
- Alberta Health Services (AHS)
- Alberta Health

Declaring the investigation over:

- AHS Public Health will work with the school administration and superintendent to determine when the investigation is over.
- AHS Public Health will direct school administrators to fill out the “**investigation over**” **notification template (Appendix G)** and distribute it to parents/guardians, students and staff.
- AHS Public Health will notify Alberta Health that the school COVID-19 investigation is over, and close the investigation. Alberta Health will update the [COVID-19 school status map](#) to reflect when the investigation is over/closed.

Resuming normal activities:

- Follow recommendations from AHS Public Health, including when to resume regular activities that may have been disrupted by the COVID-19 investigation and return to [standard practices](#).
- Inform school authority/other relevant stakeholders that the investigation is over.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your school’s response:
 - Discuss and note best practices and lessons learned.
 - Identify any issues in your response and effective solutions.

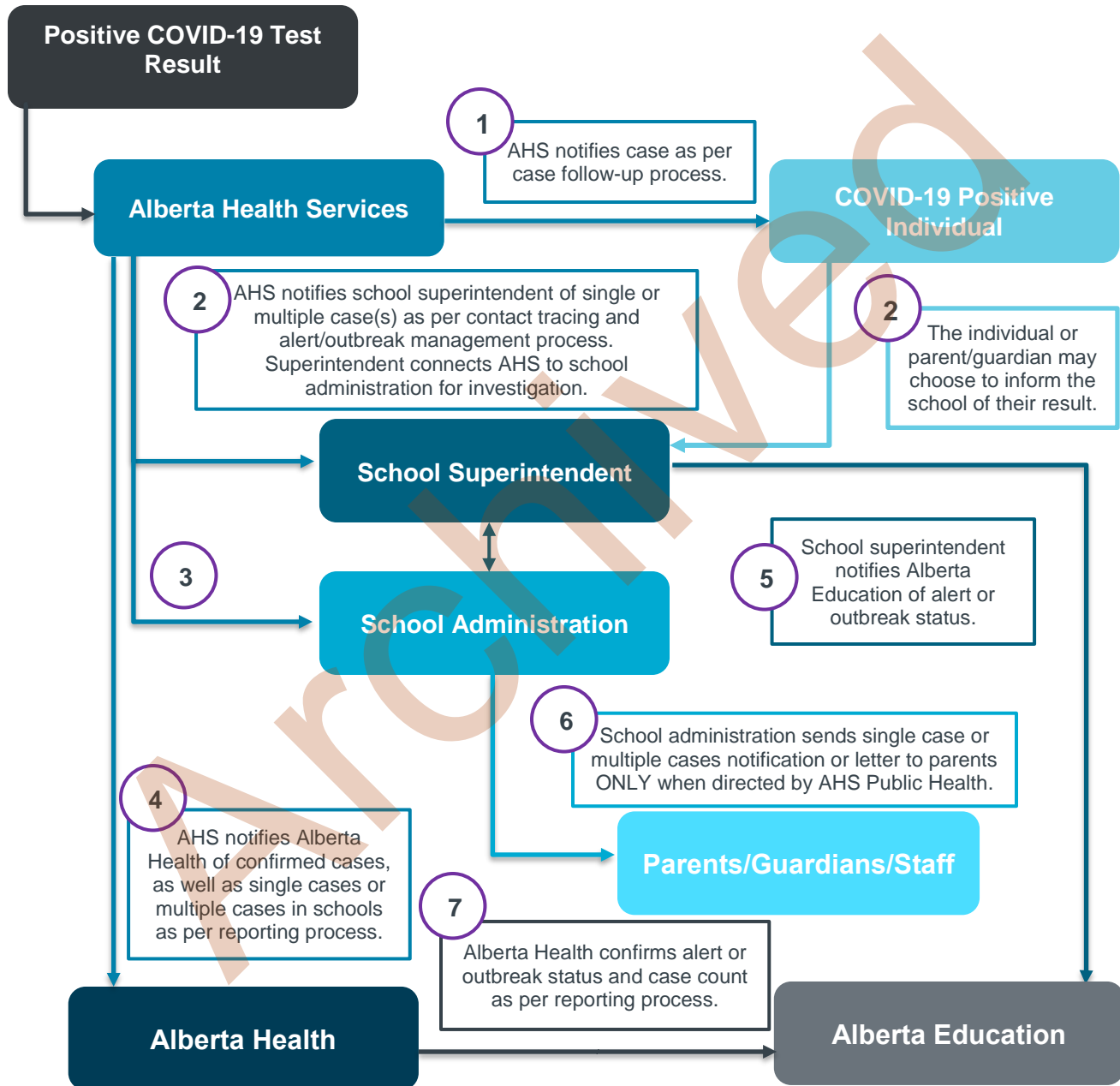
Notifying students, parents/guardians and staff that the investigation is over:

- AHS Public Health will direct superintendents/designates/school administrators to fill out and distribute the “**investigation over**” **notification template (Appendix G)**.
 - Superintendents/designates/school administrators are not to use this template in any other situation and are not to send “investigation over” notifications without AHS Public Health direction.
 - Superintendents/designates are to communicate to Alberta Education that this notification was sent, provide a copy of the notification, and include information on the final total number of students/staff required by public health to quarantine due to the investigation at the school.

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Appendix A: COVID-19 school alert and outbreak notification process flow diagram



RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Appendix B: Management of Individuals who are tested for COVID-19

Symptoms	COVID-19 Test Result:	Management of Individual:		Management of Individual's Close Contacts*:	
		CHILDREN	ADULTS		
Symptomatic	Positive	Isolate for a minimum 10 days or until symptoms have improved AND afebrile for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer..		Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure.	
	Negative	Stay home until symptoms resolve. Except if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case: Quarantine for 14 days since the last exposure.		No quarantine required.	
	Not tested	If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, or loss of sense of taste/smell:		If symptoms include fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat or runny nose:	No quarantine required. Except: if symptomatic individual identified as a close contact of a confirmed case • Close contacts of this individual should quarantine for 14 days from last exposure to this individual.
		Isolate for a minimum for 10 days or until symptoms have improved AND afebrile for 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications, whichever is longer. Except if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case: Quarantine for 14 days since the last exposure.			
		If other symptoms (chills, sore throat/painful swallowing, runny nose/congestion, feeling unwell/fatigued, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea, unexplained loss of appetite, muscle/joint aches, headache or conjunctivitis): • ONE symptom: stay home, monitor for 24h. If improves, return when well enough to go (testing not necessary). • TWO symptoms or ONE symptom that persists or worsens: Stay home until symptom(s) resolve (testing recommended). Except if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case: Quarantine for 14 days since the last exposure.		If other symptoms, stay home until symptoms resolve.	
Asymptomatic	Positive	Isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the test date.		Quarantine for 14 days from last exposure.	
	Negative	No isolation required. Except if identified as a close contact of a confirmed case: Quarantine for 14 days since the last exposure.		No quarantine required.	

COVID-19 INFORMATION

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

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*Close Contacts:

- Provide direct care for an individual with COVID-19 or who had similar close physical contact OR had close prolonged contact OR had direct contact with infectious body fluids of an individual with COVID-19 (i.e., coughed or sneezed on).
- The entire classroom cohort may be considered to be close contacts of the case, based on the AHS Public Health investigation. This is a cautious approach to identifying close contacts in order to minimize the risk of transmission.
- Teachers/staff are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

NOTES:

- For further information for parents of children attending school and/or childcare, please visit ahs.ca/parentCOVIDGuide
- Individuals WILL NOT receive written or email documentation of their results. Adults and children 14 years of age or older can access their test results using [MyHealth Records](#) and print these results. As of October 1, 2020, parents/guardians can use their [MyHealth Records](#) account to access their children's COVID-19 test results online.
- Individuals/parents/guardians may also be offered the option to consent for text message notification of COVID-19 test results when arranging for testing.
- There is not a requirement to provide evidence of negative results prior to returning to school.
- AHS Public Health will contact all confirmed cases and their close contacts and provide them clear direction.
- AHS Public Health will notify the school of any confirmed COVID-19 cases who were present at the school while infectious and/or most likely became infected at the school
- Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms are encouraged to be tested using the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#).

COVID-19 INFORMATION

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Appendix C: Template for pre-alert notification to students, parents/guardians and staff

Instructions for use:

This notification template may be filled in and distributed by school administrators or superintendents/designates if the school administrator has been notified by an individual, parent or guardian that there is a case of COVID-19 at the school and the school administrator/superintendent/designate is unable to wait until AHS Public Health confirms the exposure or completes their investigation. Once AHS Public Health confirms a single case or multiple cases the school, AHS will provide further direction on all other communications to be sent. Please note, any time a COVID-19 notification is sent by the school administration, superintendents/designates are directed to communicate to Alberta Education that a notification was sent, including which template was used, as well as provide a copy of the notification.

Dear Parents/Guardians,

It has come to my attention that a person affiliated with our school has tested positive for COVID-19. Every case of COVID-19 is investigated by Alberta Health Services (AHS). AHS is currently conducting a case investigation and will know shortly if this person may have been in our school while infectious, or if they may have acquired COVID-19 in our school.

If a case of COVID-19 is confirmed to have been infectious or acquired disease at our school, a letter will be sent out to all parents/guardians. AHS will also contact the parents/guardians of students, as well as any staff/visitors/volunteers who may have been in close contact with the case. Please monitor your phone and email accounts for any notifications by AHS. If AHS determines that this person did not acquire disease in school, or attend school while they may have been infectious, a letter will not be sent.

[School to insert appropriate local context here]

Sincerely,

Principal / designate of _____ school

COVID-19 INFORMATION

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Appendix D: Sample template for school close contact list

AHS Public Health will contact the school administration if information for contact tracing is required. At that time, AHS Public Health will provide a spreadsheet template for the school administration to fill out and return. The table below is meant to be an example only.

All school administrators should review the following fields and be prepared to send these field to AHS if asked. Please note that Alberta Health Services also requires the **name and date of birth** (at minimum) and contact information from staff.

Last Name	First Name	Date of Birth <i>(dd/mon/yy)</i>	Staff / Student/ Visitor	If contact was in same class, what was the classroom?	If contact was on school bus, what was the bus route/#?	Date of last exposure to case	Parent / Guardian Name	Parent / Guardian (or staff) Primary Email Address	Parent / Guardian Alternate Email Address	Phone Number
Sample	Student	01/Jan/10	Student	Grade 4A	Bus 154	01/Sep/20	Parent Sample	parent@email.com	parent2@email.com	123-456-7890
Sample	Teacher	01/Jan/80	Staff	Grade 4A	N/A	01/Sep/20	N/A	teacher@email.com	N/A	234-567-8901

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Appendix E: Template for single case notification to students, parents/guardians and staff

Instructions for use:

This notification template may be filled in and distributed by school administrators or superintendents/designates only when directed by AHS Public Health. School administrators/superintendents/designates are not to use this template in any other situation and are not to send single case notifications without being directed by AHS Public Health. Please note, any time a COVID-19 notification is sent by the school administration, superintendents/designates are directed to communicate to Alberta Education that a notification was sent, including which template was used, as well as provide a copy of the notification. Additionally, information on the number of students and the number of staff required by public health to quarantine due to an exposure to a COVID-19 case in the school should be included in this communication with Alberta Education.

Dear Student, Parent/Guardian or Staff Member,

A case of COVID-19 has been diagnosed in an individual from _____ school. We are working closely with Alberta Health Services to ensure necessary measures are in place to protect all students, staff and visitors to the school.

Alberta Health Services will only be contacting parents/guardians of students, as well as any staff/visitors/volunteers who may have been in close contact with the case. Please monitor your phone and email accounts for any notifications by Alberta Health Services.

We remind parents/guardians of students, as well as any staff/visitors/volunteers to monitor for any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 using the applicable checklist for their age group ([Adult Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) or [Child Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)). Please remember to complete the checklist each day prior to attending school.

As a reminder, if you/your child has any of the symptoms of illness listed on the Alberta Health daily checklist, please fill out the online [Alberta Health Services COVID-19 self-assessment](#) or call Health Link at 811 and stay home/keep your child at home.

[School to insert appropriate local context here].

We will continue to provide additional information to parents/guardians, students, staff and visitors as it is available.

Sincerely,

Principal / designate of _____ school

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Appendix F: SAMPLE multiple case investigation letter for students, parents/guardians and staff

Instructions for use:

The below letter is a sample only and is not to be used or filled in by school administrators or superintendents/designates. When a Zone MOH/AHS Public Health begins an investigation due to multiple cases of COVID-19, AHS Public Health will draft a letter specific to the school, including information on COVID-19 transmission in the school and health advice. This letter is signed by the Zone MOH or designate. AHS Public Health will provide a copy of the signed letter to the school administration for distribution. School administrations/superintendents/designates are not to use this letter in any other situation and are not to send this multiple case investigation letter without being directed by AHS Public Health. Please note, any time a COVID-19 multiple case investigation letter is sent by the school administration, superintendents/designates are directed to communicate to Alberta Education that a multiple case investigation letter was sent, as well as provide a copy of the letter. Additionally, information on the number of students and the number of staff required by public health to quarantine due to an exposure to a COVID-19 case in the school should be included in this communication with Alberta Education.

Date:

Dear: [Parents/Guardians of students of School Name]

RE: Notice of COVID-19 to Staff, Students and Visitors in [name of school and location]

Two or more cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed at [school name and address]. As a result the Medical Officer of Health has started an investigation at [school name]. Public Health staff are investigating to determine who may have been exposed at your school to cases of COVID-19 during their infectious period. The virus is passed from person to person by large, respiratory droplets, like from a cough or sneeze. This means that a person would need to have direct contact with droplets from a sick person or surfaces that they have recently touched. The risk of the general population in the school becoming infected because of these cases is low.

If staff or students have been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, Public Health will contact them directly for follow-up.

- If staff or students have not been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case but develop symptoms as listed on the daily screening tool, please self-isolate at home and complete the online assessment tool or call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible to arrange for COVID-19 testing.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

- If you or your child require medical attention, please call ahead to your health care provider or call Health Link at 811 to help guide you to the right care provider and make appropriate arrangements to care for yourself or your child safely.
- If this is an emergency and you or your child require urgent attention, call 911 and tell them that you or your child may have been in contact with COVID-19 so that they can make appropriate arrangements to care for you or your child safely.

To help minimize spread of any respiratory virus we always recommend the following:

- Make sure everyone in your household washes their hands with soap and water often. If soap and water are not available, you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw it in a garbage bin lined with a plastic bag. Wash your hands immediately after that. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- Stay home if you're sick. If your kids are sick, keep them home from school.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are used often and shared by everyone in your home such as door knobs, light switches and bathroom taps.
- Practice physical distancing outside the home (at least 2 metres) and wear a mask in public spaces if social distancing is not possible.
- Ensure your child's immunizations are up to date, including their annual influenza immunization.

For further information regarding COVID-19, please visit:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/default.aspx> the AHS website for COVID-19 or call Health Link at 811 if there are any questions.

Thank you.

Original signed (Zone Medical Officer of Health or Designate)

COVID-19 INFORMATION

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR COVID-19 CASES IN SCHOOL (K-12) SETTINGS

Before, during and after a COVID-19 alert or outbreak

Appendix G: Template for “[Alert or Outbreak] investigation over” notification to students, parents/guardians and staff

Instructions for use:

This notification template may be filled in and distributed by school administrators or superintendents/designates only when directed by AHS Public Health. School administrators/superintendents/designates are not to use this template in any other situation and are not to send “[Alert or Outbreak] investigation over” notifications without being directed by AHS Public Health. Please note, any time a COVID-19 notification is sent by the school administration, superintendents/designates are directed to communicate to Alberta Education that a notification was sent, including which template was used, as well as provide a copy of the notification. Additionally, information on the final total number of students and the number of staff required by public health to quarantine due to the COVID-19 investigation at the school should be included in this communication with Alberta Education.

Dear Student, Parent/Guardian or Staff Member,

This notification is to inform you that the [Alert/Outbreak] investigation at _____ school has been declared over by the Zone Medical Officer of Health.

We remind parents/guardians of students, as well as any staff/visitors/volunteers to continue monitoring for any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 as part of their routine daily practice, using the applicable checklist for their age group ([Adult Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) or [Child Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#)). Please remember to complete the checklist each day prior to attending school.

As a reminder, if you/your child has any of the symptoms of illness listed on the applicable Alberta Health daily checklist, please fill out the online [Alberta Health Services COVID-19 self-assessment](#) or call Health Link at 811 and stay home/keep your child at home.

[School to insert appropriate local context here]

Thank you for your support and continued collective efforts in protecting our school community.

Sincerely,

Principal / designate of _____ school