

COVID 19 Parent Information



Updated August 14, 2020

Introduction

The administration and staff of Galbraith Elementary School are committed to providing students with an inclusive learning environment that develops engaged, ethical and innovative learners. This handbook works in partnership with our current school handbook to develop routines and procedures that will provide the blueprint and guidance staff and students need to help us achieve our goals. The COVID-19 handbook was developed to specifically address routines and procedures our learning community will follow to promote safety and collaboration. The following handbook also follows Government of Alberta and Lethbridge School Division expectations and procedures around school re-entry.

As we all know, the effects and response to COVID-19 are constantly changing; therefore, the content in this handbook will need to be revised throughout the year to better respond to these changes and are always subject to change. This is a living document that can change, and we are committed to communicating any changes that do occur with our community and dedicated to providing the most effective and timely communication that we can. **If at any time you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at (403) 327-3465. The office opens on August 18th at 8:00 a.m.**

We cannot wait to see our students and begin the 2020-2021 school year!

Government of Alberta Expectations

Screening

Before leaving home, staff, children/students, 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 attached tool.

Parents and children/students will be provided a copy of the screening tool upon school registration with the expectation that it needs to be reviewed daily. The screening tool does **NOT** need to be submitted to the school; the expectation is that it is completed by **EACH DAY** by going through it as a parent, staff member, and student (age appropriate).

The school will keep records of children's known pre-existing conditions. If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies), the child should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before entering or returning to school.

Anyone that reports symptoms should be directed to stay home, seek health care advice as appropriate (e.g., call Health Link 811, or their primary health care practitioner, or 911 for emergency response), and fill out the [AHS Online Self Assessment tool](#) to determine if they should be tested.

Signs will be posted reminding persons not to enter if they have COVID-19 symptoms, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.

Masks

Lethbridge School Division is following the current advice provided by the Alberta Government.

As per the announcement on August 4th, 2020, mask use will be mandatory for staff and teachers in all settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained. Students in Grades 4-12 will be required to wear them in all shared and common areas such as hallways and on buses. Exemptions will be made for students and staff who are unable to wear a mask due to medical or other needs.

Mask use for kindergarten to Grade 3 students will continue to be optional.

Reusable face masks will be provided by the Government of Alberta (2 for each student and staff member). It is recommended that students wash each mask daily after use. Also, the purchase of additional face coverings, disposable or reusable, is encouraged for this school year and has been added to the school supply list.

The Government of Alberta Guidance document for wearing non-medical face masks is available [here](#).

Students who take bussing to school must wear masks while on buses. The City of Lethbridge announced that masks will be mandatory on public transit effective Aug. 4, 2020.

Division Expectations

The complete re-entry parent guide for Lethbridge School Division can be found [here](#). Please refer to this document for complete information and guidance on school re-entry.

Communication with Families

As we continue to learn, grow, and adapt through COVID-19, we know there will be unknowns and many changes to come. Galbraith Elementary School staff are committed to providing the most up-to-date, clear and efficient communication that we can with our community. Our main modes of communication continue to be through email and the school website. We will also continue to use our social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram) to share the same information. Please be sure to continuously check our district website, social media accounts, and the email account you provided to the school. If your contact information changes, please be sure to contact our office.

School website: <http://www.gal.lethsd.ab.ca>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/galbraithschool/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/GalbraithLeth>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/galbraithelementary/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1bkgTHOHHGne-WQUdAcayw>

Revised Routines and Procedures to Address COVID-19

Preventative Measures and Procedures

Cleaning Schedule

Lethbridge School Division has instituted enhanced cleaning protocols, ensuring that staff are cleaning and sanitizing common areas and frequently touched areas such as railings, doorknobs, washrooms, fountains, etc. more often. Classrooms will also have wipes or disinfecting spray bottles to clean and disinfect shared materials and high touch areas throughout the day.

We believe that cleaning and disinfection is a shared responsibility for everyone in our school, and we will all do our best to ensure that school sites remain safe.

Hand Hygiene

Hand washing is one of the most effective ways to stop the spread of COVID-19. Hand hygiene with plain soap and warm water is preferred in schools. The mechanical action of hand washing is effective at removing visible soil as well as microbes. In instances where hand washing sinks are not available, supervised use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers may be considered. If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizers may not be effective at effective cleaning and sanitization.

The Government of Alberta and Lethbridge School Division are supplying hand sanitizer solutions and dispensers throughout the school on walls, main entrances, gathering spaces and the entry to classrooms.

It is best to practice proper handwashing and / or sanitizing routines, especially:

- before leaving home and on arrival at school
- after using the toilet
- after breaks and sporting activities
- before food preparation
- before eating any food, including snacks
- after contact with saliva or nasal secretions after diapering a child
- before using shared materials such as arts and craft supplies
- before leaving school and on arrival at home

Arrival and Departure Procedures

We are continuing to examine and explore safe and effective routines for arrival and drop-off. Communication in regard to any changes will be sent out and shared to parents via email and our social media platforms.

Bus students are expected to wear their masks while on the bus and will have a seating arrangement that they must adhere to until further notice.

Lunchtime and Recess

Students will be expected to eat their lunches in their regular classrooms with their class cohort. This is the same practice as in previous years. Cleaning and hygiene protocols will be followed before and after students eat. We continue to ask students not to share food, utensils or napkins.

A change in our lunchtime routine will be around recycling. At this time, all elementary schools are asking students to bring home their recycling containers. Any garbage from lunchtime will still be allowed to be thrown out.

For the outside portion of lunchtime and for the recess breaks, we are implementing an alternate schedule based on class cohorts. Grade-level classes will be scheduled to go outside during the recess breaks, and social distancing between cohorts will be maintained. Recess times will be scheduled in rotating time blocks to avoid all students being outside at the same time in the playground. Each classroom currently has its own collection of outdoor equipment to use and clean/sanitize after student use.

Food and Snacks

Children are still permitted to bring snacks for the school day. We ask that snacks are not shared between students and that any containers that should be recycled be brought home for recycling at this time. No activities that involve the sharing of food between students or staff is permitted. Physical distancing will be practiced while students have lunch in their classes and during snack times.

Field Trips

At this time, all field trips are temporarily not offered due to the heightened level of concern for COVID-19. Opportunities will continue to be reviewed throughout the year directly reflecting Alberta Health Services recommendations and level of risk involved.

Parents and Volunteers

As per the Division Re-entry Guide that schools will be restricting visitation, including parents. **Parents will be permitted if there is a scheduled meeting, otherwise, parents are to drop off and pick up children outside of the school.**

When a visitor enters the school, they will be asked to use the self screening tool (in Division Re-entry Guide). If a visitor answers YES to any of the questions, the individual will not be admitted into the school. A record of all visitors will be kept.

Extra-Curricular Activities

All extra-curricular activities, such as sports leagues and Family Fun Nights, have been suspended at this time.

Hallways

Our school will begin to use procedures and routines that promote physical distancing between all attendees in areas in and outside of the classroom, including hallways, washrooms, and common areas. This may include staggering transition times for classes during breaks to avoid crowded hallways, posting signs, and marking floors to direct movement and reduce congestion, and removing/restaging seating in public areas to prevent gathering.

Scheduling will be arranged to reduce the hallway traffic for all staff and students. Additional transition time between class movement in the hallways will also be accounted for and scheduled.

Classroom Seating

Physical distancing (2 metre spacing) is a useful public health measure to help prevent the spread of disease. Increasing the space between persons decreases the risk of transmission. Where 2 metres is not possible between desks, the greatest possible spacing is recommended.

- If 2 metres cannot be arranged between desks/table, students should be arranged so they are not facing each other (e.g. arranged in rows rather than in small groups of 4 or a semi circle). This way, if a student coughs or sneezes, they are not likely to cough or sneeze directly on the face of another student.
- In situations where physical distancing is not possible (e.g., busses, classrooms and some sporting activities), extra emphasis on hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, not participating when sick and cleaning and disinfecting on a regular basis before and after activities is strongly recommended.
- In circumstances where 2 metres of physical distance is not possible (especially if the circumstance requires prolonged close contact for longer than 15 minutes), teachers, staff and students are to wear masks. Guidance on mask use is available here.
- It is still recommended to maintain physical distancing within a cohort whenever possible to minimize the risk for disease transmission (i.e., spacing between desks)

Learning Commons

To start the school year, the Makerspace and Learning Commons will be closed. We are continuing to review, revise and examine our practices to ensure that students and staff are safe.

Drinking Fountains

Our water fountains and hydration stations will be cleaned routinely as part of the updated cleaning schedule. We strongly encourage students to bring their own water bottle from home labelled with their name and/or grade. This can be kept in their classroom with their belongings for the day. By having water bottles, it will reduce the number of fillings and visits to the water fountains and help to minimize the risks of contamination. It is recommended that water bottles be washed daily.

Music & Physical Education

Students will still participate in music and physical education classes. Scheduling of music and physical education will be modified to reduce the number of transitions to/from the music room and the gym, and to reduce the number of students in the gym. Classes will not be sharing music or physical education time.

As per the Government of Alberta, learning experiences involving in-person singing or playing of wind instruments should be postponed at this time. We will continue to work hard at providing students an opportunity to experience and appreciate music.

We are also re-evaluating the use of physical education equipment, as use of shared items should be avoided. Any equipment that is shared will be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Shared Technology Use

At this time, students will not be using the computer lab. We will re-evaluate as the school year progresses. Devices in classes may be shared but will be required to be sanitized / cleaned between student use. Staff will continue to collaborate and work together to ensure safety and access for everyone.

Restrooms

Our goal is to reduce the contact points between students as much as possible. Students are still allowed to use the restrooms but are asked to limit or reduce their restroom breaks through the day.

For cleaning and sanitization, all washrooms will have a checklist posted to note that the date and time of when the washroom was cleaned.