

INFORMATION ON COVID-19

As questions present with regard to the COVID-19 virus and our Division's response, we will endeavour to share these common questions and answers at this location. As questions present, we will update this Q and A database.

QUESTION: WHAT DOES SELF-ISOLATION MEAN AND WHEN IS SELF-ISOLATION RECOMMENDED?

Self-isolation is when people are recommended to stay at home for 14 days when they have the symptoms of COVID-19 and/or they have returned from an International destination (recent recommendation from Alberta Health Services March 12, 2020). Self-isolation involves staying at home, avoiding contact with others and ensuring hygiene practices are heightened (counters wiping, own toilet if possible, not sharing food).

QUESTION: WHAT IS THE DIVISION DOING TO ENSURE THAT THE SCHOOLS ARE CLEAN?

Answer: Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces (e.g. door handles, water fountain push buttons) will help prevent the transmission of viruses. This will be done using school cleaning and disinfection protocols, particularly the COVID-19 virus Disinfection is most effective on a clean surface; surfaces will be cleaned first, as necessary, before applying the disinfectant.

THE MORE IMPORTANT METHOD OF PREVENTION IS AROUND EDUCATION AND SUPPORTING PRACTICES THAT PROMOTE CLEAN SCHOOLS AND HEALTHY STUDENTS.

Enforcing strict hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette hand hygiene with plain soap and warm water is preferred in schools as the mechanical action of hand washing is effective at removing visible soil as well as microbes. If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol based hand sanitizers may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses. Students/children and adults in the child care setting should clean their hands:

- 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
- Respiratory etiquette in school/child care settings includes covering the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow and disposing of used tissues in a plastic-lined waste container, followed by hand hygiene.

QUESTION: MY CHILD IS SUPPOSED TO GO ON A FIELD TRIP. IS IT SAFE?

Answer: Lethbridge School Division is cancelling all field trips and extracurricular events outside of Lethbridge. As well, events in Lethbridge that support gatherings of more than 50 attendees, and/or events that involve seniors or other high risk populations such as immune compromised individuals are cancelled. Large events with more than 250 attendees, including sporting events, conferences and community events will not be attended. School administrators will take steps to ensure that no more than 250 people are in the same room at any given time. We continue to work with AHS as they also support and monitor public facilities and community events and we recognize that as time progresses recommendations may change.

QUESTION: SHOULD MY CHILD RIDE THE BUS IF THEY HAVE TO SIT CLOSE TO ANOTHER STUDENT?

Answer: Transportation is working closely with the City of Lethbridge to ensure that busses are cleaned regularly. If you have concerns with your child riding the bus then please arrange alternate methods of transportation to get your child to school.

QUESTION: WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS SNEEZING/COUGHING?

Answer: Alberta's Chief Medical Officer emphasized the importance of not having tolerance for individuals who exhibit signs of COVID-19. A Parent Guide for School Attendance is available on the website. If schools note that a student is symptomatic (exhibit signs of COVID-19), parents/ guardians will be contacted to pick up their child.. The guide can be found here: <http://www.lethsd.ab.ca/download/239096>

QUESTION: WILL SCHOOLS STILL BE RUNNING EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS AND CLUBS?

Answer: Schools can continue with clubs or team practices if the activity meets the following requirements: the number of students is below 50, the activity has limited person-to-person contact, is conducive to social distancing, and protocols are in place for hygiene.

QUESTION: I HEAR THE TERM "SOCIAL DISTANCING" AND THAT IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONTAIN THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19. WHAT IS SOCIAL DISTANCING?

Answer: The World Health Organization (WHO) defines "social distancing" as maintaining 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing. It is recognized by Alberta's Chief Medical officer that contexts such as schools cannot guarantee social distancing. Schools will be examining how they can eliminate large gatherings and where possible, have smaller numbers that cluster during transition times. Hygiene protocols will be emphasized and reinforced throughout the day at schools to reduce potential transmission, especially during transition times where it is difficult to avoid larger numbers of students in common areas..

For more information, please see this document: <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid19-alberta-guidance-for-schools-and-child-care-programs.pdf>

QUESTION: WILL CLASSES SUCH AS FOODS CLASSES, OR OTHER OPTIONS SUCH AS THOSE WHERE STUDENTS HAVE ACCESS TO EQUIPMENT (E.G. SEWING, FITNESS CENTRES) BE CANCELLED?

Answer: The spread of this virus is not food related. It is surface contact related. As such, there is not necessarily a higher level of risk in classes where students are accessing equipment (computers, fitness machines, sewing machines, microwaves, etc.) if there are protocols in place for keeping surfaces clean. Like a classroom with desks and other resources, there cannot be guarantees that surfaces are clean; the best protocol is handwashing in any class context.

MORE INFORMATION REGARDING COVID-19
CAN BE FOUND ON THE LETHBRIDGE SCHOOL DIVISION WEBSITE
WWW.LETHSD.AB.CA
THE WEBSITE INFORMATION INCLUDES DAILY UPDATES
FROM ALBERTA HEALTH SERVICES,
ALONG WITH INFORMATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
AND THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION



Lethbridge
SCHOOL DIVISION