

### **March 18 UPDATE:**

Measures are in place to protect businesses, employers and employees from the economic disruption of COVID-19, including:

- Financial relief for businesses and employers
- Job-protected leave for employees
- Federal employment insurance benefits
- Business continuity planning resources
- Utility payment deferral

### **[COVID-19 supports for employers and employees](#)**

### **March 17 UPDATE:**

Alberta declared a state of emergency under the Public Health Act. Learn more here:

**[EMERGENCY](#)**

### **March 16 UPDATE:**

Lethbridge School Division has provided an update to parents in regards to Sunday's announcement that classes have been cancelled for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12. Alberta Education has let school jurisdictions know that the province will be developing and communicating a "base level of service" and school jurisdictions will navigate what the delivery looks like. For more details, please see this letter from Supt. Dr. Cheryl Gilmore: **[LETTER](#)**.

### **Excerpt from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw's March 16 statement:**

"Today is the first day of cancelled classes. I know this decision is going to impact parents for the days and weeks ahead, as you find child care solutions.

"To be clear, we did not close schools. Teachers and other school staff should continue to come to their schools to plan potential alternatives for students, particularly those in grade 12.

"Yesterday, we also announced that all licenced childcare facilities, out-of-school care programs and preschools were to close immediately.

"I know many parents are looking for child care arrangements, such as private child care providers. While they are able to remain open, these unlicensed day homes can only care for up to six children, not including their own, at any one time.

"These arrangements are not monitored by the province, and I encourage parents to seek out more information to make informed decisions.

"While grandparents and other seniors are a great help with child care, I would encourage limiting their exposure to children who have any signs of illness. Older Albertans are at an increased risk of having complications if they were to get COVID-19.

"Parents should also take precautions and limit the number of playdates to reduce the chances of community transfer. Parents should ensure that whether they are having friends or family care for their children, or they're attending a day home, handwashing facilities or hand sanitizer must be available to children and visitors who are encouraged to wash their hands frequently."

### **March 15 UPDATE:**

**As per Alberta Health Services:** Effective immediately:

- Student attendance at K to 12 schools is prohibited and in-person post-secondary classes are cancelled.
- All licensed child care facilities, out-of-school care programs and preschool programs are closed indefinitely.

Learn more here: [AHS SCHOOLS](#)

### **Important notice:**

Please do not contact schools tomorrow regarding belongings or other learning needs, unless it is a medical emergency. Sometime on Monday, schools will communicate the process by which medical supplies can be picked up at the school. On Tuesday, individuals who are healthy (no symptoms of COVID-19), will have the opportunity to pick up personal and academically-related items. Schools will set up a schedule for parents/guardians to make this process as orderly as possible. Once Lethbridge School Division staff has had an opportunity to meet at the Division and school levels to determine the next steps regarding learning for your child and how it will be accessed, those steps will be communicated.

An Assessment Guide for Parents has been created. This guide outlines how parents can help stop the spread of COVID-19. It also provides advice for school attendance. The document will be found here: [GUIDE](#)

The Division has also created a COVID-19 question and answer document. The document can be found here: [Q AND A](#)

A graphic which explains social distancing can be found here: [SOCIAL](#)

### **March 14 UPDATE:**

AHS has developed a simple online assessment tool to help you decide whether you need to call 811 to be tested for COVID-19. It'll guide you to answer questions about your symptoms and take you through steps to help determine whether you need testing. <http://ahs.ca/covid>

AHS has also developed a guidelines for schools and child care programs guide, which can be found here: [GUIDELINES](#)

### **March 13 UPDATE:**

Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Deena Hinshaw issued the following statement for Albertans on March 13:

"I now want to talk about schools. I know that many parents and teachers are worried about the risk of COVID in schools. We have seen other provinces and countries close schools as a preventive measure. What is important to know is that school closures are not universally agreed on as an effective intervention to prevent spread. In some other provinces that have chosen to close schools, they have not taken the other aggressive measures we announced yesterday.

It should be noted that the World Health Organization does not recommend school closure as the only way to prevent spread in the age group of young children. Instead, they also offer a safe schools checklist which describes the ways that school environments can be kept as safe as possible for students, teachers and staff.

Given the current situation in Alberta, the fact that any school closure would need to be in place for months, not weeks to be effective, and the fact that students may still be at risk of spreading infection in other settings besides schools, I have advised that school closures not be implemented at this time.

To be clear, schools, daycares and post-secondary institutions can remain open.

But steps should be taken to ensure that no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time. This includes limiting whole school activities, and canceling sporting events or after school activities where necessary.

Tomorrow, I will be talking to school authorities to walk them through guidance documents and provide information directly to answer their questions."

### **March 12 UPDATE:**

Lethbridge School Division schools remain open at this time. In terms of school closures, the Division relies on the advice of Alberta Health Services and Alberta Education. The division has enacted its pandemic plan and as a result, student travel outside the city will be restricted, as per the plan. The division is also following the advice of AHS to ensure no more than 250 individuals are in the same room at any given time. This will impact a range of school events throughout the division, until AHS advises otherwise.