COVID-19

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

**July 24, 2020**

**To: All Parents/Guardians**

**From: Cheryl Gilmore, Superintendent**

Dear Parents / Guardians of Lethbridge School Division

On July 21 Premier Kenney and Education Minister Adriana LaGrange announced that Alberta schools will open in September with near-normal operations with some health measures in place to reduce risk of the spread of COVID-19 in schools. As I communicated to parents/guardians on June 25, the Division commenced planning and preparation in June for different scenario possibilities. In that letter, I referred to scenario one as “regular operations with restrictions and protocols.” This is the scenario that guides our operations for September. I also let you know that there is a “2020-2021 Guidelines for Health and Safety Re-entry Plan – Parent Guide” on Lethbridge School Division website. The guide has a chart that outlines the health protocols and guidelines that will be in place. All of the guidelines apply to this fall *except* those in red that apply to scenario 2 only. The link to that guide is

[https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/download/280865](https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/download/280865    )

If the link does not work, cut and paste in browser or go to our website ([www.lethsd.ab.ca](http://www.lethsd.ab.ca)) and click on the COVID-19 update section

We will be reviewing and updating the guide in early August to ensure that everything is still in keeping with Alberta government protocols anticipating few changes. We all need to keep in mind that school jurisdictions follow decisions made by Alberta Health Services and the provincial government - circumstances can change.

It is understood that there may be some parents/guardians who do not want to send their children to school in the fall. I encourage you to review the Re-entry Guide outlining protocols that will be in place prior to making your decision. If a parent/guardian chooses to keep their child(ren) at home, Lethbridge School Division will be providing an at-home learning option. The at-home learning option will include on-line delivery of core courses and the potential of some option courses depending on grade level and suitability of the curriculum for at-home delivery at the different grade levels. If a parent decides to choose this option, please recognize that some support is typically needed at home and the same expectations regarding meeting curriculum outcomes and assessment will be in place for at home and in school learning.

**VERY IMPORTANT**

**Again, ON OR BEFORE AUGUST 4TH, you will be sent a link to a survey that is of critical importance for final assignments of students to classrooms (at school or at home).** It is essential for you to fill it out as quickly as possible. The survey is essentially a commitment to the choice you will make regarding the attendance of your child(ren) at the school site or at-home delivery. This information is critical for the school division because we will need to organize our delivery of learning according to the number of students who will be in the schools and the number who will be at home. Students who will have delivery of learning at home will become part of a cohort of students who will be assigned an “at home delivery” teacher. Each cohort organized by grade level may be made up of students from across several schools. When a parent/guardian selects “at school” or “at home” delivery, we are asking that the commitment be made for a minimum of one quarter of the school year. We are calling the dates that students can change “pivot” points. The first quarter ‘pivot point” is November 10 (the last day of the first quarter). I am hopeful you understand that we need to have commitment to delivery choices because it would be extremely difficult for the division to assign teachers their classes (at home or at school delivery), and for teachers to provide high quality instruction with students moving back and forth between delivery options on an ongoing basis. This being said, we are fully aware that the province can change what the structure of schools look like with very little notice depending on public health circumstances, and the division will respond accordingly.

There have been some inquiries regarding “home schooling.” Home schooling is not the same thing as what we are calling “at-home learning” to which we will assign teachers for delivery. If a parent chooses to pursue “home schooling” there are different providers who work with parents to deliver the learning (in the home school provincial regulation, you can see that parents are ultimately responsible for the planning and delivery of instruction with a jurisdiction providing support; this looks different across different providers). If you pursue this avenue, your child(ren) would be a home school student with another provider for the year (there are not pivot points for returning to regular classes).

I know that these are very challenging times for everyone; I truly hope that our students and families are having some wonderful summer experiences.

The school division is committed to the health and safety of students and staff; we want our students to continue to thrive academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. We will do our very best to make re-entry as seamless as possible and maintaining the joy and exhilaration students feel when they start a new school year.

**Again, you will be sent a link to a survey that is of critical importance for final assignments of students to classrooms (at school or at home).**

Take care,

Cheryl

