September 14, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

Re: Respiratory Illness at Park Meadows Elementary School, Lethbridge

Park Meadows Elementary School has recently experienced an increase in numbers of students ill with respiratory illness, including COVID-19 core symptoms. Respiratory Illness is defined as a new onset of two or more symptoms, at least one of which must be respiratory: cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose/nasal congestion, loss of taste/smell, fever, fatigue (significant and unusual), muscle/joint pain, headache or nausea/vomiting/diarrhea.

The germs that cause illness can be easily spread from one child to another through coughing and secretions from the nose and mouth. The recommended control measures are effective for any respiratory virus.

To help minimize spread of any respiratory virus we always recommend the following:
- Get immunized against vaccine preventable respiratory illnesses such as COVID-19 and influenza. Immunization against COVID not only protects you, but also your children and others under 12 years of age who are too young for COVID vaccine.
  - If you/your child are eligible for vaccine, have not been immunized with 2 doses of COVID-19 vaccine and don't have any symptoms currently, please schedule an appointment at COVID-19 Immunization Booking | Alberta Health Services or by calling 811.
- Ensure your child's routine immunizations are up to date.
- All household members should wash hands often with soap and water thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty.
- Encourage household members to not touch their eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Stay home if you are sick. If your kids are sick, keep them home from school.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often and shared by everyone in your home such as doorknobs, light switches and bathroom taps.
- Consider wearing a mask while in school to align with masking requirements in other public places, while keeping distance from others when in public places.

Students are able to return to school and other activities:
- If symptom free and test negative for COVID-19.
- After 10 days from symptom onset, if positive for COVID-19.
- If symptomatic and household contact of a confirmed COVID case, and not tested, to stay home for ten days after symptom onset.

There is no longer a legal requirement for quarantine of close contacts of cases of COVID-19. As a result, AHS Public Health is no longer identifying or notifying close contacts of cases of COVID-19.
- If staff or students develop symptoms as listed on the COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist please isolate at home and complete the AHS COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool or call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible to arrange for COVID-19 testing.
- If you or your child require medical attention, please call ahead to your health care provider or call Health Link at 811 so that they can care for your or your child safely.
- If you need emergency medical care, call 911 and tell them that you or your child may have been in contact with COVID-19 so that they can care for you or your child safely.

Please call HealthLINK Alberta toll-free (811) if you have any further questions or for further information refer to the Alberta Health Services website: Home | Alberta Health Services

Sincerely,

Alberta Health Services Public Health South Zone