



## **SPECIAL BOARD MEETING AGENDA**

Aspen View Public Schools acknowledges Treaty 6 territory: the ancestral and traditional territory of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, as well as the Métis. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations. We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those on whose territory we reside or are visiting.

<b>Business to be discussed:</b> Masking Protocols	Motion Required
<b>Adjournment</b>	Motion Required



**Meeting Date: September 7, 2021**  
**Topic: Masking Protocols**

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**Background Information:**

On September 3, 2021 the provincial government announced increased measures to protect public health. One of the temporary measures introduced was a mandatory masking requirement for all indoor public spaces and workplaces. Schools are not required to implement masking, however school boards continue to have the autonomy to set COVID-19 policies that they deem appropriate.

One of the key components of the Aspen View Return to School Plan was the flexibility to adjust the plan should circumstances change. The information below is taken from the Alberta government website on Monday, September 6 and shows the number of active cases and the number of vaccinations by age groups in the communities we serve.

Data as of September 2, 2021 from Government of Alberta websites:

<b><u>Current Cases (Local Geographic Area)</u></b>		
	<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>Cases per 100k</b>
Smoky Lake	6	126.9
Athabasca	34	318.2
Boyle	14	395.0
Westlock (Thorhild area)	72	375.6
Slave Lake	83	710.8

<b><u>Current Cases (Municipality)</u></b>		
	<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>Cases per 100k</b>
Smoky Lake County	73	871.3
Athabasca County	41	313.6
Thorhild County	15	551.3
MD of Lesser Slave River	77	713.8

<b><u>Vaccinations</u></b>	<b>12+ (at least 1 dose)</b>	<b>12-19 (at least 1 dose)</b>	<b>12+ (fully vaccinated)</b>	<b>12-19 (fully vaccinated)</b>
Smoky Lake	62.60%	37.30%	57.40%	32.30%
Athabasca	69.00%	56.70%	62.70%	46.70%
Boyle	58.50%	40.90%	51.10%	29.00%
Westlock (Thorhild area)	68.20%	49.60%	61.20%	40.90%
Slave Lake	59.80%	53.90%	51.20%	42.30%

In addition, the following changes since the release of the plan need to be considered.

- Approximately 10% of students are wearing masks even though it was strongly encouraged.
- Approximately 50% of staff members are wearing masks even though it was strongly encouraged.
- The number of positive daily cases in Alberta, the stagnation of vaccinations, the increased hospitalizations and the number of people in intensive care beds continue to cause health care professionals concern.

I recommend that the attached masking protocol be implemented as a temporary measure in all schools, all school division offices and any other school division enclosed spaces beginning Wednesday September 8, 2021 with a reassessment when the provincial masking mandate is lifted.

## **Attachments**

Deputy Minister Email Dated September 3, 2021  
 Division Review  
 Aspen View Masking Protocol September 2021

## **Submitted by:**

**N. O'Shea, Superintendent**

## **Recommendation or Action Requested:**

For discussion.

*French Translation to follow.*

Colleagues:

This communication is in follow-up to the announcement made by the Government of Alberta this morning that made masking mandatory in all indoor public spaces and workplaces starting September 4 at 8 a.m. Schools are not required to implement masking for staff or students and school authorities will continue to set COVID-19 management policies as they deem appropriate. You can read more about the announcement in the [news release](#) or watch the announcement at [alberta.ca/news](http://alberta.ca/news).

I would also like to note that masking on school buses is required for all individuals age 2 and older. Earlier this week, Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health issued [Order 34-2021](#) that allows for exemptions where a school board adopts and implements a School Bus Safety Plan. Requirements and measures for the School Bus Safety Plan are included in the order. These plans do not require prior approval by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, but need to be available upon request and published on the board's website.

As noted in my earlier email, school authorities continue to have the ability and corresponding accountability for any local measures that are put in place, such as physical distancing, cohorting and masking requirements, which may exceed provincial guidance. If school divisions make the decision to go beyond the provincial guidance, part of the accountability you have to your communities is to explain why this is necessary in your local contexts.

Alberta Education will continue to work closely with Alberta Health to develop and modify guidance for health best practices to support the [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#). We remain committed to providing Education partners with information as it is available.

Vaccination remains an effective means of protecting Albertans from COVID 19, and it is an important part of protecting children, students and each other. This is why we continue to encourage all eligible teachers, staff, students, parents and guardians to get vaccinated against COVID-19. As you know COVID-19 vaccinations will be available in schools in September and October for eligible students in Grades 7-12. Staff in those schools will also be able to access vaccinations, if desired — as well as parents if there are sufficient supplies.

Thank you again for all of your efforts to keep students and staff safe as we begin a new school year.

Regards,

Andre Tremblay  
Deputy Minister of Education

cc: Secretary-Treasurers of Public, Separate, Francophone and Charter School Authorities  
Executive Directors of Stakeholder Associations  
Communications Contacts at School Divisions

Below are links to a number of divisions who made adjustments to their return to school plans recently. I did not include the large urban boards and nor did I check every board in the province.

Elk Island – September 2 - <https://www.eips.ca/about-us/whats-new/post/elk-island-public-schools-board-of-trustees-changes-masking-requirement>

St. Paul – September 3 - <https://www.stpaueducation.ab.ca/post/important-update-on-masks-in-school>

Lakeland Catholic – September 3 - <https://www.lrcssd.ca/our-division/lcsd-news/news/post/temporary-mask-measures-implemented-at-lakeland-catholic-schools>

Northern Gateway – September 3 - <https://www.ngps.ca/about-us/news/post/update-masks-required-in-school-common-spaces>

Holy Family School Division – September 3 - <https://hfcrd.ab.ca/covid-19/hfcrd-board-of-trustees-changes-masking-requirement/>

Elk Island Catholic – September 3 - <https://www.eics.ab.ca/about-us/media-room/post/elk-island-catholic-schools-changes-masking-requirement>

Foothills School Division – September 3 - [https://www.foothillsschooldivision.ca/\\_ci/p/5176](https://www.foothillsschooldivision.ca/_ci/p/5176)

Fort McMurray – September 2 - <https://www.fmpsdschools.ca/view.php?action=object&id=43650&stream=Homepage%20News>

Fort McMurray Catholic – September 2 - <https://fmcschools.ca/news/fmcsd-updated-covid-19-protocols/>

Northern Lights – August 26 - <https://www.nlpsab.ca/our-division/news/post/2021-2022-back-to-school-plan>

Greater St. Albert – August 31 - <https://www.gsacrd.ab.ca/download/362490>

Red Deer Catholic Schools – September 5 - <https://www.rdcrcs.ca/our-division/whats-new/post/rdcrs-2021-09-05-school-re-entry-adjustments>

#### Upcoming Meetings

Wild Rose – Special Meeting – September 8 - <https://www.wrsd.ca/our-division/news/post/special-board-meeting-september-8-2021>

Parkland – Special Meeting – September 7 - <https://www.psd.ca/division/news/post/special-board-meeting-scheduled-for-september-7>

Pembina Hills – Board Meeting – September 8 - <https://www.pembinahills.ca/our-division/news/board-to-consider-mask-requirement-in-schools/>

## Aspen View Masking Protocols September 2021

- Masks will be required for all students, staff and visitors in all indoor school common areas such as hallways, the school office, public washrooms, cafeterias, etc.
- Typically, masks will not be required while students are seated in the classroom during instruction if additional measures are in place. (i.e. if students are all facing in the same direction and working alone at their desks, adequate physical distancing is available)
- Masks may be required in classrooms for a number of reasons including, but not limited to:
  - When activities, as determined by the teacher, require close contact or movement around the room (i.e. group work, labs, close collaboration on projects)
  - When room or desk configuration prevents adequate physical distancing between students and/or staff
- Additional mask requirements may be instituted by the Superintendent of Schools in certain situations including, but not limited to:
  - A school is under Outbreak, as defined by AHS
- Mask use will be required (Kindergarten through grade 12) whenever and wherever students are instructed to wear a mask.
- Masks are required on the school bus for all staff and students, Kindergarten to Grade 12
- Masks are not required outside when appropriate distancing can be maintained
- The Superintendent of Schools, or designate, may determine programming, activities or situations that allow students to remove their masks for the duration of the activity, when:
  - Additional safety measures are in in place or use
  - The nature of the activity makes mask impractical
- Masks are not required during strenuous physical activities (such as during physical education classes or during sporting activities)
- This masking protocol will remain in place while a Provincial Masking Mandate is in effect.
- A person is not required to wear a mask if the person is/has:
  - Unable to place or remove the mask without assistance;
  - Seated while consuming food or drink;
  - Providing or receiving care, assistance, or instruction where a mask would hinder that care, assistance, or instruction
- A person who is unable to wear a mask due to a health condition and who has a medical exemption letter provided by an authorizing health professional is exempted from wearing a mask
- Students with complex medical and/or learning needs may qualify for a mask exemption, to be determined on an individual basis by the school principal