

COVID-19 Return to School Protocols

Returning to Foothills Academy: Fall 2020



August 11th 2020

Scenario 1 Return to School Near Normal Operations

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Introduction & Rationale

The Ministry of Education provided three re-entry scenarios for schools to resume operations in the Fall of 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. In-school classes resume (near normal with health restrictions)
2. In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)
3. At-home learning (in-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

As of July 21st, the Ministry of Education announced that all schools in the province will be following the government's directions under scenario 1: to resume in-school classes, with near-normal operations and some health restrictions [Alberta Education Re-entry Plan](#). On August 4th, the Minister of Education announced that **all students and staff will be required to wear masks in schools**. This document sets out the protocols that are required for school re-entry to Foothills Academy in the Fall.

Foothills Academy is committed to the safety and security of students, staff, families, board members and visitors, during the COVID-19 pandemic. The protocols presented in this manual are requirements and information for all stakeholders to be aware of and to adhere to, for the safety of all at Foothills Academy. Due to the changing nature of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, **these protocols are subject to amendment at any time**. We will continue to take our direction from the Alberta government, and we expect all stakeholders to comply with these COVID-19 protocols.

The Chief Medical Officer has acknowledged that there will most likely be cases of COVID-19 in schools in Alberta when re-entry to schools happens in the Fall. Foothills Academy's protocols and policies presented here aim to:

- Provide the most reasonable physical safety of students, staff & stakeholders.
- Provide continuity in student learning, growth and development.
- Support social and emotional wellbeing of students.

Staff and students are integral to these protocols, and so too are parents. The role of parents is a key component to our successful re-entry plan. This year's school development maxim is **"Stronger Together"**, and there is no doubt that this is more relevant now, than ever before.

We are focusing upon specific health practices, school operations, education program changes, and facility changes, in our attempt to minimize potential COVID-19.

The protocols focus upon:

1. **Health Re-entry Protocols**
2. **Building Re-entry Protocols**
3. **Learning Re-entry Protocols**
4. **Operational Re-entry Protocols**

1. Health Re-entry Protocols

Masks and Shields

COVID-19 can be spread by infected individuals who have not yet, or who may never develop symptoms. Therefore: **Every person entering Foothills Academy MUST be wearing a mask, and masks MUST be worn in all common areas of the building**, such as hallways, reception desks and open areas. Masks may be removed in classrooms or offices if the room has a closing door and if the individuals within the room can safely practice physical distancing.

Alberta Education is providing two reusable masks for every student. However, students will need to wear their own masks on the bus journey on the first day of school.

Alberta Education is also providing two reusable masks and one face shield for all teachers and assistants. However, a face-shield **cannot** be worn alone as an alternative to a mask; face-shields may only be worn in conjunction with a mask.

Staff may want to use their own masks, and considering the need to 'normalize' mask wearing for students, staff may want to wear masks that have some appeal to students; a small gesture to help limit student anxiety around masks.

Masks include homemade cloth masks or non-medical face masks. Masks help to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 in areas where physical distancing may not be possible. For more guidance on wearing non-medical face masks, and how to take care of your mask, refer to [Guidance for Wearing of Non-Medical Face Masks for the General Public](#).

Screening

It is of paramount importance that nobody enters the building with symptoms of COVID-19.

All parents must complete the COVID-19 Symptoms screening tool with their child every day before coming to school or getting on the bus (the form is provided at the end of this document).

All staff members must complete the screening tool, and will be required to sign-in upon entering the building, to confirm that they have no symptoms of COVID-19.

Individuals (students or staff) may have pre-existing conditions which present as symptoms of COVID-19; such as seasonal allergies. If anybody has symptoms of COVID-19, they must take a COVID-19 test, and if the results come back negative and the symptoms persist (because the symptoms are due to their pre-existing condition), then that individual is allowed back into the building and the level of their symptoms are taken as the benchmark for their good health. If the symptoms worsen, they must take another COVID-19 test.

An **electronic** attendance form will be shared with all parents before school starts. This will be a new way for parents to report a child's absence from school, and helps Foothills Academy to closely track and monitor student illness and COVID-19 symptoms throughout the school.

All visitors coming into the school must sign in and declare that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19.

Foothills Academy will be limiting visitors into the building, and parents wanting to drop off items for their students during the school day will be requested to do so at a designated area just by the front doors, rather than the front desk.

Responding to Illness

Although no student or staff member will come to school with symptoms, individuals may come down with symptoms during the school day. If a student becomes symptomatic during the day, they will immediately go to the designated isolation room.

The student who has been taken ill will be asked to wear a mask if they can, and they will be isolated immediately. The parents or guardians of the student will be contacted, and the student must be picked up from school immediately. **Parents must be able to pick up their child within one hour, or have arranged for a designate to be able to do so instead.**

The staff member taking the student to the isolation room should wear a mask and a face shield if necessary. A face shield is required if the sick student is sneezing, coughing or vomiting.

Staff who fall sick during the school day should ensure they are physical distancing from others, inform their supervisor straight away, and arrange to leave the building as soon as possible.

Where an individual (student or staff member) has left the building due to COVID-19 symptoms, they must have a negative COVID-19 test result before returning to the building.

If there are cases of COVID-19 identified within the school, the Zone Medical Officer of Health will be contacted to work with Foothills Academy. The Medical Officer of Health/designate will collect relevant information required for contact tracing, and will provide medical guidance to Foothills Academy.

2. Building Re-entry Protocols

The overall cleaning and sanitizing of the building is required to be even more rigorous during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, an updated cleaning schedule has been developed, whereby high-contact areas are regularly disinfected throughout the day. All classrooms will be disinfected at the end/start of every day.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hand Hygiene is one of the critical aspects of minimizing the risk of transmitting COVID-19, and it is essential that everyone is diligent with this.

There will be a requirement for everyone entering the building to spray their hands with the hand sanitizer at the entranceway when coming into the building. Additionally, there will be hand sanitizer in every classroom, and anybody entering or leaving any classroom, at any time, must sanitize their hands. Classroom staff will administer hand sanitizer to students' hands when it is appropriate.

Water fountains will remain open, as they are not considered to be a high risk of transmission for COVID-19. However, any push buttons on water fountains are high-contact surfaces, and will be sanitized regularly. Regardless, students will be encouraged to use their own drinking bottles for water.

There will be hand-washing posters and respiratory etiquette posters located throughout the school, as constant reminders to educate all about the best practices for a healthy school.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing will be expected as much as possible in all main areas, and markings on the floor will indicate the two-metre distance which individuals are meant to keep from one another.

Where physical distancing cannot be accomplished in a classroom, the classroom staff must arrange the classroom so that physical distancing can be practiced as best as possible. It is also important to adjust lesson objectives and activities to avoid group interaction and sharing of equipment (where possible).

In order to maintain physical distancing, there will be no assemblies or large group gatherings at this time.

Washrooms will be limited to one student at a time, so as to be able to maintain physical distancing.

Even though the student and staff population will be split up into different cohorts to better conduct contact tracing if necessary, it is important to maintain physical distancing even within the same cohort, when possible.

High Traffic Areas

More high-school classes will be semestered, to help reduce the flow of student traffic in the hallways, and to benefit students with Learning Disabilities with regards to their executive functioning and taxing of cognitive load. To further reduce traffic flow, start and end times of lessons for different cohorts will be staggered, and teachers will rotate to different classes rather than student, where possible.

In addition to the physical distancing markers on the floor, there will be directional arrows to provide a flow of student travel through the school to help support physical distancing.

In any public areas, seating will be restaged or removed so as to prevent individuals gathering and congregating in the area.

Auxiliary Spaces

In all hallways and public spaces, everyone will be required to observe physical distancing measures. Markers will be on the floor to show physical distance spacing and directional flow.

There will be no assemblies or large gatherings

The school gym is not deemed to be an auxiliary space; it is used in the same capacity as a classroom. However, there are more parameters to adhere to in the gym:

- PE should be outside where possible, and the guidance for outdoor activity document will be followed by the PE teaching team
- Focus on sports where physical distancing is more possible.
- If equipment must be shared (eg: rackets) then they must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use (as well as users practicing hand hygiene).
- Team One students (Cohort one) do not need to change for gym class, and it is also not required for Cohorts 2 and 3. This reduces the potential for cross contamination in the changing rooms.

3. Learning Re-entry Protocols

In-Person Learning

All students and staff will become part of a **cohort**, which is a group of students who do not cross over with other cohorts. This is to reduce the possible number of transmissions of COVID-19, and assists with more accurate contact tracing where necessary.

Different cohorts will enter the building at different entrances, information about which will be shared prior to school start up. The current cohort structure is:

1. **Cohort 1:** Grades 3-6. (Cohort one can be broken down into sub-groups where grades 3 and 4 make a smaller cohort, grade 5 makes a smaller cohort, and grade 6 makes a smaller cohort).
2. **Cohort 2:** Grades 7-9.
3. **Cohort 3:** Grades 10-12.

Every classroom will have a clear and precise **seating plan**. Seating plans must be recorded every lesson by the teacher. This is so that in the event of a positive case of COVID-19, contact tracing becomes more specific to those in close proximity to the student or staff concerned.

There will be **no sharing** of items between students. Where this is not possible, such as in the gym, then all students must ensure good handwashing before and after sharing the items, and the items must be sanitized after every time they have been shared.

All classroom activities will be modified so that physical distancing can be managed as best as possible during every lesson.

All PE activities will be outside when possible.

There will be no large congregations of students, such as assemblies.

There will be no field trips at this time, to limit possible COVID-19 exposure in the community.

School Hours: Students should arrive at school no earlier than **8am**, and students will all leave the building after **3:30pm**.

There will be no extra-curricular activities, to limit students crossing over cohorts.

There will be no after-school homework club at this time. In light of this, daily schedules have been created to accommodate more direct, in-class support.

Continuity of at-Home Learning - CLASSROOM STREAMING

Students will be supported by Foothills Academy to learn at home if they are required to isolate due to illness or because they are a close contact of a case of COVID-19.

Foothills Academy is preparing for scenario 1 where all students return to school, so the support provided for at-home learning is via **Classroom Streaming**.

Classroom Streaming is **not** the same as the at-home learning experiences provided at the end of the last school year. Classroom Streaming will simply be students being able to videoconference into the

actual lesson being delivered by the teacher, in real-time. Teachers will be delivering lessons as normal, in-person lessons; which will be a different experience for students attending lessons on-line.

It is important to note that curriculum expectations will be at the usual, rigorous standards, regardless of whether students are in-class, or Classroom Streaming. In the at-home learning experiences between March and June, curriculum standards, expectations and outcomes were reduced and significantly modified. Such modifications are not possible this year.

Since our program relies upon in-person teaching and small class size, Classroom Streaming is not as effective as in-person teaching and learning. However, teachers and assistants will strive to provide continuity in learning and individual connections and interventions for those learning via Classroom Streaming. This will be limited by a variety of factors, including the number of students working from home at any given time.

When a staff member is self-isolating at home due to symptoms or awaiting test results, but they are feeling healthy enough to work, they will be expected to continue preparing, evaluating and assessing lessons and student growth. They will be expected to support with the delivery of lessons electronically, to aid the substitute teacher working in the classroom.

Vulnerable Students and Staff

Students who have underlying medical conditions which put them into a more vulnerable category and at greater risk/consequence for COVID-19, may be fearful of returning to school. It is important for parents to note that any student who is at a greater risk from catching COVID-19 may find **Classroom Streaming more preferable for their own health and safety.**

Parents must contact school Kim McLean (kimmclean@foothillsacademy.org) **before Friday 21st August**, to share concerns about their child's vulnerability to COVID-19, so that Foothills Academy can arrange for Classroom Streaming for these more vulnerable students.

4. Operational Re-entry Protocols

Visitors

Visitors to Foothills Academy will be limited, and every visitor coming into the building must sign in and acknowledge their reading of the COVID-19 checklist. Foothills Academy will keep a record of every person who signs into the building.

Parents who want to drop items off for their children during school hours will be able to drop things off at a designated area close to the front doors. This will help us to minimize traffic coming into the building. The same system is in place for daily mail deliveries.

Where parents or guardians are required to return forms to school, they will be returned with students or electronically (as much as possible). We want to minimize traffic within the building, so we encourage all parents to communicate via phone, videoconference or email rather than in-person, whenever it is possible and appropriate.

Student Transportation

Bussing: Travelling on the school bus is an extension of the school day, and thereby safety protocols need to be maintained on the busses too. It is important that nobody gets onto the school bus with any COVID-19 symptoms. Parents will be required to conduct the COVID-19 checklist for symptoms every day before students get onto the bus.

Masks are mandatory on the bus, for the entirety of the bus journey.

There will be strict, documented seating arrangements on the bus, to support contact tracing and help with effective cohorting measures at school. Where there are students from the same home, they must sit together. All students will load and disembark the bus in the same way. The first students onto the bus will go to the back and load back to front.

When disembarking the bus, students will leave the bus front to back. This will prevent students having to pass each other on the bus, and will allow for the identification of students who have been in contact with anybody who has a potential positive test of COVID-19.

When loading onto the bus, students will wait in a designated loading area, to load in the right order.

If any student riding the bus has a confirmed case of COVID-19, students within two metres of the student on the bus seating arrangement (two seats ahead, two seats behind and one adjacent) will be considered to have been in contact and will require quarantining and COVID-19 testing.

Car Drop-Off/Pick-Up: There will be a specific zone for parents to pick up and drop off students. In this zone, students will have to wait in a physical distanced manner, and there are to be no students in the pick-up/drop-off zone who have symptoms of COVID-19.

Staff Guidelines

All teaching staff will be designated to some form of cohort, and will be subjected to the same health measures and protocols as students.

Staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 must not come to school until they have had testing and negative results. Individuals may have symptoms of COVID-19 which are caused by other matters such as seasonal allergies. These staff must receive a negative test result before returning to work, and then their symptoms will be used as the permissible benchmark for them being at work (ie: they will be allowed to work with their seasonal allergy symptoms, although they would need another COVID-19 test if those symptoms became more severe).

Where staff are required to isolate at home whilst awaiting test results, they will be required to continue programming for their classes (assuming their symptoms are not impairing them to have a sick day due to illness). Staff will, to the best of their abilities, be able to access classrooms electronically, and support the substitute teachers working with their classes throughout the school day. In these cases, the teacher will remain responsible for planning, assessing and evaluating students work and progress.

There is a potential for greater than usual subbing requirements if a group of staff from within the same cohort requires testing. Foothills Academy will strive to ensure that the substitute teaching list is well populated, and other emergency measures will be planned for, such as using the certified administration to cover classes when necessary too.

All employees will follow best hygiene and social distancing protocols at all times. Foothills Academy staff are role models for best practices to maintain the safety of all students, staff and visitors.

Concerns and Contacts

These protocols are subject to change as the nature of the COVID-19 pandemic shifts. We will continue to be guided by Alberta Education and the Ministry of Health. All of our actions are intended to improve the safety of all individuals, whilst supporting the re-opening of schools and continuation of in-person student learning and growth at Foothills Academy.

For questions about **protocols**, contact:

Simon Williams (siwilliams@foothillsacademy.org).

For **school specific concerns**, contact:

Sean Horton (shorton@foothillsacademy.org) / Kim McLean (kimmclean@foothillsacademy.org)

For **transportation concerns**, contact:

Colleen Hnatiuk (chnatiuk@foothillsacademy.org) / Sean Horton (shorton@foothillsacademy.org).

Other Useful Contacts and Links:

- Calgary Zone Health Coordinator: 403 297 1700. CalgaryZone.EnvironmentalHealth@ahs.ca.
- [Alberta Education Reentry Plan](#)

COVID-19 Symptoms; Daily Screening Form

COVID-19 INFORMATION

GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY – SCENARIO 1

In-school classes resume (near normal with health measures)

Appendix C Screening Questionnaire

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/STUDENTS MUST USE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE DAILY TO DECIDE IF THE STUDENT SHOULD ATTEND SCHOOL

Risk Assessment: Initial Screening Questions

		CIRCLE ONE	
		YES	NO
1.	Do you, or your child attending the program, have any of the below symptoms:		
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Chills	YES	NO
	• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
	• Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
	• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
	• Muscle/ Joint aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	YES	NO
2.	Have you, or anyone in your household, returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Have you or your children attending the program had close <u>unprotected</u> * contact (face-to-face contact within 2 metres) with someone who is ill with cough and/or fever?	YES	NO
4.	Have you or anyone in your household been in close <u>unprotected</u> contact in the last 14 days with someone who is being investigated or confirmed to be a case of COVID-19?	YES	NO

* "unprotected" means close contact without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

If you have answered "Yes" to any of the above questions, please **DO NOT** enter the school at this time. You should stay home and use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine whether you need to be tested for COVID-19.

If you have answered "No" to all the above questions, you may attend school.