

A Safe Return to School

NLESD September Reopening Plan

2020-2021

August 17, 2020

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Executive Summary

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District's priority is the safety and well-being of our students and staff, particularly as we prepare for the return to school in September. The following plan describes how the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) schools are expected to operate in the 2020-2021 school year. This plan is subject to change as more information is received from the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD).

During preparation for school re-opening for September 2020, NLESD consulted with numerous stakeholders including students, teachers, school administrators, school councils, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers Association (NLTA), Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), Newfoundland Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE), and Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of School Councils (NLFSC). NLESD will continue to communicate with its stakeholders as part of the school re-entry process.

This re-entry plan follows guidelines and recommendations outlined in the [Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Education Re-entry Plan](#) released by EECD on July 6, 2020, and the [Newfoundland and Labrador Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) released by Health and Community Services on August 14, 2020. All information and plans for school reopening for September 2020 are based on available medical evidence and subject to change. Ever-mindful of public health measures, this plan takes into consideration the risks posed by COVID-19, as well as the negative effects of school closures on the physical and mental health of children. Furthermore, the District would also like to acknowledge Ottawa Catholic School Board for granting permission to use information from its [Return to School Plan for September 2020](#).

It is the District's goal to have students return and attend school five days a week as per **Scenario 1: In-school classes resume (near normal with health measures)**.

However, this is dependent on public health measures and recommendations from the CMOH. It is possible that return to in-class learning may vary across the province, depending on the situation with COVID-19 in local areas. Any decision to move a school or a family of schools to **Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)**, or **Scenario 3: At-home learning continues (In-school classes are suspended/cancelled)** will be decided by the District in consultation with regional public health officials. Given the changing nature of the situation, flexibility,

patience, and understanding will be needed as we work out solutions to the various challenges with a return to school.

The Guiding Principles informing the District's re-entry plan include:

- Ensuring a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.
- Supporting students who may require additional student services.
- Providing continuity of educational opportunities for all students.
- Working within the parameters of all contractual agreements with school district employees.

The District's core values including putting students first, learning and inclusion will continue to guide our work which is rooted in:

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL),
- Trauma-Informed Practice (TIP) and
- Comprehensive School Health (CSH).

As students and staff prepare for a return to schools, staff will need to support students with the transition back to the classroom while at the same time manage their own transition and health. The District will provide immediate and ongoing support for staff to further enhance their understanding and modelling of SEL, TIP and CSH.

A Framework for Return to School

1	Stakeholder Consultation Engage in dialogue with educational partners
2	Preparation of Schools and Work Sites Prepare schools for return of staff and students
3	Preparation for Staff Prepare staff for school re-opening with enhanced professional learning, understanding of possible re-entry scenarios, and human resources considerations
4	Preparation for Students Prepare for the return of students
5	Plans for School Operations Plan for school activities and protocols
6	Hygiene and Cleaning Plan for hygiene and cleaning procedures for schools and work sites

1. Stakeholder Consultation

The Newfoundland and Labrador English School District has been actively seeking feedback from the District's education partners as we plan for school re-opening. Numerous opportunities for dialogue and feedback have taken place involving students, parent community (schools councils), teachers via NLTA Special Interest Councils, school administrators via NLTA Special Interest Council and through a virtual Thought Exchange, the Director's Principal Advisory Group, CMOH, EECD, NLTA, NAPE, and CUPE.

The feedback received from the District's partners indicate a desire for students and staff to return to school in a safe, caring and hygienic environment. Families are looking forward to some sense of "normalcy" as they plan for return to school for September 2020, however they are also aware that any plans the District will make are dependent on public health conditions in their community. The District appreciates that families with young children are looking forward to their children returning to school so that they can also return to their work sites. Plans for school re-entry are focused with K-6 students attending school when at all possible. In addition, the District is cognizant of the barriers to learning that some students face. We will work with families to try and find a solution that meets their child's needs while keeping them, and others at the school safe. The District's staff and students' health and safety must be at the centre from which all decisions emanate.

Lessons learned from suspension of in-school learning from March 16 - June 26, 2020 indicate that the District needs to offer a more robust continuation of a learning platform that meets the needs of all learners. This includes the equitable provision of electronic devices and reliable broadband internet connection. Our stakeholders further commented that the District needs to provide professional learning opportunities for staff on teaching and learning in an online environment and assessing student learning in an online medium. As a result of this feedback, during May and June the District provided teachers with professional learning on our preferred learning platform (Google Classroom, Google Meet). In addition, the District is planning professional development on online assessment and evaluation, in the event that students may have to revert to online learning if schools have to suspend in-class learning again.

Feedback from NLESD teachers has also identified the need for enhanced professional development in the area of social emotional learning (SEL) and trauma informed practice (TIP). In an attempt to minimize the mental health impacts of the suspension of in-class instruction on students and staff, SEL is a core element of the re-entry plan. It is expected that children and adults may have experienced increased stress, and anxiety related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The three days of professional learning prior to the start of the school year for students will allow time for professional learning, specifically in the areas of health and safety, SEL, and TIP.

2. Preparation of Schools and Worksites

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), COVID-19 spreads from person to person, most commonly through respiratory droplets (e.g., generated by coughing, sneezing, laughing, shouting, or talking) during close interactions. Infected droplets on surfaces may be spread by someone touching droplets and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. The virus generally stays active on surfaces for 3 - 72 hours, depending on the type of surface. Cleaning with soap and water, or an approved disinfectant, will typically minimize the risk of spread.

Since the closure of schools on March 16, 2020 the District's Facilities and Custodial Management Division regularly maintained and inspected our schools and work sites. Before students return to our buildings, a [NLESD COVID-19 Hazard Assessment](#) is to be completed by school staff, typically by a site specific Occupational Health and Safety Committee/worker representative. The purpose of this report is to identify and mitigate possible concerns due to COVID-19.

As referenced in the **Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Education Re-entry Plan** released by EECD on July 6, 2020, physical distancing (2 metre spacing) is a useful public health measure to prevent the spread of disease. Schools and work sites should attempt to adhere to this recommendation when possible, however where 2 metres is not possible between desks in a classroom, the greatest possible spacing is recommended.

Occupational Health and Safety Committee/OHS Worker Representatives

The ongoing public health emergency has created new awareness of, and highlighted the role for, Occupational Health and Safety committees/OHS Worker Representatives. The District's OHS policies and COVID-19 specific guidance are the starting point for all District work sites. Supervisors should acquaint themselves with the [Right to Refuse Unsafe Work](#) process. While employees are implicitly empowered to seek advice from their respective bargaining unit representatives, this does not replace their duty to make supervisors aware of any perceived issues. Supervisors are empowered to address issues, within the context of District standards, to ensure safe workplaces. The District has begun to review training needs for existing and new OHS committee members, those that require initial training for committee members or re-certification. Training will be offered to committee members early in the school year. OHS Committees are still

able to conduct meetings, inspections, and hazard assessments in the absence of committee training.

Signage Reminding about Physical Distancing

Signage on walls and floors, including one-way directional signage will help students/staff maintain a 2 metre distance from one another whenever possible. Signage will be posted throughout schools and work sites including entrances and exits, cafeterias, library learning commons, staff rooms, outside of elevators, other common areas, gymnasiums, and main office areas.

Hand Sanitizer Dispensers and Cleaning Solutions

Hand sanitizer will be provided to each school and work site. It will be placed in all classrooms, main entrances, and common areas that do not have available water and soap for hygiene purposes. While the sharing of items and equipment is currently discouraged, where equipment must be used by more than one person, disinfectant solutions will be available. For instance, teachers will instruct students in the cleaning of such items as their keyboard and mouse, skilled trades tools, home economic equipment, and certain musical instruments.

Ventilation

In schools with mechanical ventilation, these systems are relied upon to provide air changes and are maintained (e.g., filter changes) to facilitate this. However, the vast majority of instructional spaces in K-12 schools in Newfoundland and Labrador are not mechanically ventilated. To ensure clean and wholesome air, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador created a [Natural Ventilation Protocol](#) over a decade ago. District schools have long been required to adhere to this protocol, but there will be a renewed emphasis on it in the new school year.

Mask Wearing in Schools

Based on the recommendations from the CMOH concerning non-medical masks (NMM):

- The use of NMMs is not required while in classrooms for children in K-12. This situation will be closely monitored and if there is a change in epidemiology or evidence regarding COVID-19 the recommendation may change.
- Some students may choose to wear a NMM in a classroom. Wearing a mask while in the classroom is a personal choice for students and their parents/guardians. It is important to treat people who wear masks with respect.

- NMMs are recommended in situations where a child cannot maintain physical distancing for extended periods of time and in close proximity to a person outside of their regular class cohort
- NMMs will be required in communal areas of a school (e.g., corridors, washrooms, entrances/exits) for high school students and staff, and for junior high school students if cohorts change classes.
- Staff will be required to wear NMMs in certain circumstances:
 - When physical distancing is not achievable outside of their cohort (e.g. in staff rooms/break rooms)
 - Teachers or other staff who move between cohorts or instruct multiple cohorts will have to wear NMMs if distancing cannot be maintained between themselves and other staff or students.
 - School office staff when physical distancing is not achievable and physical barriers are not in place.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Two washable and reusable non-medical masks will be made available to staff, and one per student in Grades K -12 for use at their discretion and when required as per recommendations from the CMOH. The training video made available by WorkplaceNL is required to be completed by all staff, and has a section on mask safety (e.g., properly donning and doffing). It is the individual staff member's responsibility to care for their own mask - washing and ensuring it is always available while at work. Schools will also be provided with a box of disposable masks for immediate mandatory use by students who may exhibit signs of illness such as coughing, while they await pickup to go home. Custodial staff and those providing direct physical care to students should wear disposable gloves in the course of their duties. Individual workplace duty assessments by Human Resources Managers responsible for Occupational Health and Safety, may determine face shields are a necessary additional level of protection. PPE will be provided to staff based on their roles.

Community Use of Schools

Until further notice, parents and community groups will not be permitted to enter school premises without prior permission. In addition, the District will monitor other non-essential visitors to schools including District staff, non-essential contactors and food service providers. Daycare or afterschool services that have been located in District schools may remain operating only upon receiving approval from the District via approval of the [Community Use of Schools Agreement Form](#). After-school use of

gymnasium, music rooms, and other venues where students gather is temporarily prohibited. There will be no use of school facilities on weeknights or weekends by student groups (band, sport teams, student leadership groups) or community groups (gym rentals) until further notice.

Playgrounds and Outdoor Space for Recess

Students are to wash their hands before and after recess. Schools may wish to stagger recess based on the size of the school or access to outside spaces. Plans and locations of areas should consider ways to minimize contact with students from other classroom cohorts during this time. If a school is in Scenario 1, they will be permitted to use playground equipment as long as mixing of cohorts does not take place and that handwashing occurs prior to and after use of playground equipment. During Scenario 2 and 3 playground use will not be permitted.

Plexiglass Separation

Portable plexiglass may be placed in high traffic areas where 2 metre physical distancing is not possible such as in the main office, or in spaces used by itinerant staff for one-to-one student assessments, etc. Where a distance of 2 metres can be maintained, plexiglass will not be needed. Where neither distancing nor barriers are present, staff and visitors will be required to wear non-medical masks.

Health Room/Area

Each school and work site must have a designated health room or area. This room/area will be used for the temporary placement of any student or staff member who becomes ill during the day. A health kit containing staff/student PPE will be provided for each school containing: nitrile, vinyl, or synthetic gloves, face masks, face shield or safety glasses for staff members, box of tissues, hand sanitizer, disinfectant spray or wipes and paper towels. Refer to [School Health Room Guidelines](#) for more information.

3. Preparation for NLESD Staff

Early Return to School

In addition to Administration Day, three professional learning days will allow for enhanced staff learning in the areas of: Health and Safety related procedures, Back to School Reopening plans and protocols, Comprehensive School Health, Social Emotional Learning for students and staff, Trauma Informed Practice, and Teaching, Learning, and Assessing in a Virtual Environment. Although the District is aiming to return to school in Scenario 1, we are mindful that with very short notice some of the District's schools may have to shift to Scenario 2 or 3. School staff will continue to be supported for teaching and learning in an online environment. The recent announcement by EECD for the distribution of laptops for teachers, and Chromebooks for students will certainly enhance the continuity of learning in the event of Scenario 2 and 3.

Social Emotional Learning

All school staff will participate in professional learning on social emotional learning. As students return to school after several months they may be nervous, anxious and have other concerns and questions relating to trauma they may have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is essential that staff welcome students back into our schools with kindness, empathy, and a focus on establishing or re-establishing the vital student-teacher-family relationship.

Staff Accommodations

With the aim to return to school in Scenario 1, the District is confident that staff can safely return to school with the health and safety protocols in place. Staff who are immunocompromised or have underlying medical conditions are not restricted from returning to school, but may require personal protective equipment or other supports that will be assessed on an individual case-by-case basis. Staff who express that they are not able to return to school due to pre-existing health considerations, and have supporting medical documentation, are advised to contact their [Regional Director of Human Resources](#) for information on the process to be considered for a workplace accommodation. The District will consult with union representatives with respect to employee accommodation requests.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Based on the recommendations from the CMOH concerning non-medical masks (NMM):

- The use of NMMs is not required while in classrooms for children in K-12. This situation will be closely monitored and if there is a change in epidemiology or evidence regarding COVID-19 the recommendation may change.
- Some students may choose to wear a NMM in a classroom. Wearing a mask while in the classroom is a personal choice for students and their parents/guardians. It is important to treat people who wear masks with respect.
- NMMs are recommended in situations where a child cannot maintain physical distancing for extended periods of time and in close proximity to a person outside of their regular class cohort
- NMMs will be required in communal areas of a school (e.g., corridors, washrooms, entrances/exits) for high school students and staff, and for junior high school students if cohorts change classes.
- Staff will be required to wear NMMs in certain circumstances:
 - When physical distancing is not achievable outside of their cohort (e.g. in staff rooms/break rooms)
 - Teachers or other staff who move between cohorts or instruct multiple cohorts will have to wear NMMs if distancing cannot be maintained between themselves and other staff or students.
 - School office staff when physical distancing is not achievable and physical barriers are not in place.

Each school will be provided with reusable non-medical masks for staff and students (Grades K -12), and disposable masks for students in the event that they exhibit signs of illness. Some staff such as instructional resource teachers, student assistants, and school administrators may require additional protective equipment when working with students with unique needs, such as difficulty with fluids and drool, spit, or excessive saliva, or those who require administration of medication by school staff, or other health supports.

Equity Considerations

As staff plan for teaching and learning in Scenarios 1, 2, and 3 we must remain cognizant of the differentiated support for all students. As outlined in the [Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Education Re-entry Plan](#) in Scenario 2 and possibly 3, we anticipate in-school attendance for students with exceptional needs. Staff will spend time

preparing for differentiated supports for students with exceptional needs and those who require additional supports.

As per the Education and Early Childhood Development [Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and the [Service Delivery Model](#) schools will continue to implement a tiered approach to teaching and learning. Schools will prioritize services for students not accessing prescribed curriculum (alternate curriculum and alternate curricular courses).

- Alternate Curriculum is defined as an individualized curriculum developed for a student with an identified exceptionality of moderate to profound intellectual disability. It is completely different from prescribed grade level curriculum, and is created in response to the individual student's identified learning profile, including their strengths and needs. It consists of programming in the following four domains: career development, personal development, independent living and functional academics. Program Planning teams will collaborate to facilitate programming to respond to students' learning needs in school.

Schools will continue to provide electronic devices (e.g., Chromebooks) and possibly mobile internet connection devices to students that do not have internet access in their homes. The availability and reliability of internet service is outside the control of the District and, unfortunately, not all areas of the province have reliable broadband internet service available. However, we will continue to advocate to provincial and federal governments for enhancements to infrastructure and services.

Staff Gatherings

Staff are expected to promote maintaining physical distance whenever possible as role models for students.

Hygiene Instruction

Upon return to school, hygiene routines will be reinforced regularly. Each staff member will be expected to highlight the importance of handwashing, avoiding touching one's face/eyes/nose/mouth, and the importance of coughing and sneezing into one's sleeve if a tissue is not available. Posters will also be available in school/work site washrooms illustrating proper hand washing and hygiene instructions.

Doors

Classroom and office doors should be left open during the day to minimize the number of students or staff who need to open the door physically. Please note that in keeping with NLESD lockdown and secure schools policy, the handsets should still be left in a

locked position, even if the door is open. A balance must be struck between the fire code to keep certain doors closed and open doors to minimize contact in high traffic areas. The District will work with the fire service authorities having jurisdiction in this regard.

Illness

Staff who have signs of illness are directed to stay home. Staff who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive with COVID-19 must follow public health directions. Information on Provincial Government directives and COVID-19 testing is available [here](#).

Sharing of Resources

Staff will limit sharing of classroom material and promote and use electronic resources where possible in class. Adequate supplies for instructional units will be provided to each student, and where this is not practical to give each student their own resources, then shared equipment should be cleaned or disinfected between use. For instance, teachers will instruct students in the cleaning of such items as their keyboard, mouse, skilled trades tools, home economic equipment, and certain musical instruments.

Outdoor and Non-classroom Space

When the weather is fine, staff will be encouraged to take students outdoors when possible during the school day for instruction and recess. It will be important for school staff to cooperate with their colleagues' schedules for outdoor activities and learning spaces.

District Level Support for Schools

District staff will continue to dialogue with school staff concerning support for students. Whenever possible, District staff should consider online means for interacting with school staff and/or students. District staff (e.g., Itinerants, Program Specialists) access to multiple schools may be limited, with engagement and support provided through virtual means wherever possible.

COVID-19 Screening Procedures

All students and staff must complete the [School Screening Questionnaire](#) daily to decide if they should attend school.

Although families are asked to screen their child daily for any symptoms of cold, flu or other symptoms associated with COVID-19, if school staff observe that a child is ill, a

parent/guardian will be called to pick up their child from the school promptly. Students exhibiting illness will not be permitted to travel on the school bus.

It is not staff's responsibility to screen students for illness; however, if a staff member is concerned that a student is exhibiting signs of illness, this will be reported to the school administration. If a student voluntarily shares that they or a member of their family has COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test, this will also be shared with the school administrator.

Public health will provide direction if there are concerns regarding a COVID-19 case in school. Schools should not provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school, including if they display symptoms of COVID-19, unless directed to by public health.

The [School Screening Questionnaire](#) is subject to change as per guidelines of Community Health officials, any changes will be communicated by schools to families.

Student Attendance

Student attendance will continue to be taken for all students that arrive in school during Scenario 1 and 2. The accuracy of student attendance data is extremely important in the event that contact tracing is required. Parents who choose to keep their children out of school during Scenario 1 or 2 will be required to submit an [application for Home Schooling to the District](#). More information on [Home Schooling can be found here](#).

Online Support for Teaching, Learning and Assessment

The District will continue to offer various levels of professional learning for teachers in the use of digital tools (e.g., Google Docs/Meet/Classroom) for online teaching and learning. Based on parent/guardian and teacher feedback, one area of growth for the District is in the area of assessing student learning in an online environment. The District will continue to provide professional learning opportunities for staff in the area of assessment and evaluation and further investigate the use of standards - based grading across all grade levels.

Experiential Courses

Some courses will require greater modifications than others given the goal of maintaining 2 metres of physical distance and the need to clean and disinfect shared equipment. The District is developing guidelines, in consultation with NLTA Special Interest Councils, to assist teachers in modifying activities in areas such as technology

(including skilled trades courses), home economics, music, physical education, and fine arts. Where safety cannot be addressed with in-person activities, alternative online activities will be recommended with the spirit of maintaining the integrity of the course outcomes.

4. Preparation for NLESD Students

While we continue to come to terms with living with COVID-19, it is anticipated that students will be excited, yet possibly nervous, to return to school in September. While the District will be providing professional learning to staff in the area of social emotional learning, schools may wish to send home an email or short video introducing themselves and welcoming students to their school for new and returning students. This is an excellent opportunity for students to get an early look at their school and possibly alleviate anxiety and uncertainty.

Return to In-school Learning

School staff will have the opportunity to learn more about supporting students and the potential impact of trauma on student learning, behaviour and relationships. Professional learning opportunities for teachers on trauma and social emotional learning will be available prior to the return of students. This will help students adjust to a return to school, and provide a solid foundation for building meaningful relationships with school staff and peers.

Communication with Students and Families

The District will continue its efforts to provide effective communication to all stakeholders and support schools as we collectively prepare for a return to school in September. The District and individual schools will continue to provide updates to families through the mediums most familiar to their school communities. At the District level, this includes through releases, advisories and interviews with local news media, [NLESD website](#), [NLESD Twitter](#), and other means where appropriate. For schools, this may include School Messenger, email notifications, school websites, social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, etc), or other local communications tools.

Students and teachers will continue to use the Google platform for communication and teaching and learning interactions. Opportunities for families to learn more about the Google platform (Docs/Meet/Classroom) will be available in September.

Student Illness and Management of Students with Possible COVID-19

If a student becomes ill during the day and/or they exhibit signs of illness, they will be required to enter a designated health room or area. A parent/guardian, or an emergency contact, will be called for immediate pickup. While in the health room/area the student will be required to wear a disposable mask, and any staff member assisting the student will be required to wear a mask and face shield. The student is not to return to school until medical clearance has been provided.

Please refer to [If a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms](#) for information on protocol to follow for possible case of COVID-19 in schools.

Curriculum Instruction

The expectation is that teachers will do their utmost to determine the diverse learning needs of their students as they return to school. Students missed three and a half months of in-class schooling last spring and may be at different levels of knowledge and skills in specific courses and grade levels. In order to address this and to ensure the completion of the 2020-2021 curriculum, appropriate adjustments of individual curricula have been made by EECD, and committees of practicing educators that reviewed and prioritized curricula while maintaining the integrity of courses. For some courses the order of instruction has been mandated in order to ensure, as much as possible, provincial consistency in case further adjustments are required during the 2020-21 school year.

Teachers are advised to visit the [K-12 Professional Learning website](#) for adjustments to individual curricula.

Students who Require Individualized Programming and Services

Student Services staff will continue to implement and monitor Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) and Individual Support Services Plans (ISSPs). Student Services staff will be responsible for assessing the needs of PPE for staff who work with students who may not maintain physical distance. Individual behaviour management plans will be developed for students that need support with self-regulation. District staff may be consulted to assist in developing strategies for such plans. Strategies for the desensitization to masks will be reviewed. Please refer to Student Services Protocols in the Appendix of this report for more information.

Specialized Personal Protective Equipment

Students who require visual cues for communication will be identified by student services staff and specialised PPE will be provided for staff that support these students. This will include masks with a clear window by the mouth area that will assist for communication.

Student Reminders

As students return to school, a strong focus will continue to be on proper hygiene. Students will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands frequently, including upon entering and exiting school, before and after eating, moving between classes, before and after experiential activities (e.g., physical education, music, home economics, skills trades, etc.) and before and after using the washroom.

Water Bottles

Students will be encouraged to bring their own labelled, full water bottles to school each day. Water fountains may be used to refill water bottles, however drinking directly from water fountains will not be permitted until further notice.

Lockers and Cubbies

School administrators should conduct an analysis of their school's space to determine whether lockers and cubbies can be used while maintaining physical distance, possibly creating scheduled staggered times where groups of students access lockers to reduce congestion in corridors. In general, schools should prioritize what student materials are needed in the classroom to reduce the need for multiple trips to lockers. The sharing of lockers/cubbies is not encouraged, unless for siblings from the same households.

International Students

The District will welcome international students when travel restrictions are lifted, and we are better prepared to support their learning. All students entering the country as part of the International Student Program will be required to follow guidelines established by EECD and public health.

Kindergarten Students

Due to COVID-19 visitor restrictions at all NLESD schools, families of Kindergarten students will not be permitted to enter school with their children until further notice.

Curriculum Night/Meet the Teacher Night

Due to concerns with visitors entering schools, Curriculum Night/Meet the Teacher Night will not take place face-to-face, rather schools may offer virtual opportunities to engage with families.

Parent - Teacher Meetings

There will be no in-person parent-teacher meetings scheduled during Semester 1. However, there will be opportunities for families to dialogue with teachers through a virtual medium or via telephone. An announcement for Semester 2 Parent-Teacher meetings will take place early in the new year.

Kinderstart

There will be an update on Kinderstart programs (for students entering Kindergarten in September 2021) in October 2020. Parents with programming questions for their child should contact their school administrator.

Student Transportation (Busing)

During the month of August, the District may be issuing a survey to determine parent plans for student use of student transportation. In accordance with the CMOH's recommendation, the maximum capacity on school buses will be 2 students per seat until further notice. As a result, the District does not have the capacity to secure a seat for all normally eligible students. As the seat located directly behind the driver will be prohibited from being used as an added driver protective zone measure, the capacity of a normal-sized school bus will be 46 students.

In order to meet health guidance, where current load on a school bus run exceeds 46 students, the District will provide service to the first 46 eligible students assigned **to its 2020/21 school year bus routes** based on morning bus stop order (referred to as the "46 Passenger Model"). This procedure will be enacted to start the school year and as seats become available, or are unused, the eligible list will be amended. All "courtesy seating" arrangements will also be suspended at this time which, in turn, means there will be no need for any previously established "courtesy stops" within the 1.6 km school bus eligibility zone. Students who qualify for alternate transportation arrangements will continue to have access. For more information visit [NLESD Student Transportation/Busing](#).

All drivers will be required to wear a non-medical mask. All students, and student assistants will be required to wear a non-medical mask while on the bus. However, no student is required to wear a non-medical mask if they cannot tolerate it. Seating will be assigned and students will be required to sit in the same seat each day. Each principal, in consultation with Student Transportation staff, will be required to develop bus schedules and routines that allow for the loading and unloading of students while maintaining appropriate physical distancing and entry into and out of the school. For more information on student transportation, refer to [Student Transportation protocols](#) in the Appendix of this report.

5. Plans for School Operations

Student Attendance

As outlined in the [Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Education Re-entry Plan](#), there are three potential teaching and learning scenarios for the 2020-2021 school year:

Scenario 1: In-school classes resume (near normal with health measures)

- This scenario will be initiated based on public health advice when the risk of COVID-19 transmission is very low.
- Regular in-class instruction resumes for all K-12 students.
- Where 2 metres physical distancing is not possible between student desks, the greatest possible spacing will occur.

Scenario 2: In-school classes partially resume (with additional health measures)

- This scenario will be initiated based on public health advice when the risk of COVID-19 is low to moderate and will be communicated to families by District/school staff.
- Priority is for in-class instruction for ALL K-6 students, to the extent possible.
- 100 percent in-school participation for students with exceptionalities and/or who require additional supports
- 30 - 50 percent in-class instruction; balance of learning will be online/remote instruction.
- Priority for K-6 children of essential workers required to report to work under the province's Alert Level 4 and 5.
- Taking into consideration local circumstances, schools may divide students into two or more groups to go back to in-school classes on an alternating schedule.
- Where 2 metres physical distancing is not possible between student desks, the greatest possible spacing will occur.

Scenario 3: At-home learning continues (In-school classes are suspended/cancelled)

- This scenario will be initiated based on public health advice in the event of moderate to widespread transmission of COVID-19 and will be communicated to families by the District.
- Schools will offer at-home instruction and learning opportunities to their students. The expectation is that teaching and assessment of curriculum outcomes will continue. As such, teachers may be required to be in attendance at school, unless that school has been ordered closed by public health.
- To the extent possible, schools must consider and enable the full participation and inclusion of students with exceptionalities within the school environment.

Based upon the guidelines referenced above:

- When schools are open for in-school classes, it is expected that all students attend school.
- Families who choose not to send their children will be required to submit an [Application for Home Schooling](#). Home schooling is defined as an educational program administered by a parent/guardian outside school, using the provincially authorized curriculum or a recognized alternate curriculum. Information on NLESD Home Schooling Policy is available [here](#), and information on NLESD Home Schooling Administrative Procedures/Regulations is available [here](#). Note: Home Schooling is NOT the same as Learning at Home which students experienced from March 16 - June 5, 2020.

Student Attendance Model in Scenario 1

The aim is for schools to re-open in Scenario 1 with all students attending school 100 percent of the time. In K-6 and 7-9 schools, cohorting will be encouraged wherever possible. Cohorting involves groups of students remaining together for their classes at all times. The purpose of cohorting is to minimize the mixing of students and staff so that if a child or employee develops infection, the number of exposures would be reduced. Where possible, subject teachers will go into the student's homeroom to teach, thereby minimizing student movement throughout the building. Certain specialist teachers will continue to receive students in alternate learning environments including the music room, gymnasium, etc. It is much more difficult to cohort in 10-12 schools, due to the nature of high school programming and the vast array of courses in which students may be enrolled. It is recognized that in some large high schools, where cohorting does not occur, the ability to maintain physical distancing is not possible.

Student Attendance Model in Scenario 2

If a school is required to move from Scenario 1 to Scenario 2 due to increase in COVID-19 in the area:

- For students who require additional supports, Program Planning teams will collaborate to facilitate programming to respond to students' learning needs in school. Refer to [Student Services protocols](#) in the Appendix for details.
- As per the Education and Early Childhood Development [Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and the [Service Delivery Model](#) schools will continue to implement a tiered approach to teaching and learning. Schools will prioritize services for students not accessing prescribed curriculum (alternate curriculum and alternate curricular courses).
 - Alternate Curriculum is defined as an individualized curriculum developed for a student with an identified exceptionality of moderate to profound intellectual disability. It is completely different from prescribed grade level curriculum, and is created in response to the individual student's identified learning profile, including their strengths and needs. It consists of programming in the following four domains: career development, personal development, independent living and functional academics.

The remainder of the school may move into a 2-3/3-2 model of attendance (depending on school configuration). In this model, classes are divided in half, and one group will come to school Monday and Thursday, and the other group will attend Tuesday and Friday. Wednesday attendance alternates between the groups. This means that one week, half of the class attends for two days in-person and the next week the same group attends for three days in-person. Over a two-week period, both groups attend school 50 percent of the time, with the other 50 percent is online learning from home. Students will have direction and guidance on next steps for learning from home before they leave school. When the students return to school, teachers will assess their progress and continue with new learning. In Scenario 2, teachers will provide access to learning activities in their Google Classroom for students and families to access. The purpose of this is to allow for families to remain abreast of learning activities taking place in school and home. Siblings attending the same school will be prioritized to attend school on the same in-person days if school attendance is limited to half the regular school population. More information for teaching and learning in Scenario 2 can be found in the [Online Learning Protocol](#) in the Appendix.

Sample Junior High Homeroom (Cohort) in Scenario 2

Group A - 50 percent of the students attend class in person on Monday, Thursday and alternate Wednesdays.

Group B - 50 percent of the students attend class in person on Tuesday, Friday and alternate Wednesdays.

- The learning activities will be accessible through the teacher's Google Classroom.
- Where possible, subject teachers will go into the student's homeroom to teach, thereby minimizing student movement throughout the building. Certain specialist teachers will continue to receive students in alternate learning environments including the music room, gymnasium, etc. Students and teachers in 7-12 are to wear masks in corridors and other common areas.

Scenario 3: Expectations for students and teachers

In the event that schools have to revert to 100 percent at home virtual learning, teachers will be expected to continue with maintaining relationships with students and the delivery of curriculum. As such, teachers may be required to be in attendance at school, unless that school has been ordered closed by public health. If a school has been ordered closed to all staff, teachers will be expected to work from home.

For students who require additional supports, Program Planning teams will collaborate to facilitate programming to respond to students' learning needs in school. Refer to [Student Services protocols](#) in the Appendix for details.

- As per the Education and Early Childhood Development [Responsive Teaching and Learning Policy](#) and the [Service Delivery Model](#) schools will continue to implement a tiered approach to teaching and learning. Schools will prioritize services for students not accessing prescribed curriculum (alternate curriculum and alternate curricular courses).
 - Alternate Curriculum is defined as an individualized curriculum developed for a student with an identified exceptionality of moderate to profound intellectual disability. It is completely different from prescribed grade level curriculum and is created in response to the individual student's identified learning profile, including their strengths and needs. It consists of programming in the following four domains: career development, personal development, independent living and functional academics.

As described in the [Newfoundland and Labrador K-12 Education Re-entry Plan](#):

Kindergarten – Grade 3

- focus on language and mathematics learning outcomes that strengthen the development of literacy and numeracy;
- incorporate health curriculum outcomes (with a focus on social/emotional learning and mental health); and
- minimum of five instructional hours per student per week.

Grades 4-6

- focus on language and mathematics learning outcomes that strengthen the development of literacy and numeracy;
- incorporate science, social studies and wellness curriculum outcomes (with a focus on social/emotional learning and mental health); and
- minimum of six to eight instructional hours per student per week.

Grades 7-9

- focus on mathematics, language/literacy, science, social studies and wellness curriculum outcomes (with a focus on physical and mental health); and
- minimum of 12 to 16 instructional hours per student per week.

Grades 10-12

- focus on specific course requirements for high school graduation including, but not limited to, language (English and Français), social studies, mathematics, and science (biology, chemistry, physics and science); and
- minimum of three instructional hours per two credit courses per week; minimum of one and a half instructional hours per one credit course per week (based on year long, non-semesterized courses).

Based on the guidelines referenced above:

- Teachers will continue to be responsible for assessing the progress of their students. Teachers will maintain a record of contact time and assessment and evaluation records for each student under their supervision.
- School administration will continue to be responsible for monitoring of student engagement and academic progress of all students in their school.

- More information for teaching and learning in Scenario 3 can be found in the [Online Learning Protocol](#) in the Appendix.
- Students will continue to be responsible to actively engage in learning and diligently pursue their education.
- The District, families, and students must continue to follow public health measures in place.

Student Transportation (Busing) - Scenario 1

As indicated earlier in this document, during the month of August the District may be issuing a survey to determine parent plans for student use of student transportation. In accordance with the CMOH's recommendation, the maximum capacity on school buses will be 2 students per seat until further notice. As a result, the District does not have the capacity to secure a seat for all normally eligible students. As the seat located directly behind the driver will be prohibited from being used as an added driver protective zone measure, the capacity of a normal-sized school bus will be 46 students.

In order to meet health guidance, where current load on a school bus run exceeds 46 students, the District will provide service to the first 46 eligible students assigned to the school bus run based on morning bus stop order (referred to as the "46 Passenger Model"). All families will be contacted concerning ridership. This procedure will be enacted to start the school year and as seats become available, or are unused, the eligible list will be amended. All "courtesy seating" arrangements will also be suspended at this time which, in turn, means there will be no need for any previously established "courtesy stops" within the 1.6 km school bus eligibility zone. Students who qualify for alternate transportation arrangements will continue to have access.

All drivers will be required to wear a non-medical mask. All students, and student assistants will be required to wear a non-medical mask while on the bus. However, no student is required to wear a non-medical mask if they cannot tolerate it. Seating will be assigned and students will be required to sit in the same seat each day. Each principal, in consultation with Student Transportation staff, will be required to develop bus schedules and routines that allow for the loading and unloading of students while maintaining appropriate physical distancing and entry into and out of the school. For more information on student transportation, refer to [Student Transportation protocols](#) in the Appendix of this report.

School Re-entry Template

School principals (in consultation with their Director of Schools (DOS)) will complete the [School Re-entry Template](#) which will delineate a comprehensive plan for school operations in Scenario 1, 2, and 3.

School Signage, Markings, and Separations

Signage on walls and floors will help students and staff maintain awareness of the precautions associated with COVID-19. The District will be supplying printed posters emphasizing hand washing, sneeze/cough etiquette/hygiene, etc. Schools may also customize and print their own posters from the many available templates. In addition, where deemed required, floor marking directional arrows will be provided. For instance some schools may convert their hallways to one way to assist in maintaining physical distance, and to minimize the risk of face-to-face coughs/sneezes. This may result in a need to extend the gap time between periods in some cases, as a result of increased travel time to get from room to room. It is understood that these important physical distancing measures may result in a reduction of in-class time.

Physical distancing at school entryways will be a function of the individual school circumstances. However, additional entry/exit points may be made available at some school sites to prevent clustering. If line-ups are necessary, physical distancing will be encouraged where possible and practical.

Class groups in a school are considered equivalent to a bubble (cohort), and do not require physical barriers. Plexiglass dividers are only required for staff protection where maintaining physical distance from visitors is not possible. Schools' main reception areas should be adjusted as required (i.e., it is preferable to move a desk further from the counter than to add barriers). Where neither distancing nor barriers are present, staff and visitors will be required to wear non-medical masks.

Classroom Setup

Where possible, students should remain in the same consistent seat in the class as much as possible. This area becomes the student's personal space and should be located as far away from the nearest student as practical. Where possible, the same students should remain with the same teacher with minimized rotation. Physical barriers such as unused desks, or visual markings, may be used to assist with the separation of students. All student belongings are to be kept in their personal area (i.e., sharing of shared spaces such as coat racks or cubbies is not recommended). The same

desk/table should be used by the student each day. For further information, see: [Guidance for Physical Distancing in Schools](#).

Kindergarten Classrooms

While 2 metre distancing may not be as practical for four and five year-olds, a rule of no physical touching should be reinforced. Activities will be designed for small groups, and furniture and playing areas should be used to help maintain physical separation. Plush toys will be temporarily stored during the pandemic. Toys and manipulatives that are difficult to clean and sanitize will be reduced where possible, while still providing a wide variety of play-based learning materials for students.

Submitting Assignments

Where possible, student assignments will be submitted electronically using the Google platform for which all teachers and students have access. For assignments that must be physically submitted, it is recommended that a location be established in the class to leave assignments, rather than directly approaching the educator. While there is no evidence that COVID-19 virus is transmitted via paper, for added precaution, it is recommended that all assignments that are returned are placed in an area for a minimum of 24 hours before being assessed by the teacher. Where this is not possible, educators are reminded to wash their hands after handling materials submitted by students.

Entry Requirements

School entry times may be staggered, and multiple entry doors may be used to allow for physical distancing. This will be determined once the selected instruction scenario is confirmed. Students will be required to wash/sanitize their hands as they enter the school.

Dismissal Requirements

Class dismissal times may be staggered, and multiple exit doors will be used to allow for physical distancing to occur. This will be determined once the selected instruction scenario is confirmed. This may impact instructional time in schools.

School Supplies and Equipment

Students should have their own school supplies, and the sharing of school supplies between students should be discouraged. If a device such as a Chromebook is being scheduled for alternative use, it must be wiped down with disinfectant and cleaning cloth

by the user, before changing users. Isopropyl alcohol solution may be used on electronic devices. Waiting 24 - 72 hours as a precaution is still advised.

Technology

Laptops for all teachers, and Chromebooks for all junior high and high school students across the K-12 education system, will be procured as per the [Provincial Government Announcement of \\$20 Million for Technology to Support Digital Learning](#). The devices will be distributed as they become available, with priority given to Grade 12 students currently without a device. At this point, it does not appear these devices will be available for the beginning of the new school year. As such, starting the new school year, distribution of current school devices for home use will be necessary.

Students who do not have access to a device at home will be provided a loan of a school Chromebook, Apple iPad, laptop or other tablet device. Device distribution will start at the beginning of the school year.

As part of our commitment to equity, the District will prioritize assisting families that need assistance with no Internet connectivity. MiFi device distribution will start at the beginning of the school year.

Note: MiFi is a brand name used for a portable broadband device that allows multiple end users and mobile devices access to a broadband internet connection.

Music

The safety of students and staff will require additional procedures for music classes and bands, including the disinfection of instruments and classroom layout considerations. In most cases, students should be assigned their own instruments. Learning experiences involving unprotected (without a mask or physical barrier) in-person singing or playing wind instruments should be postponed at this time.

Schools may consider alternatives such as:

- Recording or live-streaming individual performers in separate locations;
- Including more lessons focused on music appreciation or music theory;
- Choosing to play instruments that are lower risk (e.g., percussion or string instruments over wind instruments).

The document [Guidance for Music Classes in Newfoundland and Labrador during COVID-19](#) provides educators with strategies to support music education. This document does not replace or serve as medical advice in any way. Instead, this

document serves to give educators support for possible directives that EECD and health professionals may give.

Fitness Rooms and Equipment

Research affirms that physical activity can have a positive impact on well-being - both physical and mental. Schools that wish to permit the use of their facilities must ensure that proper cleaning procedures are in place for all equipment that is used.

Staff/students must agree to clean all equipment before and after use and maintain a 2 metre distance from others who may be in the room simultaneously, wherever possible.

Breakfast Programs

Breakfast programs can continue with the provision of 2 metre distancing of approved volunteers. A 'Grab and Go' format will be implemented, and students should eat in their classroom cohort. Surfaces, bins, and containers used in all food preparation areas will be disinfected before and after each use.

Lunch, Cafeterias and Food Service Providers

As recommended by the CMOH, there are special considerations for cafeterias and food services. As there are a wide variety of food programs and cafeterias in NLESD schools, the following list is not prescriptive and risk mitigation should be tailored to each school's particular context:

- It is recommended that students in K-6 eat lunch in their classroom with their cohort to decrease the contact that may occur in a cafeteria setting.
- Limit the number of individuals permitted in cafeterias at any given time.
- Cohorts may use cafeterias at designated times. If the space is large enough to accommodate more than one cohort with the appropriate physical distancing between cohorts then more than one cohort may be present at a time. Protocols must be in place to ensure that the cohorts remain separated at all times.
- If cohorting is not possible, students should be encouraged to maintain a two metre distance from others while in the cafeteria and capacity should be a maximum 50% of normal, provided physical distancing is maintained.
- Consider having students eat meals in classrooms or outdoors as opposed to congregating in a cafeteria.
- Increase accessible signage and floor markings in cafeterias to remind students/staff to practise physical distancing and have unidirectional flow of foot traffic in narrow aisles/stairways.
- Increase the number of accessible hand sanitizer stations within the cafeteria.

- Discontinue self-serve models (for example: remove shared food/condiments/utensil stations) and increase staff-serving options. Buffets are not permitted.
- Reduce touching of food by individually wrapping or packing food when on display.
- Adopt touchless payment options when possible (with exceptions for those who can only pay by cash).
- Cafeteria staff must wear a NMM when preparing and serving food.
- All food service providers must complete the [School Screening Questionnaire](#) on a daily basis.
- Until further notice, microwaves will not be available for student use.
- Outside food from restaurants or chains may not be delivered into schools, as non-essential visitors are not permitted in the school during this time.

Washrooms

Signage will be placed inside the washroom, reminding students of both physical distancing and proper hand hygiene protocols. Washrooms will be cleaned as per a protocol approved by the CMOH.

Classroom Rugs

Full groups should not be gathering on shared rug areas. Rugs may remain where they are used for regular foot traffic; however, students should not be sitting on rugs unless they are able to maintain the same location on the rug and can do so while being 2 metres away from the next student. Where possible, rugs that have been used for students to sit on during full group instruction will be rolled up and temporarily set aside during the public health emergency. Any rugs that are visibly soiled should be removed and discarded.

Screening and Contact Tracing

The first requirement before anyone leaves home to go to a school site is to complete a [School Screening Questionnaire](#). This is applicable to students, staff, visitors, contractors, etc. (anyone who intends to access the school site). The screening form is subject to change as per the guidelines from public health. Only individuals answering “No” to all questions on the screening form can come to the school site. If a student voluntarily shares that they or a member of their family has COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test, this must be immediately shared with the school administrator for follow-up with families.

It is understood that positive responses on the screening will be prevalent, given the symptoms are both extensive and similar to colds, flus, allergic reactions, and other common ailments. This may lead to increased absenteeism by staff and students. On initial onset of symptoms (e.g., even if they are suspected to be caused by allergies) individuals should contact Community Health (811) and follow advice regarding the need for testing, and when they can again attend school. If a teacher observes new or worsening signs of illness in a child that includes COVID-19 symptoms, they must inform school administration and have the child go to the school's designated health room/area for parent/guardian pickup. Care must be taken not to stigmatize the student or cause unnecessary fear.

Public health will provide direction if there are concerns regarding a COVID-19 case in school. Schools should not provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school, including if they display symptoms of COVID-19, unless directed to by public health.

Please refer to [If a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms](#) for information on protocol to follow for possible case of COVID-19 in schools.

Schools keep reliable attendance data on students and staff, which lends itself to good contact tracing. New for this school year will be a requirement to also maintain contact information on all others entering the building. This requirement is a relatively minor extension to the existing requirements around Safe and Caring schools. For example, when a parent who has been requested to attend a meeting by school administration, or a delivery person pages the main entrance, the school secretary or other staff person responding will now:

1. Ask them if they have completed the [School Screening Questionnaire](#) (which should be posted on the door for this purpose);
2. Ask the person to come to the office to complete a contact form. This can best be accomplished verbally (i.e., telling someone the information for the school staff to record electronically). Alternatively it may be a paper form, with hand sanitizing required before using common pen, etc.

Temperature checks on their own are not reliable indicators of possible COVID-19 infection. Consequently, the use of thermometers to measure individuals' temperature is not a recommended strategy by the CMOH and, as such, will not be undertaken at school entry. That said, the self-assessment form does indicate elevated temperature

as a reason not to attend school, however this will be as per a family's overall assessment of their child each day.

Confirmed Cases of COVID

When a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, the school will follow the directions of public health. This may require one or multiple classes to move to a distance learning model, and/or may require the school to be closed to in-person instruction for a length of time, based on the time recommended by CMOH.

After School Activities

Student groups will not be permitted to meet after school hours inside their school until further notice. Instead, student groups may wish to collaborate online with their peers until restrictions are lifted.

Outdoor extracurricular programs may operate with approved sports (as determined by the District) following their sport governing body COVID-19 protocols. For more information see [Protocol for Extra-Curricular Activities](#).

Visitors, Volunteers, and Family Access

Visitors, volunteers, and parents/guardians will not be permitted inside NLESD schools during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The exception to this is parents who may have necessary programming meetings scheduled by school administration, or volunteers as approved with administration. If a parent has to pick up their child, school staff will escort the student to the exit door, where the parent will be waiting outside.

Vending Machines

The use of vending machines will not be permitted until further notice.

School Parking Lots

Traffic on school lots is problematic at some rural and most urban sites at the best of times. For 2020-2021, it is anticipated that parents may be more inclined to transport their own child(ren) rather than avail of the school busing system. This will increase vehicular congestion, and therefore the time it takes to get all cars and buses on and off the lot. As with all aspects of the school system, safety is of paramount concern. Schools already strive for peak efficiency with traffic, so there generally is no flow-design change that will modify the physical reality of the lots. Solutions invoked must be in adherence with all relevant employee collective agreements, but the best options involve an increased drop-off time window and increased supervision on the lot

to ensure parents adhere to the rules (which may result in a loss of instruction time). For instance “kiss and drop” needs to flow efficiently - children cannot be retrieving book bags from the trunk while parents block traffic. Increasing the duration before class when students can be dropped off decreases the peak traffic volume.

Fire Drills

Fire drills will continue in a modified fashion. In September the school should sound the fire alarm at least once, without students exiting, to ensure all are aware of the sound. Thereafter, classes should schedule monthly class-specific exit protocols to ensure staff and students know where to go in case there is a real emergency and the school needs to be evacuated.

Lockdown Drills

Physical lockdown drills will not take place during the COVID-19 public health emergency. A modified practice drill will take place that reviews the procedures in the case of a real life-threatening situation. The modified practice drill must reinforce maintaining the 2 metre physical distance requirements, whenever possible.

Library Learning Commons (LLC)

For school re-opening, the library learning commons may still be open to students; however, schools will establish a procedure for the handling and return of books. It is recommended that all returned books are placed in an area for 24 hours before being returned to display areas. Students may access the learning commons to borrow books. Student learning activities may continue in the LLC where physical distancing can be maintained and proper hygienic practices in place. Schedules must be created that will allow for physical distancing by all students who are in the learning commons at the same time.

Curriculum

School building closures during the 2019-2020 school year as a result of COVID-19 pandemic may have impacted student achievement of outcomes in a variety of ways. In order to address this and to ensure the completion of the 2020-2021 curriculum, appropriate adjustments of individual curricula have been made by EECD, and committees of practicing educators that reviewed and prioritized curricula while maintaining the integrity of courses. For some courses the order of instruction has been mandated in order to ensure, as much as possible, provincial consistency in case further adjustments are required during the 2020-21 school year.

Teachers are advised to visit the [K-12 Professional Learning website](#) for adjustments to individual curricula.

School Based Curriculum Assessment

Educators have the authority to use their professional judgment when assessing their students. Assessment practices will take into account the pandemic conditions and allow both flexibility and multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding and application of key concepts. For further information see [Assessment and Evaluation Protocol](#).

Community Use of Schools/Extra-curricular

The two applicable guiding principles around COVID-19 prevention and community use of schools are:

1. Limit the number of outside (not school staff or students) individuals accessing the building, and
2. Maximize cleaning time available to custodial staff.

To that end, adult/community rentals in schools are prohibited for the school year 2020-2021. This prohibition may be relaxed in consultation between schools and the Facilities division as the school year progresses. An exception will be made for after-school programs that involve a small number of staff coming to work with students attending the host school. These programs are helpful in supporting families of K-6 children with childcare arrangements. Where after-school programs operate, end of day pickup must be coordinated without parents entering the building.

Outdoor extracurricular programs may operate with approved sports (as determined by NLESD) following their sport governing body COVID-19 protocols. School facilities will not be available for indoor extracurricular activities, practices, or rehearsals until further notice.

Physical Education, Science, Fine Arts, and Technology-based Courses

These courses may continue with the teacher putting in place modifications to ensure that physical distancing is maintained, where possible. The sharing of equipment is not normally permitted. Where equipment is needed for different classes, the equipment must be sanitized before use. Grade level physical education activities that may be introduced while maintaining 2 metre distancing are available in the PHE Canada – [Return to School Physical Education and Health Guidelines](#).

Playgrounds

Playgrounds were permitted to open at Alert Level 2. Students who use playground equipment will be required to clean their hands before and after outdoor play and playground use. Please note that play structures may be closed as part of COVID-19 response, even when schools stay open.

Field Trips

Field trips that require vehicular transportation are currently on hold. School staff may continue with visits to nearby outdoors points of interest (parks, nature trails) until further notice. Alternatively, teachers may wish to use virtual field trip options until the province has indicated that larger gatherings can take place in indoor venues.

School Fundraising

School fundraising will not be permitted until further notice.

Contactless Payments

To reduce the handling of cash, schools may wish to consider electronic email transfers (e-Transfers). For further information, contact the regional Finance manager, and [supporting Finance documents](#) in the Appendix of this report.

6. Hygiene and Cleaning

Hand Hygiene

Handwashing is one of the main recommendations for individuals to avoid contracting COVID-19. In some schools with very small populations, this is a feasible option. However, for the most part, District schools will rely upon hand sanitizer, which will be placed in all main entrances and instructional areas. Students should sanitize their hands upon arrival at the school and, as a general routine, every hour thereafter. Specifically, students should also sanitize hands before and after eating; using any type of equipment, and wash their hands after using the washroom. While the sharing of equipment is discouraged, there will be instances where common equipment may be used by more than one student. In these cases, hand sanitizer should be used before and after use.

School Hygiene

The District has modified existing school cleaning procedures and practices to comply with COVID-19 guidance. This school hygiene protocol has been reviewed and approved by the office of the CMOH. The process that has been defined is, in brief, as follows:

1. After school each day, the building is cleaned and disinfected to ensure it is prepared for use the next day.
2. All high touch surfaces (door knobs, handrails, faucets, etc.) will be sanitized, at minimum, twice during the school day - notionally mid-morning and mid-afternoon.
3. To ensure the District supports proper hand hygiene protocols, custodial staff will fill soap dispensers when they are at 50 percent or lower, and replace hand sanitizer immediately when empty.
4. In the (possible) absence of cafeteria space, desktops will be used for eating as well as school work. As a result, at the end of each day, all student desktops in use are to be cleaned first with general purpose cleaner, and then disinfected in a second pass. Students can bring their own place mats to assist with individual and classroom hygiene (all student items are to be brought home at the end of each day for cleaning). Many primary schools recommend this now, however it is useful at any grade level.

There are multiple approaches to custodial staffing required to enable these increased hygiene practices.

1. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed increased funding for the coming school year to allow the District to replace all absentee positions.
2. The District is doing casual recruitment now to ensure there will always be available staff to perform this work.
3. Adjustments in schedule, including additional hours, are possible to ensure compliance is possible.
4. Ancillary duties of custodial staff, such as collecting mail or other supplies, running paper and materials around the school, setting up chairs for assemblies, etc., will be eliminated in the coming year. Custodial staff will spend all available working hours cleaning.
5. Combination bus driver/custodial positions will have their school time protected, with increased cleaning addressed by driver-only positions.

As a corporate strategy, the District is not relying on disposable wipes. From a simple supply chain perspective (scarcity of supply), and economic and environmental considerations, the District will rely on having disinfectant and cleaning cloths, which are readily available.

Hand Dryers and Paper Towels

Hand dryers may be used in school settings. For those who do not wish to use washroom hand dryers, a supply of paper towels will also be available.

Classrooms with Water

Classrooms which have a water supply will be provided with hand soap and paper towels.

Water Fountains

Water fountains can be used for refilling personal water bottles and should be marked as refill stations only, until further notice.

Recycling

The mixing of cohorts is discouraged during the pandemic. For this reason, students will be asked to bring home all containers and recycle in their own home, rather than at school. Schools can continue to recycle items such as cardboard boxes from school-based deliveries.

Additional Considerations

The following are some additional considerations as the District and its educational partners continue to plan for the reopening of schools for 2020-2021:

- provide additional social-emotional professional learning to teachers to better prepare them for the return of students who may have been affected during the COVID-19 public health emergency;
- maintain and strengthen its focus on student engagement and deep learning, by continuing to leverage digital technology and relationships to support teaching and learning; and
- continue dialogue with representatives from EECD to:
 - consider additional resources to provide continuity of learning to students that have medical issues precluding their attendance at school should there be a high volume of students in such circumstances;
 - review key essential learning outcomes for all curricula in K-12 in light of possible disruptions to in school attendance in 2020-2021;
 - review graduation requirements; and,
 - review the requirement for Public Exams for 2020-2021.

Conclusion

This report is considered to be a dynamic working document based upon current information provided by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the Departments of Health and Community Services and Education and Early Childhood Development. Its purpose is to inform all educational stakeholders of the District's plans to date. As such, it is possible the District may release a revised plan, based on potential changes to public health advice as a result COVID-19.

The District would like to thank all of our stakeholders for their support; understanding and cooperation during the past several months. Providing our children with the highest quality learning opportunities in a safe, caring, and inclusive environment is paramount.

The District's plan for September 2020 must be flexible and acknowledge it is not a "one size fits all" for its over 250 schools and work sites. COVID-19 may present itself in different schools, communities, and regions at various times and levels. The District will work in collaboration with its educational partners, and public health officials to determine which scenarios of teaching and learning is appropriate for its schools.

Throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, the District will continue to reimagine how it delivers educational programming in the best interest of students. The District will embrace this challenge, rely on its learning leaders throughout its divisions, and continue to develop sound system wide supports and protocols for a progressive, student-centered teaching and learning organization.

Appendix

Communications Documents

[Protocol - Media Relations in Schools](#) Published August 17

[Public Guidance Doc for Families](#) Published August 17

Facilities Documents

[Protocol - Personal Protective Equipment](#) Published August 17

[Natural Ventilation Policy](#) Published August 17

Technology Documents

[Protocol - Cleaning High Touch Technology Surfaces](#) Published September 4

Human Resources Documents

[Exposure Control Plan COVID-19](#) Published August 17

[Guidance for Physical Distancing](#) Published August 17

[Hazard Assessment](#) Published August 17

[Protocol - District Staff Travel](#) Published August 17

[Regional Directors of Human Resources](#) Published August 17

[Right to Refuse Unsafe Work Process and Form](#) Published August 17

Programs Documents

[School Re-entry Template](#) Published August 17

[School Health Room Guidelines](#) Published August 17

Assessment and Evaluation	Published August 17
Protocol - Online Learning	Published August 17
Protocol - Extracurricular Activities	Published August 17
Protocol - Hand Hygiene	Published August 17
Protocol - Entry and Exit of Students from School	Published August 17
Protocol - Cohorting	Published August 17
Protocol - Child care facilities operating in schools	Published August 17
Protocol - Determining division of classes for Scenario 2	Published August 17

School Screening Questionnaire

Questionnaire	Updated September 3
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School Finance Documents

Funds Collection Process Details	Published August 17
Funds Collection Process Flowchart	Published August 17
School Generated Funds	Published August 17
Sample Memo for e-transfers	Published August 17

Student Services Documents

Protocol - Aerosol Generating Medical Procedures	Updated September 3
Protocol - Assistive Technology	Published August 17
Protocol - Critical/Traumatic Events Response Protocols	Published August 17
Protocol - Guidance Counsellor	Published August 17
Protocol - Itinerant Teachers Student Services	Published August 17

Protocol - Medical Plans	Published August 17
Protocol - Parental/Guardian Consent	Published August 17
Protocol - Protection of Personal Information	Published August 17
Protocol - Student Services Department Head	Published August 17
Protocol - Students with Exceptionalities (Scenario 2 and 3)	Published August 17
Protocol - Transition Planning	Published August 17

Student Transportation Documents

School Administrator Responsibilities	Published August 17
School Bus Operator Procedures	Published August 17
Special Rules on the Bus	Published August 17
Student/Parent Expectations	Published August 17
Student Transportation Procedures	Published August 17
