

January 27, 2022

Dear Families,

As you may have learned, there have been some changes to the Public Health Order (PHO) announced today that will take effect tomorrow. This will cause change in our practices at schools. I continue to admire and appreciate the support you provide to schools and the significant efforts you make at home to help us get through these challenges together. As more details emerge from the Ministry or local Health teams, we will adjust our practices and continue to keep you informed.

The changes are outlined in the government press release here <https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2022/january/27/update-to-covid19-selfisolation-close-contact-protocols>, and the impacts on our schools are summarized below.

Effective January 28, 2022:

1. **Close contacts no longer need to isolate**, regardless of vaccination status or source of potential exposure.
 - a. Any student who was isolating as a close contact can return to school as of noon on Jan. 28, providing they are asymptomatic and meet the isolation requirements of the new Public Health Order (see 2a and b).
 - b. We do have 2 classrooms that are currently in remote learning and they will return to in-person learning according to the initial timeline provided.
2. **Only people with positive test results (PCR or Rapid Test) will need to self-isolate**, regardless of vaccination status.
 - a. Regardless of vaccination status, the isolation period for those who test positive is 5 days from date of test OR 24 hours after fever has resolved without medication AND all other symptoms have been improving for 48 hours (**whichever is later**). This means that self-isolation is a minimum of 5 days; it may be longer if symptoms persist.
 - b. If you have questions about the isolation requirements, please visit www.saskatchewan.ca or call 811 for guidance.
3. **Parents no longer need to inform schools if their child tests positive.**
 - a. Parents are expected to keep any children who test positive at home and let the school know their child is absent.
 - b. Parents are also advised to keep children home if they are ill or experiencing covid or flu-like symptoms.
4. **Schools will no longer provide notification to parents if there is a positive case in a classroom or school.** Positive cases will need to self-isolate and students with COVID or flu-like symptoms and miss school but no one else will need to isolate.
 - a. We only have 2 classrooms currently in remote learning and those students and staff will be returning to in-person learning according to the timeline initially provided.

It is important to note that despite the elimination of the close contact designation and changes to isolation requirements, we have many other aspects of our operations that will be maintained in the same way in our schools:

- a. Masking remains to be required in all public cases, including schools;
- b. Cleaning, sanitization and other layers of protection remain intact;
- c. Various restrictions that are in place in schools to protect the safety of staff and students will remain in effect for now. Principals will continue to work with staff, SCCs, and their Superintendent to determine these measures within schools (these are things like separate recess times, modified nutrition programs, limitations on assemblies, or a number of other practices in schools);
- d. We remain in the adjusted Phase 3 for extra-curricular activities;
- e. We continue to encourage vaccination, and provide Health space and time in schools to conduct vaccine clinics in schools; and
- f. We encourage all families to monitor for symptoms and do rapid tests at home on a regular basis. Contact your school to arrange for a test kit for your family.**

Our SRPSD COVID Response Plan will remain active much in the same way it has been for the last several months. We will continue to evolve the plan as circumstances change.

There will be those among us that celebrate these changes to the isolation requirements and those among us who see them as concerning or worse. The important thing is that we are compassionate and patient with ourselves and those around us as we move through this together. We are all re-training our brains to manage this. We need to accept that COVID is all around us; we will not know who has COVID and who doesn't. We can help each other come to terms with this new reality and move forward in finding positive ways to live with the presence of COVID. As always, if you have any questions, suggestions or concerns please do not bottle them up. Share them with your child's teacher or principal or contact your Health professional or 811 with any COVID questions.

Yours in Education,



Robert Bratvold
Director of Education