



## School Re-Entry Plans – Q & A (Updated August 21)

To ensure that Westmount Charter School (WCS) is prepared to respond to the changing public health situation when learning resumes in September 2020, our Health & Safety Committee is busy planning for the implementation of the province's three possible school re-entry scenarios with our current focus on Scenario 1:

- Scenario 1 – In-school classes resume, with health measures;
- Scenario 2 – In-school classes partially resume with health measures; or
- At-home learning continues.

The following Q & A has been developed for parents/guardians, students and staff to help build understanding around what school operations may look like under each Scenario and the precautions WCS will be taking to ensure health and safety of its learning communities. Questions are grouped thematically and answers will be posted and amended regularly based on any new information or changes.

### General Questions

**Q: Which school re-entry scenario will be implemented in September?**

A: On July 21<sup>st</sup>, the Alberta Government announced the final decision to implement Scenario 1: In-school classes resume, with partial health measures. WCS is in the process of finalizing its plan for Scenario 1.

**Q: Once WCS has released its preliminary school re-entry plans, should we expect further communication?**

A: Throughout the remainder of the month of August and during the year, we will provide updates based on any new information or directed changes..

**Q: If I am not comfortable sending my children back to school, can I choose to keep him/her at home? **UPDATED Aug. 21****

A: Due to health concerns and parental choice related to the pandemic, families may choose not to have their children attend school. Parents will need to inform the school of this decision. Parents are requested to complete and submit **by August 24 at 8:00am**, the *Enrolment Commitment form* **if they do not intend to send their children back to school on September 1st**. An option for at-home-learning will be offered; however, the specific nature of at-home learning will depend on the number of students and grade levels. The strategy will be a combination of

online instruction and independent work and requires a significant commitment from students and parents. Specific strategies will be communicated following analysis of results from the Enrolment Commitment data.

### **Reducing the Risk of Transmission** **UPDATED Aug. 21**

**Q: Will staff and students be required to go through a daily health check?**

A: Before leaving home each day, staff, students, parents/guardians and permitted visitors who will access the school must be screened for symptoms using the **Daily Health Check** provided at: [Appendix A – Health Check](#)

**Q: How will schools address staff and/or students who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms during the school day? How will WCS handle a school outbreak, if there is one? **UPDATED Aug. 21****

A: Schools are required to identify an area in their school suitable for isolating students who become symptomatic during the school day. Symptomatic students will be required to wear a face mask for as long as they are symptomatic, even if in an infirmary awaiting pickup. Parents/guardians will be contacted and expected to pick up their child within **one hour** of being contacted. ***Please be sure to provide an alternate contact if you are unable to pick up your child within the one hour as requested.*** As per Alberta Health Service (AHS) guidelines, anyone who may have been exposed to COVID-19 must self-isolate and contact Health Link (811) for guidance or use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool to determine whether they or their child needs to be tested for COVID-19. Staff will be asked to leave the school site immediately to self-isolate.

***Schools will follow procedures in the following Resource Guide before, during and after an outbreak:***

<https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/covid-19-in-school-k-12-resource-guide-for-schools-before-during-and-after-a-covid-19-outbreak>

**Q: What is the procedure for reporting sick students or staff to AHS?**

A: Parents whose children test positive for COVID-19 are encouraged to contact the school. However, Alberta Health Services (AHS) also will inform WCS of any identified cases. *See Resource Guide above.*

**Q. What if my child has pre-existing symptoms that may appear like COVID-19?**

A. Individuals who have allergies or ongoing health issues must be tested at least once according to the Alberta Health Services Guidance document. This will establish a baseline for the individual. If symptoms change (worsen, additional symptom, change in baseline) the individual must stay at home and use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool at: <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/journey/covid-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx> to determine whether your child needs to be tested for COVID-19.

**Q: Are my children required to wear a face mask to school? If so, will schools provide the face masks? **UPDATED Aug. 21****

A: On Aug. 4, Education Minister Adriana LaGrange and Chief Medical Officer Dr. Deena Hinshaw announced that all school staff and students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks where physical distancing cannot be maintained, including on school buses. In schools, this will include common areas such as hallways and public spaces, as well as classrooms where physical distancing cannot be maintained. *Westmount is requiring all students K-12 to wear masks.* Exemptions will be made for students and staff who are unable to wear a mask due to medical or other needs. The province will provide all students and staff with two reusable cloth masks. The school will have a supply of masks for students and staff who forget or need a replacement for the day. Specifics about the wearing of masks will be communicated separately and included in the School Re-Entry Plan.

**Q: Will there be ample hand sanitizing stations throughout schools?**

A: Automatic Hand sanitizing stations have been placed at various locations in the hallways of each campus. All persons entering the school will be required to make use of portable hand sanitizing stations before entering the building. Each classroom will have hand sanitizer bottles.

**Q: What other environmental controls will WCS implement to reduce the risk and spread of COVID?**

A: There are many measures to be implemented as described in the WCS School Re-Entry Plan to be released in August. For example, whenever possible, doors will be open to reduce touch points and hallways will be designated one-way. Schools also have been asked to identify entry and exit patterns for students.

**Q: Will enhanced cleaning be undertaken?**

A: WCS will ensure enhanced cleaning of its school sites including daily cleaning and disinfecting of washrooms and high touch surfaces several times a day. Regularly scheduled deep cleaning will take place when students are not present.

**Q: Will water fountains be open?**

A: Water fountains will remain closed. Students are encouraged to bring a full water bottle to school and refill it with water from designated sinks or water refilling stations.

**Addressing Physical Distancing Guidelines**

**Q: Will students have access to their coat hooks or lockers?**

A: No. While AHS's distance requirements are in place, students will be asked to keep all of their possessions with them throughout the school day.

**Q: How will class transitions be handled in the hallways?**

A: Students and staff will be asked to practice physical distancing to the best of their ability and to follow posted traffic flow protocols during class transitions. Each school will provide detailed information just before the school year begins with how they are working to address school entry and exit, class transitions, hallway movement.

**Q: Will school cafeterias or lunch spaces be open for use?**

A: In Scenario 1, students will eat in classrooms, designated spaces with physical distancing requirements in place, or outdoors. All spaces will be cleaned in between use. Under no Scenario will sharing of food occur.

**Q: Will students have recess and social time with friends?**

A: Yes, recess breaks will be staggered through the day and taken by class groups to limit the number of students in hallways at any one time.

**Q: Will students have access to outdoor playgrounds?**

A: Only the playground at the K-4 campus will be open during Scenarios 1 and 2.

**Group Requirements**

**Q: How many people will be permitted in a classroom at any given time?**

A: Schools have been asked to develop procedures and plans for in-person learning that support physical distancing where possible, and to separate cohorts to the greatest extent possible. In Scenario 1, class sizes will be similar to previous years in WCS. In Scenario 2, class sizes will be no more than 20.

**Q: How will restrictions on group gatherings affect classroom instruction?**

A: Student cohort groups will be developed. These cohort groups will remain the same until schools fully open. Efforts will be made to limit student movement to entering and exiting the building, bathroom visits, and class transitions. Where practical, teachers will move to students instead of students moving to teachers.

**Q: How will restrictions on group gatherings impact staff meetings?**

A: School staff will be asked to follow physical distancing and host on-line meetings where possible.

**Q: Will schools still hold assemblies?**

A: Assemblies and other large group activities will be suspended while there continues to be gathering restrictions.

**Q: What will be the impact on the use of instructional equipment, such as computers?**

A: Schools are encouraged to divide devices into cohorts and/or grade levels and limit the number of people that come in contact with the devices. Devices and shared equipment are to be cleaned after each individual's use. Students in grades 6-12 are encouraged to bring their own device to school.

**Q: Will the gymnasium still be accessible?**

A: Yes, gymnasiums will be open for instructional use.

**Student Learning**

**Q: Will students still write PAT exams in 2020/21?**

A. WCS will not be participating in provincial Grade 3 Student Learning Assessment or the Grade 6 and 9 Provincial Achievement Tests.

**Q: What about Grade 12 Diploma Exams?**

A. Operating under Scenario 1, the Grade 12 diploma exams are required by the province and will continue to count as 30 per cent of the student's final diploma course mark.

**Q: How will WCS support students with special learning needs?**

A. WCS will maintain learning opportunities for students specific to their Individualized Program Plan (IPP) using a variety of approaches.

**Q: Will WCS be running field trips and out-of-country school trips?**

A: The WCS Board of Directors will review the currently approved out-of-country field trip to Japan for 2020/21 for a final decision. It also will not approve any additional field trips or travel to out-of-country locations for the remainder of the school year. Decisions about field trips within the community and/or provinces will be made later.

**Q: How will WCS ensure that students are still engaging in physical education activities?**

A: Students will move outdoor for physical education activities where possible or engage in no-contact physical education activities indoors.

**Q: How will parent-teacher interviews be held?**

A: All parent teacher interviews would be conducted on the phone or via online meetings.

**Q: What about extra-curricular activities and school sports? **UPDATED Aug. 21****

A: For now, they are cancelled but WCS will revisit that decision later in August once additional information is available.

## Mental Wellness

**Q: If schools are directed to continue with at-home learning, how will WCS address mental wellness for its community?**

A: Staff will utilize many different resources available to teach and support how the school is operating in light of the pandemic. Ways to support one's mental health and social-emotional supports will also be shared by Student Services personnel, teachers and other staff.

## Transportation

**Q: How will WCS ensure the safety of bus riders and drivers?**

A: Southland is our transportation provider. WCS is working with Southland officials to set health and safety measures for student transportation this fall. Specific measures will be outlined in our School Re-Entry Plan to be released in mid-August.

## Key Documents from AHS (August 20, 2020) **UPDATED Aug. 21**

Please access the following documents for detailed descriptions of general re-entry and health related measures:

<https://www.alberta.ca/k-to-12-school-re-entry-2020-21-school-year.aspx>

<https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-school-re-entry-scenario-1>

This document will be updated as appropriate based on new information or changes directed by AHS or Alberta Education.