

January 7, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

On January 5th, Education Minister, Adriana LaGrange announced that all students will return to in person learning on Monday, January 10th. You can read the press release [here](#). We want to provide you with some information regarding Palliser School Division's plan to ensure our schools are ready for the return of students.

### **Masks and Rapid Test Kits**

To lower the risk of in-school transmission of the Omicron variant and provide an additional layer of protection, the Government of Alberta will be supplying rapid tests and masks to schools with shipments extended by the end of next week. We expect to receive enough tests for two and a half weeks and are voluntary for students and staff to use at home. Those choosing to use rapid tests are recommended to use them twice per week, 72 hours apart (e.g. Sunday and Wednesday or Monday and Thursday). Additional information about rapid tests is available [here](#). A [video](#) and [rapid test program fact sheet](#) offer tips on how to use the rapid tests. When tests become available at your child's school, the school will send out a notification and parents that wish to access these test kits and masks will be able to request them from the school. Again, while using the test kits is recommended, it is not mandatory. The masks being supplied by Alberta Education are medical grade masks, and students may use these masks or continue to use their own if they are more comfortable with them.

### **Stay Home if Feeling Unwell**

Please keep your child home when they are sick. We need our families and staff to assist in limiting the transmission of COVID-19 in our schools. The requirements for students and staff who are ill have changed, students and staff must use the [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) to determine if they should attend school or stay home. We have developed a [Stay at Home Guide](#) for students and families to understand the current requirements.

### **Reporting Positive Cases**

Although Alberta Health Services is not currently confirming positive cases of COVID-19 in schools, we will continue to notify parents and guardians of positive cases when a family reports one to the school. If a family reports a positive rapid test to the school, we will take this as their consent for the school to send out a notice to specific classes associated with the reported case. To protect the privacy of individuals, we are not able to provide any additional information about positive cases. Please continue to inform your school if your child is absent from school for any reason. Schools will continue to monitor absenteeism due to illness.

### **Possible Shifts to At-Home Learning**

Although we plan for in-person learning, with an increase in the transmission of COVID-19 in our communities, our schools are preparing for potential transitions of classes to at-home learning if required. The decision to transition individual classes or grades to at-home learning will be based on both staff availability and student absences. Should your child's class be transitioned to at-home or online learning, you will receive information from your school to support this transition.

The safety of our staff and students remains our priority, and we know that our response to COVID-19 must remain flexible and responsive to the direction of Alberta Education and Alberta Health. Thank you for your ongoing support and working with us as we return to school.

Palliser School Division