

November 25, 2020

Dear Families,

As you may have already heard, the government of Alberta has declared a public health emergency and [new health measures](#) have been put in place to address the rising spread of COVID-19 in our province. Our school system, like all others in the province, will be impacted by the new measures we have been directed to implement.

SCENARIO 3

Students in grades 7-12 will move into [Scenario 3](#) (at-home learning) starting Nov 30, 2020, returning to school for in-person learning on Monday, Jan 11, 2021. **Please review the figure below to take note of important dates for at-home learning.**

DATE RANGE	MIDDLE/HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 7 – 12)
Nov 30 – Dec 18, 2020	Students attend school at-home through online learning
Dec 21, 2020 – Jan 3, 2021	Winter Break – No school for all students
Jan 4 – 8, 2021	Students attend school at-home through online learning
Jan 11, 2021	All students attend school for in-person learning in Scenario 1

There will be some exceptions where students in grades 7-12 will continue to go to school and learn in person. The exceptions will be as follows:

- a. **Specialized programming:** We will continue in-person learning for students who are currently served in a congregated, specialized program. School staff will reach out directly to families of students who will be included.
- b. **Outreach programming:** We will continue with in-person learning for outreach students in all grades. School staff will reach out with more information about the impact this may have on your family.

AT-HOME LEARNING

It is critical that all secondary students actively engage in at-home learning. Unlike when we shifted to eLearning in March 2020, the government of Alberta has not promised a passing grade to all who are passing at this moment. While teachers can focus their priorities during Scenario 3 on essential outcomes, almost all high school credits must be earned. Our principals will be able to assign credit only for “hands-on” courses that cannot be completed online. It is our expectation that students attend to the outcomes taught in all other courses.

Middle school (grades 7-9) students are expected to attend to their coursework as well. A good deal of important work must be done during this period so that students are prepared to succeed in their grade. Advancement to the next grade is dependent on the work done throughout the entire year, including time spent in Scenario 3.

Our Scenario 3 plan has been adjusted to represent a more reasonable instructional hour standard than the minimum standard that was set out this summer by Alberta Education. This was done in order to honour the programs of study. In our dialogue with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Education, it was made clear that they fully anticipated that more than the minimum would be pursued. We will expect more from our students, as far as time and commitment are concerned, than we did in the spring of 2020.

VIDEO LESSONS

While students are expected to attend their classes in real-time, we know that sometimes this is not possible. Teachers will record direct instruction and save it to their Google Classroom, so students may review it or, if they were absent from class, view it later. These recordings are secured in Google Classroom. Teachers will decide if they want to record their lessons prior to class or if they wish to deliver and record a live lesson. If lessons are recorded from live instruction, the recordings may include some dialogue among the class.

It is important to note that students are better served by being in attendance in real-time, as they benefit from the ability to ask questions and engage in class discussions that are critical parts of the learning process. Attendance will be taken, and teachers will engage with families to encourage attendance and to address areas for improvement and available supports. Families are asked to communicate with their child's teacher as soon as possible if they experience challenges. This will allow our teachers to work with families to support student learning.

LEARNING STANDARDS AND TIME COMMITMENT

Grades 7-9

- focus on core mathematics, language/literacy, science, social studies, and wellness (with a focus on physical and mental health) curriculum outcomes
- **approximately 4 hours per day (1 hour/course)**

Grades 10-12

- focus on specified and core course requirements for high school graduation, including language (English, Français and French language arts), Social Studies, Mathematics, and Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Science 10, 20 and 30) while adding any other course that can be offered in an online environment
- **approximately 4 hours per day (2 hours/course)**

- high schools will communicate with families about options courses and physical education classes

Learning may include any combination of teacher direct instruction (live or pre-recorded), live connection (whole class or small group) and/or independent student work time with teacher availability.

EXAMS

- Diploma examinations are optional until August 2021 (including summer school).** Students and their parents/guardians will have the option to choose whether they will or will not write the exam. Diploma exams count for 30% of a student's final course mark, students that do not write the exam will receive a mark from their teacher based on the course work completed. Students in diploma courses will not be expected to write a school-based final exam.
- Until we return to in-person learning, exams and assessments will be completed online.

TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET ACCESS

Students that do not have access to the internet or a device for learning are asked to contact the school principal to arrange options for support.

- New Chromebook sales:** We have approximately 50 new English keyboard units for sale at \$199/device. Please note that we have had these unused devices on hand since August and there is only 8 months of warranty left. Since the price of \$199 is well below retail price, we will not adjust the cost to accommodate for the limited warranty. In addition, we have approximately 25 new French keyboard Chromebooks for sale that have one-year warranty remaining. To purchase a Chromebook please visit our website mhpsd.ca.
- [Chromebook purchase options](#)

IN-SCHOOL SUPPORTS

It is a priority that our schools continue to support the social-emotional health, mental health and wellness of our students during the at-home learning period. The following in-person programs and supports will continue to be available to students and families at schools. Students or visitors that enter a school building will be required to follow all public health and safety measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

- Specialized programming:** We will continue in-person learning for students who are currently served in a congregated, specialized program. School staff will reach out to families with more information about the impact this may have on your family.
- Outreach programming:** We will continue with in-person learning for outreach students in all grades. School staff will reach out with more information about the impact this may have on your family.

- e. **Parent-teacher meetings:** Schools will be accessible by appointment only. Parents and students are still able to access the school building by appointment only.
- f. **Counselling supports:** Students and families that require support from a school counsellor, FSLW, therapist, etc. will be permitted to come into the school for scheduled appointments.
- g. **Nutrition:** The Medicine Hat & District Food Bank will support student nutrition by providing weekly brown bag lunch packages that can be used in the home. Parents or students can apply for the program and once approved, packages can be picked up from the food bank or delivered directly to your home.
- [Register for the at-home brown bag lunch program TODAY!](#)
- h. **School bus transportation:** transportation services will remain available to any students in grades 7-12 that that will continue to attend in-person learning at school.

WHAT WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE

SPORTS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Sports, extracurricular activities and school clubs will only be permitted to operate if they are able to shift to virtual meetings. All clubs, extracurricular and sports that are not able to move to a virtual meeting space will be suspended until further notice. There will be no in-school meetings, open gym, practices, team, or individual sporting activities in secondary schools until further notice.

THE HUB AT- HOME LEARNING SCHOOL: Enrolment in The Hub is frozen, students in grades 7-12 will not be permitted to transfer to The Hub between Nov 30, 2020, and Jan 11, 2021. Given that all students in our middle schools have been directed to Scenario 3, their teachers will be exclusively planning for programming in this environment. There is no need to shift, then, from one online learning environment to another. When we return to Scenario 1, families of grade 7-9 students will be able to elect to register at The Hub again.

We are all grappling with the change in our circumstances and are wondering how it might impact us and the ones we love. People have expressed a range of emotions about the new restrictions announced yesterday, particularly with respect to the shift in education delivery. This transition will not be without its challenges; we have highly skilled teachers and students who are familiar with the tools they need in order to succeed. We also have a loving and committed community to support our students. We know that commitment, grace and compassion will lead the way.

Be well,

Mark Davidson, Superintendent
Medicine Hat Public School Division

