**PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE TO STAFF AND PARENTS**

**Dear parents and guardians,**

As you know, the current public health order required that we extend winter break until January 10, 2022, with the exception of children whose parents are health care workers, teachers, or other services deemed essential. During that time, we have been planning next steps and updating our protocols in response to the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

**Our goal in this phase of the pandemic is to ensure, to the best of our ability, that our school can remain open to students and be adequately staffed. If too many staff are sick, we may have to consider a health-related or functional closure of the school.**

**It is a requirement that all staff and students wear a mask**. We appreciate your support by sending a well-fitting mask to school with your child, showing them how to wear it properly, and reminding them to wear it at all times while inside the school. We will be providing daily reminders to students as well. If you haven’t already, please contact me directly if your child is unable to tolerate a mask.

Please read the health and safety guidelines included in this document to learn of the updates in our protocols.

Please read the [K-12 communicable Disease Guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-safe-schools) including the recent December 30, 2021 update.

We will send emails with updated information and plans as they unfold.

Thank you for your patience and support. We have done this before, and we can do it again, together. We look forward to getting back to regular classes Monday, January 10, 2022. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns,

Sincerely,

**Terri Hayes**

Principal,

J. Alfred Laird Elementary School

250-342-6232

terriann.hayes@sd6.bc.ca

**IMPORTANT HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES AT OUR SCHOOL**

The prevention measures already in place in the school continue to be effective at reducing the risk of COVID-19.

These include:

**Wearing a well-fitted mask:**

* Please ensure that your child brings a clean mask to school each day;
* The [PHO Order – Face Coverings](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-face-coverings.pdf) requires all students, staff, and visitors to wear a mask indoors at school;
* Everyone who is able to (i.e. does not have a mask exemption) must wear a mask;
* Masks are most effective when everyone who is able to is wearing one;
* Those not able to wear a mask all day will continue to be encouraged to wear one as much as they’re able to;
* For those with mask exemptions, administrators and staff will support other strategies identified to reinforce and enhance other safety measures, such as waiting at the end of the line and practicing social distancing.

Masks should:

* + - Cover the mouth and nose and go under the chin
		- Fit tightly with no gaps (consider adjustable masks)
		- Be made of three layers of fabric, including two layers of tightly-woven fabric, with a filter or filter fabric between layers.
		- If there are two layers with a pocket for a filter, use a filter.

**Getting fully vaccinated**

**Staying home when sick**

**Completing the daily health check**

**Cleaning hands regularly**

**For more information, visit the SD6 webpage:** [COVID-19 Communication | Rocky Mountain School District No. 6 (sd6.bc.ca)](https://www.sd6.bc.ca/parents/covid-19-communication)

**PARENTS and VISITORS TO THE SCHOOL**

When school resumes, after winter break, any adult wishing to enter the school must make an appointment. We will be keeping our school doors locked.

Please contact the office if you need to enter the school. This includes picking up or dropping off of students. Please remain in your vehicle limiting proximity to school and other students or staff.

**DAILY HEALTH CHECK**

Parents and guardians are asked to monitor their children daily for symptoms and not to send them to school if they are sick.

Use the [Daily Health Check App](https://www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca/healthcheck?execution=e1s1) and follow the recommendation.

People who are sick will not be allowed at school. We will call the parents of children who become sick at school immediately and request that they be picked up. Sick students will wait on the bench outside the office until parents arrive for pick up.

**SPORT TOURNAMENTS**

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At this time, all BC school sport tournaments are paused. Schools may play team-versus-team in the school but schools will not be allowed more than two teams at a time.

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**STAGGERING, STOP, RECESS, AND LUNCH TIMES**

We will return to past practices that include:

* Encouraging outdoor learning whenever possible;
* Arranging desks to maximize space between students;
* Students only entering and exiting the school through their classroom door;
* Requiring students to wash or sanitize their hands any time they transition from outside to inside, and when moving between classrooms;
* Limiting the number of children in small spaces, such as the coatrooms, hallways, and washrooms;
* Staggering lunch times to limit the number of children outside during lunch recess;
* Assigning sides of the school grounds for recess to avoid congestion;
* Moving to virtual assemblies;
* Pausing any inside activities in which students from multiple classes mix. This includes suspending all after-school and lunchtime clubs, Climbing Club and Fantastic Friday, until further notice;
* Sanitizing high touch-point equipment, such as laptops and iPads, after each use;
* Restricting student access to the school office. We are happy to call parents on behalf of students who need to call home;
* Actively encouraging mask-wearing. Students riding the bus **MUST** wear a mask;
* Not sharing food, and turning off the water fountains. Water bottle fillers are still available;
* Suspending the use of lockers in the hallway;
* Ensuring students know how to access online learning, should the need arise.

You can assist us with these measures by:

* Keeping your child home if they are showing any signs of illness. Please let us know if your child is absent due to illness (ie: leave a message on the attendance line saying your child will be away due to illness.)
* Sending your child to school with a labelled water bottle; we can no longer provide cups for students;
* Making sure that your child has a clean, well-fitted mask to wear each day;
* Ensuring that your child is dressed for the weather, as there may be longer wait times when entering the school;
* Dropping off and picking up your child as close to bell time as possible;
* Choosing a pick-up and drop-off location away from school grounds;
* Not sending home-baked food to school as gifts for staff or to celebrate special occasions;
* Encouraging your child to leave school grounds immediately at the end of the day.

The Government of British Columbia recently updated isolation guidelines, as follows:IMPORTANT **HEALTH ANEASURES AT OUR SCHOOL**

**CURRENT COVID-19 ISOLATION GUIDELINES**

* If you are unvaccinated you will need to isolate for 10 days from the time your symptoms began;
* If you are fully vaccinated, you will need to isolate for 5 days from the time your symptoms began.  After 5 days and symptoms have or mostly have resolved you can go back into the community while wearing a mask (both indoors and outdoors) for an additional 5 days;
* Those that have been exposed do not need to get tested and can continue normal community activities but avoid group gatherings, wear a mask, and self-monitor.

These guidelines do change from time-to-time. For the most current information, please consult the BC CDC website: [Self-Isolation and Self-Monitoring (bccdc.ca)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation)

**://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/covid-vaccinated-travellers-hildrenCURRENT COVID-19 ISOLATION GUIDELINES**

**TRAVELLING OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY**

The Government of Canada has implemented the following for children travelling outside the country:

**If you qualify as a fully vaccinated traveller**, your unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated children must follow specific requirements when you return to or enter Canada. This applies to unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated children under 12 years of age who are accompanying a parent, step-parent, guardian or tutor who qualified as a fully vaccinated traveller when they entered Canada.

These requirements also apply if you are returning from a short trip of less than 72 hours.

Unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated children under 12 must complete [pre-entry, arrival and Day-8 tests](https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/flying-canada-checklist/covid-19-testing-travellers-coming-into-canada), unless you have evidence that the child had a positive COVID-19 test taken 14 to 180 days prior to arrival in Canada or the child is under 5 years of age.

For the following 14 days, the child(ren) must also:

* not attend school, camp, team sports or daycare

These requirements may also change from time-to-time. Please refer to the Government of Canada travel website for the most current information: <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid/travel-restrictions/covid-vaccinated-travellers-entering-canada#children>