

**St. Alphonsus School Re-opening Plan for the 2020/21 School Year**  
**Manitoba's Restoring Safe Schools**  
**Last Updated: September 2, 2020**

**Pandemic Response Team**

A Pandemic Response Team has been established which includes the school's administrative team, the building and office managers, as well as representation from the staff, parents and school board. The school principal, in collaboration with the Pandemic Response Team, will stay current with evolving Public Health Orders and communicate these to the school community as necessary. Staff have been informed of developments through the summer and will be provided with specific training on existing Public Health Orders, symptom management and sanitizing protocols prior to the start of the 2020-21 school year. Information on home screening and safety measures in place will be communicated to parents in August 2020 with direction on reviewing these protocols with their children. As classes return to school, classroom teachers will teach new processes to students and reinforce these messages frequently.

**Planning for Re-opening**

In June 2020, the province indicated its strong desire for students to return to school in the fall and announced re-opening dates. School will reopen for teachers and staff on September 2, 2020, with students returning on September 8, 2020. As part of this announcement, schools were tasked with planning for different scenarios. On July 30<sup>th</sup>, the province announced its decision on returning to school, along with re-defined **Response Levels**. In August, the province converting to a colour coded pandemic response model and schools aligned themselves to that framework. Depending on how things evolve, schools may need to pivot between the different response levels. This may be done at the class, school or broader community level and will be determined by Public health and Manitoba Education.



**Green- In- Class Learning**

**LIMITED RISK – The spread of COVID-19 is broadly contained. Vaccine and/or effective treatment for COVID-19 are available**

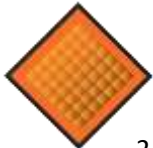
-School will proceed as normal in pre-pandemic times, with some safety measures in place.



**Yellow- In-Class Learning – All K-12 Students In-Class Learning**

**CAUTION – Community transmission is at low levels**

-K-8 students in school five days a week, regular instructional day, full classes.  
-1 M of distance when seated, if students are organized into cohorts.



**Orange – Blended Learning - In-Class and Remote**

**RESTRICTED -- Community transmission of COVID-19 is occurring**

-K-8 Students prioritized for in-class learning.  
-2 M of physical distancing required, smaller class groupings.



**Red – Remote Learning (with exceptions)**

**CRITICAL -- Community spread of COVID-19 is not contained and/or there are significant strains on our health care system**

-Remote (at home) learning in place.  
-Schools are closed with the exception of K-6 children of critical care workers.

The province announced on July 30, 2020 that we will return in September at the **Yellow Level**. Therefore, in-class learning will resume for students in all public and independent schools across the province. Kindergarten to Grade 8 students will return for five days of in-class instruction (full instructional day) per week.

**Key Planning Considerations**

This plan is based on the most current information available and is subject to change. Schools must follow existing public health requirements and educational priorities as identified by **Public Health** and **Manitoba Education**. Existing guidelines, considerations and conditions of preparedness outlined in Welcoming Our Students Back: Restoring Safe Schools, as well as those previously established for Limited Use of School Facilities and Day Camps have helped inform this plan.

## **Learning Plans for the Different Response Levels**



### **Yellow Level- In-Class Learning – All K-12 Students In-Class Learning**

K-8 students in school five days a week, regular instructional day, full classes.  
1 M of distance when seated, if students are organized into cohorts.

#### **Cohorting**

In order to accommodate full classes of students, we will be using a cohorting system as suggested by Public Health. In this system, one meter of distance is required between student workspaces. For our purposes, we will consider each class a cohort, which reduces the number of contacts for students and staff. Additional individual workspaces will be added to classrooms to supplement existing classroom set-ups. Extraneous furniture will be moved into temporary storage to allow for increased space for physical distancing. Desk shields have been purchased for each student to provide an additional layer of safety for staff and students.

#### **Teaching Focus**

The learning expectation in Response Level One will be regular programming to the greatest extent possible. Some adjustments will be made to Music and Physical Education to allow adherence to public health orders, including allotting time for increased sanitation.



### **Orange Level – Blended Learning - In-Class and Remote**

K-8 Students prioritized for in-class learning.  
2 M of physical distancing required, smaller class groupings.

#### **Accommodating Small Groups and Physical Distancing**

In order to meet the 2 M physical distancing required in Response Level Two, we have assessed all spaces in the school and discussed sharing space with the parish if needed to allow for all students to participate in in-class learning. Our aim will be to continue full day instruction for all students.

#### **Teaching Focus**

Emphasis in Response Level Two will be on Numeracy and Literacy, along with Science, Social Studies and French. Whenever possible other curricular areas such as Music, Physical Education and Art will be maintained, although specialty teachers may be re-assigned to support classroom teachers' work with small groups.



### **Red Level – Remote Learning**

In-class learning is suspended. Teacher led remote learning for all K-12 students, with the exception of K-6 children of critical care workers

#### **Remote Learning**

Over the spring, learning shifted from in-class to remote learning. Teachers used a variety of online platforms, along with packaged materials to deliver programming across the grade levels. Staff will take time to reflect on the successes and challenges of remote learning and to determine what additions or alterations could be made to improve remote learning in the future. As student engagement was high during the spring, few alterations are anticipated and would mainly relate to increased teacher/student interaction throughout the school day.

#### **In-school Sessions for All, if Allowed**

The school developed a Limited Use Plan for re-opening the school during June 2020. This plan worked successfully, but it will be adjusted to increase the opportunity for student/teacher personal interactions in the event that we move into Response Level Three.

#### **Teaching Focus**

In Response Level Three, learning resources will be focused on Literacy and Numeracy, with some allowance for other curricular areas at the discretion of the classroom teacher in consultation with the school principal.

As we plan for the above Response Levels, provincial guidelines identify four key areas of preparedness for schools to consider: **Students and Families, Operational (Institutional), Learning, and Staff**, each with points to address.

### **Student and Family Preparedness**

#### **Communication**

The school has strong mechanisms in place to communicate information to parents and will utilize them to educate and inform parents through the summer and as school reopens in the fall. If there are families that are not responsive via the normal mechanisms, we will look at other ways of reaching out to them.

Parents will be asked to read the plan and sign an agreement indicating they understand and will follow the protocols set up by the school.

#### **Faith, Prayer and Spirituality**

As a Catholic school, we have the good fortune of being able to connect with each other through our faith and spirituality. During these challenging times, opportunities for prayer and faith discussions are even more integral to the well-being of students, families and staff. We will incorporate prayer and faith practice as much as possible at all response levels.

#### **Attendance and Participation in In-class and Remote Learning**

Students are expected to attend in-class learning unless they are ill or exhibiting symptoms. Families will be required to report absences to the school office as per our regular process, but must also indicate the reason for their child's absence (illness, appointment etc.). If remote learning is enacted as part of the learning plan, students will be expected to participate. School staff will work to identify any barriers to full participation in remote learning and assist families in addressing them. Students who are unable to return to school due to personal or family health risks factors related to COVID-19 will be supported in remote or blended learning.

#### **Illness at School**

Parents will be expected to screen their child at home prior to bringing them to school. If a child should become ill or symptomatic while at school he or she will be isolated away from the group. An isolation area has been set up in the Community Room, with room for two students distanced from each other. An additional space in the office will act as a reserve isolation area if needed. Students who exhibit symptoms will be given a mask to wear while they await pick-up. Parents will be contacted to take the child home. Parents are encouraged to have contingency plans in place to care for an ill child. Parents will be advised to contact Health Links – Info Santé at (204-788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257) or the child's health care provider for direction, if required. If the student is young and requires close contact and care while isolated, staff can continue to care for the child until the parent is able to pick up the child. Caregivers are to be mindful of hand hygiene and avoid contact with the respiratory secretions of the student. A medical mask is to be worn by the staff person caring for the child.

#### **Contact Tracing and Outbreak Management**

In the event of confirmation of a case of COVID-19 connected with the school, Public Health will lead the response and provide guidance, including ensuring appropriate supports are in place to coordinate the response. Contact tracing involves identifying the contacts of a positive case and contacting those individuals who may have been exposed. Public health may:

- request records that identify cohorts/groups of staff, students, volunteers and visitors in the school for a specified timeframe;
- offer testing following established guidelines to staff, students, volunteers and visitors that may have been exposed to a positive case; and
- assess the need for the school to be closed for a period of time.

Public health will advise staff and students if they have been in close contact, if they need to self-isolate or self-monitor and when they can return to school.

### **Before and After School Care**

Childcare is essential for many of our families. In order to accommodate this need, and in light of the size of the program, we will break the participants into smaller age-based groups and disperse them into multiple spaces in the school.

The drop-off and pick-up from the program will look different this year as we endeavour to keep visitors to a minimum. This is new to everyone, so we thank you in advance for your patience.

For drop-off, you and/or your child can buzz at the parking lot entrance for access. If you are uncomfortable with your child making his or her way up to the program, Miss Sinclair will send a friend down to walk upstairs with him/her. The exception to this is Nursery students who attend the program; parents can come up with their child. If you have any concerns, please speak to Miss Sinclair.

The afternoon program is much busier as a general rule, so the children will be broken into smaller groups to allow for greater social distancing. When you arrive to pick up your child(ren) buzz at the door and ask for your children to be sent out. The staff have walkie-talkies to coordinate children in different areas of the school. Once again, if you have concerns or feel an exception needs to be made, please speak to Rose.

### **Alternate Kindergarten and Nursery Afternoon Care**

As said above, we know that childcare is of great importance to parents. The Alternate Kindergarten and Nursery Afternoon Care Programs will run this fall to support families.

### **Community Mental Health and Well-being**

Attention to the mental health and well-being of our school community will be a priority over the coming months. Professional development for staff regarding anxiety and other mental health concerns has been scheduled for early fall. In addition to ongoing work with Project 11, we have arranged for our clinical support team to present to students in the fall. We also plan to arrange sessions for our parent community.

### **Operational Preparedness**

#### **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Our building staff have increased their cleaning and disinfecting regimen, with more frequent cleaning of washrooms and high touch surfaces. An electrostatic sprayer will be used, especially for shared items such as manipulatives and toys. Doors of washrooms will be set open to allow for less contact. Other high touch surfaces including handrails, push-releases, counters and light switches will be cleaned with greater frequency. Hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies and disinfectant have been secured for this purpose and will be restocked as needed.

#### **Hand Hygiene**

All entrances, rooms and spaces are equipped with hand sanitizer. Anyone entering the building will be expected to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. A schedule for class hand washing will be in place (before eating, after recess, after wiping their nose and additionally as needed) with students receiving direct instruction on hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.

#### **Screening**

The school has a screening protocol based upon the screening tools developed by the Province of Manitoba. Families will conduct self and child screening before leaving home in the morning. Staff members will also self-screen for symptoms. Children and staff who are ill or showing any symptoms must not come to school.

#### **Physical Distancing in and Around the School**

Signage has been installed around the school encouraging hand hygiene, physical distancing and listing symptoms of COVID-19 for all to be aware. All traffic flow through the building will be "keep right" as students and staff move through the building. This will hold true for the main staircase at the Munroe entrance as well. The other staircases are narrower and will

require users to cede the right of way to groups already using the staircase. Review of this practice will be part of the education for students.

Each grade has been assigned a specific entrance to the building (below) and arrival time will be a window of arrival, as opposed to a set time, from 8:15-8:30 AM. This will reduce congestion and allow for physical distancing, Pavement markings are in place outside each entrance to remind people of spacing as they arrive. Everyone will sanitize hands upon entry to the building. Teachers will set up routines for locker and coat hook access to avoid crowding in these areas.

Munroe Entrance: Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 5 and Grade 6

Parking Lot Entrance: Grades 2, 3 & 4

Music Room Stairwell Entrance: Nursery, Grades 7 & 8

Departure time will be staggered, using the same exit as in the AM, with staff members escorting younger groups out to the designated pick-up area. Parents are asked to exit their vehicles and receive their children on the grassed area directly south of the church parking lot.

2:55 PM-Kindergarten, Grade 2 and Grade 7

3:00 PM-Grade 1, Grade 3 and Grade 8

3:05 PM -Grade 4, 5 & 6

Supervision at pick-up time will be maintained and increased if needed.

### **Water Fountains**

Our water fountains are all equipped with touchless water dispensers for filling water bottles. The touch buttons have been closed off. Students must bring a water bottle to school each day. Water bottles will go home for families to disinfect at the end of each learning day.

### **Outdoor Learning and Play**

Outdoor learning and play is considered by Public Health to be one of the safest of choices and will be part of teachers' planning in the fall, at least until winter weather arrives. Students must come to school prepared to go outside, both for Physical Education and other classes. Hand hygiene will take place before and after outdoor play.

### **Shared Supplies and Personal Items**

Teachers are actively planning on ways to avoid sharing items and school supplies. Although families have always been asked to label personal items, this will be of increased importance. Teachers will plan for student access to lockers, coat hooks and cubbies to minimize crowding in these areas.

### **Personal Protective Equipment**

Dr. Roussin, Manitoba's Chief Health Officer, has mandated masks for children in Grade 4 and up, as well as for staff, volunteers and any school visitors. The school will provide a reusable cloth mask for all staff and students in these grades. Students are also welcome to use their own personal mask from home. Younger students have the option of wearing a mask, at the discretion of their parents. The school has a supply of medical masks for any staff or students who exhibit symptoms while at school.

Staff will have access to face shields for use when working in close proximity with students. Instruction on proper use of PPE will be part of staff development prior to school start.

### **School Transportation**

Our bus transportation is provided by River East Transcona School Division. In July, we were advised that bus service has been suspended for our students. Parents of students who use bus transportation have been informed of this decision and advised that they should explore other options for transporting their children to school. If restrictions ease over the course of the year, we will update parents.

### **Limiting Non-essential Visitors**

Although we welcome parent involvement in our school community, provincial guidelines instruct us to limit the number of non-essential visitors in the school for the time being. If possible, parents are asked to conduct school business via email or telephone. Parents may accompany their children to the school doors, but we ask that parents refrain from coming into the school.

### **Facility Use and Gym Rentals**

The school facility is normally used on weekends by the parish catechism program. As we begin the school year, the parish will run its catechism program in parish buildings. If we move forward into fall and determine that it is safe to proceed with in school catechism programming, the School Administration will meet with the Catechism Supervisor to outline protocols for use of the school during pandemic, including mandatory self-screening for catechists and participants, marking used areas for proper sanitation and ensuring that all attendees for each session are recorded.

Additionally, community groups and school families use our school gymnasium in the evenings and on weekends. At this point, all facility permits have been put on hold until we are confident that appropriate safety measures can be implemented and maintained. Considerations will include: the level of sanitation required after an event, the need for a record of attendees, and the increased burden on custodial staff.

Our School Board, Parent Association and Gala Committee will be able to use the facility to meet at their discretion and in consultation with the school administration. These groups will be made aware of the current Public Health rules.

### **Food Handling/Sharing**

The school has a well-established policy on “No Sharing” of foods brought from home, originally set as an allergy measure. Students will be reminded of this rule and its increased importance through the pandemic.

Shared food as part of a class celebration, including birthday treats, will be suspended until further notice. As well, special lunches, as hosted by our Parent Association will be on hold until the process of distributing food has been evaluated and protocols put in place to ensure safety of students, staff and volunteers.

The Milk program will be available for students. The procedures for the program will be reviewed to ensure that there is little risk involved to the students and staff.

### **Toys and Other Shared Learning Equipment**

Play is an integral part of the learning in the early years, as reaffirmed in Manitoba Education’s publication *Learning and Joy in the Pandemic: Manitoba Kindergarten Practice Resource*. Consideration will be given to how to mitigate the risks of interactive play. Staff will assess the toys and other items used in the classrooms and put away items that are not easily disinfected, including: stuffed toys, costumes, hats, etc. An electrostatic sprayer will be used to disinfect the remaining items.

### **Learning Preparedness**

#### **Recovery Learning**

We have been fortunate to have reported a high rate of student engagement through the remote learning period in the spring. That said, there are students who will need additional supports as they re-enter school. Transition meetings took place in the spring to communicate information on students’ academic, social and emotional needs to the receiving teachers. We anticipate that there will be some additional needs that surface as we begin classes in the fall and through the subsequent months. Our Resource team will provide assessment and additional supports as needed.

### **Blended learning**

Undoubtedly, there will be students who must remain home for short or long periods of time during the pandemic. We are increasing our ability to livestream lessons, so that students at home can participate with their class. Teachers are able to send and receive assignments electronically. The school has a loan system in place for families that need devices for their children to use during remote learning. If internet connectivity is a persistent issue, teachers and administration will strategize to find alternatives for families. As well, teachers will prepare learning packages as needed for pick-up or delivery. Frequent email and phone communication with students and parents will be in place to ensure engagement in remote learning. This will be facilitated by the classroom teacher, but may also require involvement from support staff.

### **Technology Education**

Our school community is committed to moving towards one-to-one technology for students. Through the summer we are adding a class set of laptops to our technology infrastructure, as well as more iPads and laptops for teacher use in remote and blended learning.

All users will be asked to clean hands before using a school device. Staff and students will be instructed on the method to disinfect devices between users.

Staff have a strong grasp of which families had difficulty with remote learning through the spring, as evidenced in student engagement. Discerning whether these issues were technology related will help us as we plan for different scenarios. A survey of families will be conducted to obtain information on their technology needs.

### **Music Education**

Our Music program will focus on activities that present less risk for students, including: body percussion, non-movement activities, individualized manipulatives etc. Smaller class groupings, use of larger spaces (gym, parish hall), assigning instruments to individuals or classes, and students traveling with personal supplies will all be taken into consideration. To reduce travel within the building, some music classes will be held in homerooms.

### **Physical Education**

Allowing students to be physically active will be an important part of the school's reopening, as it is important for mental health and social emotional connection in addition to physical well-being. Our PE program will incorporate activities that allow for increased distancing and will endeavour to allocate equipment to particular cohorts to reduce the amount to disinfection necessary between classes. Students will be expected to clean hands before and after gym class. Changing for gym class will be held off and gradually reintroduced beginning with the Grade 6-8 students once a process has been developed to ensure distancing and sanitation.

### **Nursery Program**

The Nursery Program will resume in the fall, following guideline set out for schools, as well as child care centres. Nursery parents will be allowed to come into the school and drop-off/pick-up their children. Physical distancing markers will be in place in the hallway outside the room as a reminder for everyone.

### **Shops Programming**

Our Shops programming is delivered as part of a shared services agreement with RETSD. As we begin the school year, Grade 7 & 8 students will not be attending programming at Munroe Junior High School. If circumstances change, parents will be informed of the program beginning again.

### **Assemblies and Other Gatherings**

Public Health Orders will likely limit the size of groups as we move into the fall. This will impact our ability to gather as an entire school. In order to maintain our sense of community we will gather smaller groups for Mass and assemblies and have the remaining students participate via livestream using the projectors in each classroom. Larger gatherings may occur outdoors while the weather allows.

**Field Trips**

All field trips for the 2020-21 school year will undergo careful evaluation before they are approved. The Field trip plan will include information of the venue's physical distancing and other health and safety measures.

**Recess Time and Lunch**

Outdoor play is important for children's health and well-being, so daily recess periods will continue. Staggered recesses will be scheduled, as well consideration of assigning play areas to specific groups to minimize the crossover between groups.

Our lunch will be split so that while one group is eating the other will take recess, and then the groups will switch. Class cohorts will be kept separated outside.

**Extra-curricular Activity and School Sports**

Our school community values extra-curricular opportunities, including sport, and has historically offered a wide variety of options for students. Extra-curricular activities will be gradually reintroduced as the school year begins, with thorough assessment of each activity to ensure that public health orders can be maintained.

**Staff Preparedness****Symptom Management**

Our staff has a very high attendance rate, which speaks highly of their professional commitment. In this pandemic, however, staff members will have to demonstrate this commitment to the school community by remaining at home when they are ill or have any respiratory or other COVID-19 symptoms.

If a staff member becomes symptomatic while at school he or she will immediately isolate themselves from other staff and students, notify the principal, and go home to monitor symptoms.

**Personal Risk Factors**

Staff members who have personal risk factors or require medical accommodations must advise the Principal of the issue. Each case will be dealt with according to Manitoba labour law and the school's employment guidelines.

**Staff Well-being**

Staff members have experienced a great deal of stress through the period of remote learning. Emphasis on personal well-being and stress reduction will be a feature of our professional dialogue through this year and beyond.