

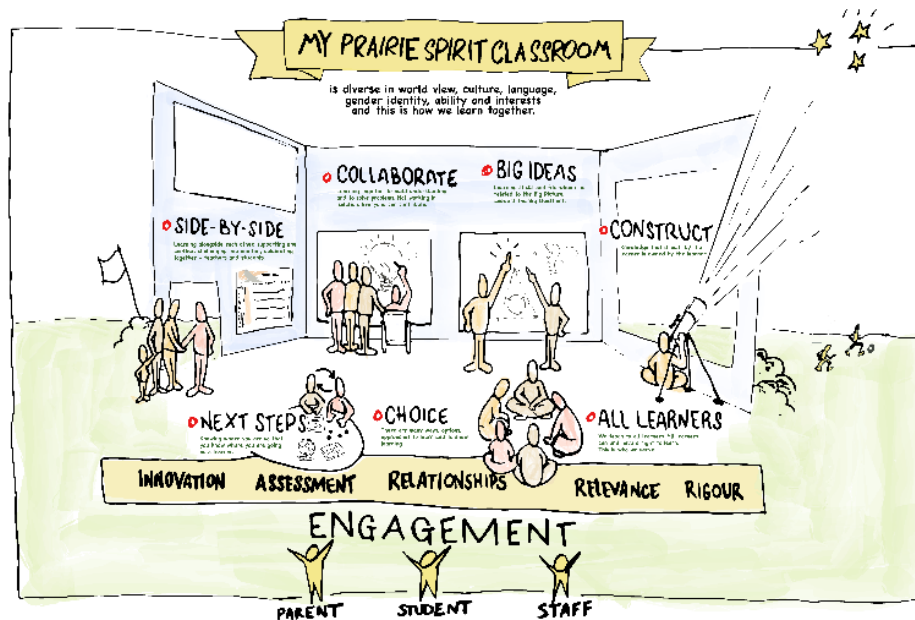
# PRAIRIE SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION

## Planning Document 2021/22

MISSION: Learning without limits in a world of possibilities

VISION: Learners for life

*This document is intended for Division personnel.*

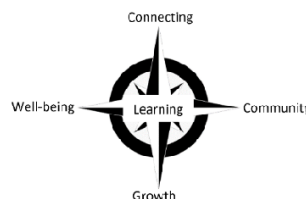




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# MEMO

**Date:** August 23, 2021  
**To:** Prairie Spirit Staff  
**From:** Darryl Bazylak, Director of Education  
**RE:** Return to school 2021/22



The purpose of this communication is to connect with all Prairie Spirit staff as we continue to plan for the start of the 2021/22 school year. As your new Director of Education, I am pleased to provide this update.

Soon we will be back together again, sharing stories with our students and colleagues about our summer adventures. As a Division, we are optimistic and excited to start the new school year where we can learn together, support one another, challenge one another and celebrate our learning.

As a Division, we follow the advice and recommendations of the local Medical Health Officers (MHO) and the provincial government. Public Health strongly recommends mask wearing for all students and staff at this time. The provincial government provided an [update](#) for COVID-19 precautions on August 20. Prairie Spirit will continue to have the support and guidance of the local MHO in responding to public health risks in school settings.

When school resumes on Wednesday, September 1, all Prairie Spirit schools will offer in-class, daily learning. Prairie Spirit schools will have several safety protocols in place to reduce the possible transmission of COVID-19. This is of particular concern for our youngest students who are not eligible to be vaccinated, with the spread of the Delta variant causing a resurgence in cases. Our focus continues to be on the safety and well-being of students and staff members.

***Please note: Safety measures may change at any time with short notice, depending on the local situation.***

## **Vaccination**

All eligible Saskatchewan residents are encouraged to get vaccinated. The Saskatchewan Health Authority will offer school-based vaccination clinics similar to those offered at the end of the last school year. In addition, any individuals turning 12 in the current year are immediately eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination.

**Masks**

At this time, **masks will be required for elementary students (those students born in 2010 and later) and elementary staff in all Prairie Spirit schools.** This will also apply to any older students who are in the same cohort as students who are required to wear a mask. The provincial government announced last week that all students born in 2009 are now eligible to be vaccinated, regardless of their birth date.

Students and bus drivers will be required to wear masks while on a Prairie Spirit school bus since buses transport students from different grades and other schools, in some cases.

For outdoor activities such as recess or outdoor gym classes, there is no recommendation for students to mask.

**Illness at school**

If students or staff members have COVID-19 symptoms, they are expected to stay home. Although this has been emphasized during the pandemic, it has always been a strong practice and expectation.

**Contact tracing**

The Saskatchewan Health Authority plans to continue to do contact tracing when there is a case in a school. The provincial government has indicated there will be a rapid testing pilot program offered to families through their schools. More information will be provided once it is shared with school divisions.

**Back to school events**

At this time, we have asked schools to hold off on planning back to school gatherings (e.g., Welcome Back BBQ, school assemblies, etc.) until we see what the start of the school year looks like. We want to ensure we are being careful and mindful of the risks involved in a large group gathering. We will revisit our gathering guidelines in the upcoming weeks.

**Extra-curricular activities**

We are currently planning for a return to extra-curricular activities. Schools can proceed with sharing their plans for extra-curricular activities, being mindful to align to relevant guidelines, considerations and recommendations as they emerge.

**Transportation**

Our buses will continue to be cleaned and sanitized according to pandemic expectations. Buses will continue to follow assigned seating plans this fall.

**Water bottle filling stations**

Each Prairie Spirit school has water bottle filling stations. These will continue to be available for students and regular water fountains will remain closed.

**Cleaning and hand hygiene**

We will continue to follow the required cleaning and sanitization practices in all Prairie Spirit facilities. All students, staff and visitors will be expected to follow established hand hygiene practices, with hand sanitizer available throughout schools and offices.

**Classroom activities**

Students may work together in groups in classroom activities. Students may share toys and other supplies, with good hand hygiene before and after activities.

**School ventilation**

All mechanical equipment in Prairie Spirit schools and offices is well-maintained and readied for operation. Prairie Spirit has consulted with industry experts to ensure our systems maximize outside fresh air into the buildings. In addition to opening windows whenever possible, the Division has focused on increasing fresh air through mechanical ductwork. The Division uses filters with the maximum filtration possible in each school. Several schools in the Division are currently receiving significant mechanical upgrades as a result of provincial stimulus funding.

**Cohorting**

Schools are asked to keep students in their cohorts throughout the school day, as much as possible. Block scheduling is in place for all Prairie Spirit high school students this fall.

**Visitors in schools**

Parents, community coaches and other guests will be able to access the school building this year, following a personal pre-screening for symptoms and with masking required. A decision will be made regarding welcoming parent volunteers in schools in the coming weeks.

**Learning options for families**

We will continue to provide options for those families who would prefer an alternative to in-person learning this fall. Please share the following link with families who may be exploring their options: [welcome.spiritsd.ca](https://welcome.spiritsd.ca).

We want to ensure a smooth transition for everyone at the start of this new year. Thank you for your patience and collaboration.

DB

## ENTERING A PRAIRIE SPIRIT SCHOOL

### Daily screening for COVID-19 symptoms

Instead of the online tool, this year staff will independently complete the daily COVID-19 screening questionnaire before entering a Prairie Spirit facility. Visitors will be reminded to screen for symptoms when they see a poster on the front door of each school. Students and staff are expected to stay home when ill.

Symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses, including the flu and common cold, and may include one or more of the following new onset (or worsening) symptoms:

- Fever
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Conjunctivitis
- Fatigue
- Diarrhea
- Altered sense of taste or smell
- Loss of appetite (difficulty feeding for children)
- Cough
- Muscle and/or joint aches and pains
- Chills
- Nasal congestion
- Dizziness
- Nausea/vomiting
- Difficulty breathing
- Shortness of breath

### Visitors in schools

Parents, community coaches and other guests will be able to access the school building this year, following a personal pre-screening for symptoms and with masking required. Parents must sign in at the front desk. This information will be presented in a sign on the school's front door. This signage will be provided to schools soon.

A decision will be made regarding welcoming parent volunteers in schools in the coming weeks.

Picking up and dropping off students outside of the building is encouraged, unless there is a need for the parent or caregiver to enter the school.

When parents are in the school, there should be a plan to keep hallway congestion to a minimum.

## SAFETY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS

Our local Medical Health Officer has provided the following guidance for schools to consider in their planning. Although Public Health Orders are no longer in place, the following safety measures continue to be recommended:

- Decrease in-person interactions as much as possible, notably avoid large crowds and poorly ventilated spaces
- Cohort when possible
- Wear a mask
- Wash your hands often
- Keep your surfaces clean
- Vaccination
- If you think you might have COVID-19, get tested
- Stay home when are sick
- “Know your risk and own it”

### Vaccinations

All eligible Saskatchewan residents are encouraged to get vaccinated. The Saskatchewan Health Authority will offer school-based vaccination clinics similar to those offered at the end of the last school year. In addition, any individuals turning 12 in the current year are immediately eligible for the COVID-19 vaccination.

### Masks

At this time, **masks will be required for elementary students (those students born in 2010 and later) and staff who work with these students in all Prairie Spirit schools.** This will also apply to any older students who are in the same cohort as students who are required to wear a mask. The provincial government announced last week that all students born in 2009 are now eligible to be vaccinated, regardless of their birth date.

Students and bus drivers will be required to wear masks while on a Prairie Spirit school bus since buses transport students from different grades and other schools, in some cases.

For outdoor activities such as recess or outdoor gym classes, there is no recommendation for students to mask.

#### *Mask guidelines for elementary staff and for students born in 2010 and later*

- Medical-grade disposable masks will be available for students and staff at the school
- Masks are required during physical education classes indoors.
- Students are welcome to bring their own masks. Triple-layer masks are recommended. Bandanas and gaiter masks are not appropriate face coverings.
- Staff members will be able to remove their masks in rooms where students are not present.

Please note: It is not a violation of the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code* to require a student to wear a mask. If, however, a student is unable to wear a mask because of medical reasons, that student must be accommodated in the same way as any student with medical restrictions.

*If a student cannot wear a mask for medical reasons*

A student may qualify for a medical exemption from wearing a mask, but this would be for a medical reason and not because of personal preference.

For students unable to wear a mask due to a medical reason, the family will obtain medical documentation and work with the school to create an accommodation plan. If there is already medical information on file specific to exemption from wearing a mask, further medical information may not be required. In addition, accommodations will be needed at school to ensure the student is able to maintain a two-metre distance from all staff and students throughout the day.

*Masking Overview*

Guidelines	Students born in 2010 or later	Students born in 2009 and older	School staff working with students born in 2010 and later	Other school staff	Guests/Visitors
Indoors in Prairie Spirit schools	Masks required for all students born in 2010 or later	Masks strongly recommended	Masks required	Masks strongly recommended	Masks required for all visitors in Prairie Spirit schools
Outdoors/Recess	Not required	Not required	Not required	Not required	-
Prairie Spirit buses	Required	Required	-	Required	-
Masks available	Medical-grade disposable masks will be available for students and staff at the school.				

**Hand hygiene**

All students, staff and visitors will be expected to follow established hand hygiene practices, with hand sanitizer available throughout schools and offices. Good hand hygiene will be required before and after group activities.

**Cleaning**

Caretaking staffing levels have returned to pre-pandemic levels with the focus on cleaning high traffic spaces and high touch areas. Staff will continue to sanitize surfaces.

**Physical distancing**

Schools will encourage physical distancing when possible. School staff may choose to continue the practice of staggered entrance and exit times, recess times or use separate entrances. Schools can plan to keep student groups separate.

Elementary students are masked as one level of protection. Older students can mask if they cannot keep their distance from younger students in common areas.

**Student cohorting/groups**

Schools are asked to keep students in their cohorts throughout the school day, as much as possible. Schools should continue with cohorts of about 60 students (as last year). Schools should minimize large gatherings where students are in close proximity to one another.

Block scheduling is in place for all Prairie Spirit high school students this fall.

At this time, we have asked schools to hold off on planning back to school gatherings (e.g., Welcome Back BBQ, school assemblies, etc.) until we see what the start of the school year looks like. We want to ensure we are being careful and mindful of the risks involved in a large group gathering. We will revisit our gathering guidelines in the upcoming weeks.

### **Ventilation**

All mechanical equipment in Prairie Spirit schools and offices is well-maintained and readied for operation. Prairie Spirit has consulted with industry experts to ensure our systems maximize outside fresh air into the buildings. In addition to opening windows whenever possible, the Division has focused on increasing fresh air through mechanical ductwork. The Division uses filters with the maximum filtration possible in each school.

Several schools in the Division are currently receiving significant mechanical upgrades as a result of provincial stimulus funding.

### **Illness at school**

If students or staff members have COVID-19 symptoms, they are expected to stay home. Although this has been emphasized during the pandemic, it has always been a strong practice and expectation. Parents and caregivers should make a plan in case their child needs to be picked up early from school due to illness. Please ensure contact information is up to date with the school.

#### *If a student is sick*

If a student is experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms, they must not attend school. If symptoms persist, parents/caregivers should contact HealthLine 811 for direction. Students can return to school 24 hours after they are symptom-free, even if COVID-19 test is negative prior to the 24 hours.

#### *If a student becomes sick at school*

If a student is showing symptoms, they will be taken to a separate area and provided with a medical mask until they can be picked up. Students will be supervised in this area. The student's parents or caregivers will be contacted and must pick up the student. School staff will not transport the student home. After the student has been picked up, the space will be cleaned and disinfected.

#### *If there is a COVID-19 case at school*

The Saskatchewan Health Authority plans to continue to do contact tracing when there is a COVID case in a school. We will provide more information about this process once we have confirmation from the SHA.

The school division works with local public health officials to monitor cases and possible transmission in school communities. If necessary, additional measures will be put in place to protect students and staff members.



## **INSTRUCTION and SCHOOL OPERATIONS**

Teachers are expected to follow *My Prairie Spirit Classroom* in planning their work with students. There is no expectation to plan for front-facing instruction this fall.

### **Classroom activities**

Students may work together in groups in classroom activities. Students may share toys and other supplies, with good hand hygiene before and after activities. Elementary teachers may resume using carpets in their group activities with students.

### **PAA travel to neighbouring school**

Travel on Prairie Spirit buses to other schools for PAA instruction will resume this fall. If students are travelling within their cohort and are 12 years old and above, masking is not required on the bus, but is strongly recommended.

### **Physical Education**

Students born in 2010 and later will be required to wear masks while participating in physical education while indoors. Outside activities are encouraged.

### **Field trips**

Off-site activities and field trips are permitted. Classes will be able to use charter busing.

Overnight trips are not permitted at this time, except if there is a compelling reason to have this type of trip in the next six weeks and only if there is no mixing of classroom cohorts (i.e., only one cohort on the trip). If this type of trip is planned, it must be presented as an option for families, so that families who are not comfortable with this type of trip at this time will not feel pressured in any way to participate.

### **Limiting shared materials**

All students will be responsible for their own school supplies. Sharing of student personal items such as electronic devices, writing instruments, supplies, and food will be discouraged.

### **Lockers**

Students will be able to use lockers for storing personal items. Schools will plan to minimize students gathering in the hallways.

### **Water bottle filling stations**

Each Prairie Spirit school has water bottle filling stations. These will continue to be available for students and regular water fountains will remain closed.

### **Recess/outdoor spaces/playgrounds**

Schools may resume normal recess and playground schedules while emphasizing hand hygiene before and afterwards.

### **Before and after school programs/Preschool/Daycare**

Programs that operate in Prairie Spirit schools must follow the safety protocols set by the school division. Schools who have programs in their buildings will share this information with their partners.

**Fire and Lockdown drills**

The provincially required fire and lockdown drills will resume.

**Extra-curricular activities**

All curricular and extra-curricular activities will resume. This includes all performing arts, athletics, and in-school clubs.

**Band**

Band and choir will resume. Students born in 2010 and later will be required to wear masks unless actively participating in class. Instruments, including accessories (e.g., drum sticks, mallets) should not be shared. If sharing instruments and accessories is required for equity purposes, they will be thoroughly cleaned between users. Sharing of music stands and sheet music is allowed, along with good hand hygiene.

**Facility rentals**

Facility rentals may proceed, following current safety protocols in the Division.

**SCC meetings**

SCC meetings can proceed in person or virtually. All parents/caregivers must wear a mask while inside the school.

**Transportation**

Students and bus drivers will be required to wear masks while on a Prairie Spirit school bus since buses transport students from different grades and other schools, in some cases. Students who have an approved medical accommodation are exempt from wearing masks. Disposable masks will be available for students, if needed.

Buses will continue to be cleaned and sanitized between each run.

**Food**

We will continue with our food handling practices from last year, for the first six weeks of the new school year.

Please note: Fundraisers are allowed but must not involve food prepared at home.

Students are encouraged to eat in their classroom or with their cohort, as much as possible.

**Extra-Curricular sports**

Extra-curricular activities are voluntary for students and staff. Coaches, Athletic Directors, and school admin should consider a balanced re-engagement plan that supports health and safety, mental health and wellness, as well as curricular and professional commitments of participants.

*Health and safety*

The [Saskatchewan High Schools Athletic Association](#) suggests a gradual progression while returning to activity to limit/decrease the potential for injury. Coaches should consider training and practice schedules that help athletes to gradually re-engage, strengthen and condition muscle and kinesthetic systems to avoid injury.

Additional health and safety measures around COVID-19 should be considered prior to the commencement of a season of extra-curricular sport.

- Extra-curricular activities will be guided by the school division in conjunction with local Medical Health Officers. Changes to the sanctioning of extra-curricular sports could occur over the course of the school year in response to evolving COVID-19 situations.
- All extra-curricular activities will operate with the following considerations in mind:
  - Students born in 2010 or later will follow [PSSD masking requirements](#).
  - Individuals who are sick must not attend practices or games.
  - Masks are strongly recommended whenever close indoor contact cannot be avoided (change rooms, buses, etc.)
  - Participants can be supported/encouraged to mask during game play and/or when not actively involved in competition (i.e., on the sidelines).
  - Personal hygiene continues to be key. Players should not share water bottles.
  - Consider alternatives to start and end of game routines such as handshakes.
  - Enhanced cleaning and disinfection measures should be in place.
  - Guests/fans attending indoor competitions must complete and pass a mandatory pre-screen and wear a mask. Spacing/distancing in guest seating will be strongly encouraged.

Everyone participating in extra-curricular sports is strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated. Encouragement to get vaccinated is permitted but requesting and/or collecting proof of vaccination or pressuring participants to get vaccinated is not permitted at this time.

#### *Mental Health and Wellness*

Extra-curricular sports generally complement mental health and well-being in athletes and coaches through physical training, exercise, competition, and team play. When leading extra-curricular sports programming this year, schools, athletic directors, and coaches should consider the impact COVID-19 might play on mental health and well-being.

Participants might be uncertain about health and safety during training, competition, and/or travel. Participants may struggle to find balance between extra-curricular commitments, curricular/professional commitments and commitments to home. Schools are encouraged to support conversations, accommodations, and planning in these areas to reduce feelings of stress and/or anxiety when participating in extra-curricular sports.

## LEARNING OPTIONS FOR STUDENTS

### Learning options for families

We believe that students enjoy a rich experience when they learn together. For parents who are looking for an alternative to in-person learning this fall, Prairie Spirit offers a number of options for families to consider. Please go to: [welcome.spiritsd.ca](http://welcome.spiritsd.ca) for an overview of the options available for students this fall.

**PRAIRIE SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION**

**Learning Everywhere Together – Options for Families**

 <b>Prairie Spirit Schools</b> In person learning in our welcoming and well-maintained facilities. Access to a full range of opportunities, including extra-curriculars, practical arts, counseling, learning support, and more.	 <b>Spirit eLearning Online School</b> Provincial leader in online education, offering the benefits of a Prairie Spirit school, in an innovative online format. Daily interaction with teacher and peers.
 <b>Prairie Spirit Learning @ Home</b> For learners who are not able to attend regularly in person. Low-tech solutions are available, with support and materials from a dedicated teacher.	 <b>Home-Based Education</b> Parents are the primary educator for their child and determine learning content. Support from Prairie Spirit School Division is available.

For more details about the upcoming school year, visit:  
**[welcome.spiritsd.ca](http://welcome.spiritsd.ca)**

Questions? Call Us  
 **306-683-2806**

## Online Learning – Spirit eLearning School



*Spirit eLearning* is a K-12 online school offering a full curriculum including, all core courses and a wide variety of electives at the high school level.

Classes are structured synchronously, with some independent work expected throughout the school day. Spirit eLearning virtual classrooms mirror typical Prairie Spirit classrooms in terms of daily schedule, routines and expectations.

To access Spirit eLearning classes, students are required to have technology and internet access?.

For more information specific to PSSD's *Spirit eLearning*, please connect with our Spirit eLearning Coordinator, Peggy Mattila-Bains [peggy.mattila@spiritsd.ca](mailto:peggy.mattila@spiritsd.ca) or by phone 306.683-2835.



# LEARNING@HOME

## Supporting families with grades K-9 full curriculum learning at home

- ✓ Full Saskatchewan curriculum learning
- ✓ Regular connection with a teacher
- ✓ Low-tech and no-tech options
- ✓ Supporting transition to Prairie Spirit Schools or online learning
- ✓ Option to connect with other learners

Families interested in this option should contact the School Division.

Current home-based families are asked to register by June 30.

Families are committed to the program until at least October 15, 2021.



To register, or for more information contact Erin



(306) 683-2806



SELregister@spiritsd.ca