



## 2021-2022 School Entry Handbook

*This document will continue to be updated based on direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and recommendations from Alberta Education.*

Updated August 20, 2021

Updated September 17, 2021

## [Message from Joanne Higgins, Superintendent STEM Innovation Academy](#)

Welcome to the 2021-22 school year. STEM Innovation Academy is proud to open our doors on August 30 to over 400 students. As we plan for our opening and welcoming students and families to our school, keeping everyone safe and minimizing the risk of infection and spread will be our priority.

On Friday August 13, 2021 Alberta Education released their [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#). At the same time Alberta Health released their [Guidance for Respiratory Illness Prevention & Management in Schools](#). Within these documents the Government of Alberta has indicated that school restrictions may be removed other than the mandatory wearing of masks on public transportation.

In-school public health measures continue to be a topic of much discussion within our shared community and across Alberta. I have heard various advocacy viewpoints throughout the pandemic and appreciate the common link connecting each perspective - a successful return to in-person learning. We collectively agree that it remains the best option for our children and staff team.

The STEM Innovation Academy response plan can be summed up in four words:

### **Require - Recommend - Respond - Respect**

First, there will be times and circumstances where we **require** compliance with provincial health measures. When we implement a health measure that is greater than what is mandated by Alberta Health, it is because we believe there is sufficient research from other sources, such as Health Canada, CDC, or WHO to suggest it is a reasonable strategy and is in the best interests of staff, students, and our school community. These include:

- **Students must wear a mask on charter bus transportation** (to be reviewed by the province on September 27, 2021).
- Students and staff, must wear a mask when entering the school, leaving the school, and in common gathering spaces inside the school (i.e. hallways and washrooms).
- **Students and staff must wear a mask at all times while inside the school. This includes times when students are sitting in their desk and facing the front of the room. It also includes times when the teacher is at the front of the room instructing.**
- **Students must eat lunch from 11:45 am-12:05 pm with all devices off and away. Once students are finished eating, they may access their device beginning at 12:05 pm with their mask on.**
- Daily [COVID-19 health check](#) (Appendix A) and staying home when sick.
- Promotion of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Second, we will **recommend** strategies as we move forward. Students safely distanced from others may remove their mask. As many individuals are experiencing different levels of

anxiety/stress, it is imperative we all use good judgement and be considerate of individuals. Individuals who choose to wear a mask at all times will be welcomed and supported in their personal decision. We strongly encourage and recommend:

- Physical distancing wherever possible.
- Reducing traffic flow in busy areas such as entry and exit doors for individual grades.
- That students change for Phys Ed. Our change rooms are small and it is difficult to maintain a physical distance while changing. For this reason, student may choose to remain in their STEM uniform. If students are not changing, it is important they are wearing clothes that allow them to participate in class and not hinder their movement. If students are not changing, we recommend they are wearing a t-shirt and have deodorant at school in their backpack.

Third, we will continue to **respond** by:

- Reviewing ongoing direction from Alberta Education or Alberta Health Services.
- Re-evaluating our strategy as more information becomes available.
- Remaining in communication with our school community by sharing relevant updates.

Lastly, we **respect** the personal choices of our students, families, staff, and greater school community. As many individuals are experiencing different comfort levels, it is imperative that we all use good judgement and continue to be considerate and supportive of one another. Families and students navigated the pandemic last year by working together with their respective schools to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students and staff teams. This partnership remains essential as we begin the new school year. We look forward to your support in implementing these risk mitigation measures as a layered approach that will ensure continued activities and in person learning in our schools this year. Together, and supported by each other, we will get through this.

I thank you for your understanding and cooperation as we step towards a return to normal while striving to provide high quality learning opportunities for our students.

We are incredibly proud you have placed your trust and confidence in us in choosing STEM Innovation Academy for your child. If you have any questions regarding our School Entry Plan, please contact me directly. Thank you once again for your support and partnership with STEM Innovation Academy.

Joanne Higgins  
Superintendent  
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## Introduction

As we prepare for a return to school, our reality is that we must learn to live with COVID-19. While all Albertans have done a tremendous job this past year, variant cases continue to rise. Minimizing the risk of infection and spread continues to be our priority in schools. With the availability of vaccines, Alberta is lifting health restrictions and safely getting back to normal. The 2021-2022 school Year Plan is based upon the recovery phase reflecting a corresponding shift from mandatory health measures to recommended health best practices. This plan is focused on a normal return to school, with in-class learning for the majority of students.

The complete Alberta Education School Year plan can be accessed on-line at ([2021-2022 School Year Plan](#)). The plan was developed on the foundation of the following four principles that were established by government in collaboration with education partners:

- The safety of children, students and staff comes first.
- Children and student learning will continue.
- Provincial funding is still flowing to schools.
- School authorities have flexibility to do what is best for their community.

The following communication outlines expectations and planning to support a safe return to school. Successful implementation is dependent upon the cooperation and efforts made by our community, staff, parents and students to follow established health measures.

## Plan Purpose

The purpose of this Entry Plan is to provide students, parents and staff with information about attending STEM Innovation Academy in August. This plan will outline how we will provide the support required for a safe return to school by students and staff. We want students, parents and staff to feel that although the pandemic has changed how we live and work, STEM Innovation Academy is committed to providing a safe and caring learning environment for all.

We recognize that it is not possible to eliminate all COVID-19 transmission risks, but through the implementation of Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services health and safety measures we are able to mitigate many of the risks associated with COVID-19. Successfully mitigating these risks requires cooperation between home and school in implementing these safety measures.

It is important to note that some public health measures in place during the 2020-2021 school year have been eased or removed altogether. Examples include the isolation of close contacts, contact tracing and there will no longer be communication of positive cases. Routine measures to reduce the risk of transmission will continue to include promoting and facilitating hand

hygiene and respiratory etiquette, staying home when sick, maintaining ventilation and ensuring regular cleaning and disinfection of high traffic/touch areas. Additional measures may be considered if our school experiences an outbreak.

### Safety is our Priority

The safety of staff and students is our priority. As society continues to adapt to COVID-19 it is important to remember we all have a responsibility to ensure the safety of ourselves and others. At STEM Innovation Academy we will continue to help students learn new behaviours and strategies to stay healthy in a world where COVID-19 continues to exist. Parents can support us in this work. Five key safety measures will guide our return to school and be at the forefront of our return to school plan. These measures, and how parents can support, are as follows:

<b>STEM Innovation Academy Safety Measure</b>	<b>Parents can support by:</b>
1. Health checks and monitoring	Review the <a href="#">COVID-19 health check</a> (Appendix A) for children under 18 each day to ensure your child is healthy and ready to attend school. Keep your child home when sick or symptomatic.
2. Handwashing	As with all learning, behaviour supported at home ensures the internalization of the behaviour. Parents can model proper handwashing and ensure their children wash their hands regularly, especially after being outside where contact with the virus may occur.
3. Sanitizing	Parents can encourage children to sanitize when entering buildings such as grocery stores, offices, malls, etc.
4. Wearing masks	It is important to remember that Stage 3 of Alberta’s Relaunch Strategy is based upon vaccination rates, and students under age 12 are ineligible for vaccination. Canada Health, the Center for Disease Control and the World Health Organization continue to recommend the wearing of masks in public places. STEM Innovation Academy <b>requires</b> students and staff to wear masks at school when entering the school, leaving the school, and in common gathering spaces inside the school (i.e. hallways and washrooms). <b>Students and staff are required to wear a mask at all times while inside the school.</b> Our program is based on collaboration. When close collaboration and/or physical distancing is not possible, staff will ask students to wear their mask in the classroom.

	<p>Students will be required to eat their lunch from 11:45 am -12:05 pm with all devices off and away inside the school. Once students are finished eating, they may access their device beginning at 12:05 pm with their mask on.</p> <p>1. Students will not be required to wear a mask when they are sitting in their desk facing the front of the classroom. Students are required to wear a mask when sitting in their desk facing the front of the classroom. Teachers are required to wear a mask when at the front of the room instructing.</p> <p>2. Students will not be required to wear a mask during physical education. Students are required to wear a mask during physical education. Students are recommended to change into their gym strip; however, they may remain in their STEM uniform. Students who choose to change must wear their mask in the change room.</p>
5. Physical distancing	<p>Parents can encourage their children to be mindful of the benefits of physical distancing, when reasonable to do so. As is the case for most of us, physical distancing may not always be possible, however there is no disputing the benefit of physical distancing where possible.</p>

**COVID-19 School Immunization Program**

The Alberta Education [2021-2022 School Year Plan](#) (page 7) states the following:  
*“Vaccination is an effective means of protecting Albertans from COVID-19, and it is an important part of the overall plan to lift health restrictions and safely get back to normal. The decision to be vaccinated is a personal choice. In accordance with Alberta’s privacy legislation, the Personal Information Protection Act and the Freedom of Information of Information and protection of Privacy Act, staff must respect the health privacy of students, including their vaccination status.”*

Alberta Education recently announced plans to offer vaccinations in schools to eligible students **with parent consent**. Parents will soon receive information regarding this vaccination program for students in grades 7-12, who are born in 2009 or earlier. **Vaccinations will be offered at STEM Innovation Academy on September 28 for both students (with parental consent) and staff.** The dignity and privacy of students will be paramount. Because of the Personal Information Protection Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, students and parents are not required to identify their vaccination status. For the same reason, STEM Innovation Academy will not reveal the vaccination status of staff.

Expectations

Return to normal. The following enhanced measures will be implemented:	
1	<p><b>To reduce COVID-19 transmission:</b></p> <p>a. <b>Parents will use the AHS <a href="#">COVID-19 health check</a> to screen their children daily before bringing them to school.</b> Students and staff must use the AHS health check and maintain a strict stay-at-home policy for anyone exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. The health check is included in Appendix A of this entry plan.</p> <p>b. <b>Parents will pick up students if they develop symptoms at school during the day.</b> If a student develops symptoms while at school, parents will be called to pick up the student immediately. The student will be brought to an isolated space with care to await pick up.</p> <p>c. <b>Stay-at-home policy for any students or staff exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms.</b> Staff and students exhibiting core symptoms of COVID-19 will be required to stay-at-home as per Alberta Health Services guidelines.</p> <p>d. <b>Communal sharing of resources, food and spaces will be limited.</b> Parents will provide and maintain individual student school supplies, water bottles and other resources. This includes the student’s personal learning device (laptop, iPad). If communal sharing of resources is required, students will wash or sanitize their hands before and after using the resources. Water bottle filling stations as well as drinking fountains will remain open. Daily disinfection of water bottle stations and fountains will occur. When sharing of equipment is required, the equipment shall be cleaned between uses.</p>

	<p>e. <b>Hand hygiene is required when entering and exiting the school, washrooms and before and after eating.</b> Hand hygiene procedures will be taught and implemented when entering and exiting the school, and before and after eating. Sanitizer will be available throughout the school, classrooms and at entrances/exits.</p> <p>f. <b>Respiratory etiquette will be taught and reinforced.</b> This includes avoiding touching the face, disposal of used tissues promptly and covering coughs and sneezes with the elbow or tissue.</p>
2	<p><b>Cleanliness:</b></p> <p>a. <b>School cleaning and disinfecting will be enhanced.</b> Students will be expected to clean their own area after eating. Enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfecting, including daily cleaning for all areas of the school, washrooms and high-touch surfaces. Student desks will be thoroughly disinfected weekly. A scheduled deep cleaning of all areas of the school will occur when students are not present.</p> <p>b. <b>Handwashing/Sanitizing</b> Students and staff should wash their hands or sanitize their hands regularly including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When entering the school and before they go home</li> <li>• Before eating and drinking</li> <li>• After using the bathroom</li> <li>• After being outside</li> <li>• After coughing or sneezing into their hand</li> <li>• When hands are dirty.</li> </ul> <p>Staff should additionally wash their hands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before handling food or assisting students with their food</li> <li>• After contact with body fluids (if a student is ill)</li> <li>• After cleaning tasks</li> <li>• After any clean-up including putting article in garbage receptacles</li> </ul>



## Symptomatic Students at School

If a child becomes symptomatic (symptoms that include fever, cough, chills, sore throat, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, shortness of breath or loss of taste/smell) during the school day:

- a. Parents will be called to pick up their child as soon as possible.
- b. The student will be moved to an isolated space and cared for until the parent arrives.
- c. Students are to remain at home as per Alberta Health Services guidelines in the [COVID-19 health check](#).
- d. **Alberta Health has determined there will be no more contact tracing or class isolations as of August 16, 2021. Close contacts of the symptomatic individual are no longer required to isolate. STEM Innovation Academy will notify families of self-reported cases in the school.**

## [The Plan](#) - What will the school day look like to your child?

### The First Day of the school Year

August 30, 2021

School opens for all students on August 30, 2021. The staff of STEM Innovation Academy are committed to working to support student entry so that students feel safe and secure with not only coming back to school but coming to a new school. Our goal in our first week of school is to provide an opportunity for students to orient themselves to their new school and the many exciting learning opportunities that await. During this week and beyond, hygiene and COVID-19 prevention protocols will be reviewed with students.

### A Student's School Day

#### Be Prepared for Flexibility

Parents should prepare their children for a return to normal school activities. Students are coming from a variety of different schools where COVID-19 protocols were part of the daily routine. While enhanced cleaning protocols and regular hand hygiene will remain in place, students can expect a return to a more normal daily experience. Some students and staff may choose to wear masks and other protective gear at all times. **Staff and students must wear a mask at all times while inside the school.** That is an individual choice and will be positively supported. We will all practice kindness and acceptance in our safe, caring and welcoming school.

#### Pre-Screening Your Child at Home Before School

Parents will use the attached pre-screening checklist to screen your child prior to leaving home to drop your child at school or to travel to their bus stop. See Appendix A [COVID-19 health check](#) for the checklist. If you answer 'yes' to any of the questions, stay home.

The school will provide specific information about educational programming for your child if they have been directed to remain at home.

#### If a Student Gets Sick or Shows Symptoms at School

If a student shows symptoms at school, they will be moved to the designated isolation room. Parents will be called to come and pick up their child immediately. The student will not be able to travel home on the public transit or on charter bus. See Appendix A for symptoms.

#### Arrival at school – Student drop off

Students should arrive between 8:30 and 8:40 am. Students are expected to be in their homeroom for Stand Up beginning at 8:45 am.

Parents will remain in their vehicles during drop off unless assisting their child out of the vehicle. Please note there is no parent parking in front of the school. This area must be kept clear for our busses before and after school.

If your child accesses charter bus transportation, they are **required** to wear a mask. The school bus will drop off and pick up students directly in front of the school. Students from each bus will have a designated school entry door (based on their grade) to support arrival and dismissal protocols.

### Entering the school to start your day

Students will enter through their assigned entrance door. This will help to alleviate hallway congestion as all students will arrive at similar times. Hand sanitizers will be available at all entrances for student and staff use. Instructions about where to store personal belongings will be provided by the classroom teacher.

### The School Day

Students will travel between classrooms wherever needed. This will facilitate educational programming at STEM Innovation Academy. Wherever possible, physical distancing will be encouraged.

### Washrooms

If students need to go to the washroom, their teacher will provide permission. No more than two students are permitted in the washroom at one time. Students will wash their hands prior to leaving the washroom and will use hand sanitizer upon return to the classroom. Students are **required** to wear a mask when moving in common areas such as hallways and washrooms.

### Break and Lunch Time

Students will sanitize their desk as well as their hands prior to eating lunch at their desk. After eating is completed, students will again sanitize their desks. Students will be allowed to leave the school during lunch time. This will help facilitate physical distancing. Students are not required to wear a mask while outside. If students choose to wear a mask, they will be positively supported. Students are required to eat their lunch from 11:45 am – 12:05 pm with all devices off and away. Out Hive and hallways are busy at lunch and it is not feasible to physically distance at this time. If students are focused on eating, they will finish lunch much sooner than they currently are. Once students are finished eating, they may access their device beginning at 12:05 pm with their mask on. As a reminder to students, weather permitting, they may choose to eat their lunch outside without masks.

### Physical Education

When students are engaged in Physical Education, it is reasonable for students to remove their masks when participating. Students may wear masks when gathered in small groups for activity instruction. Students are required to wear a mask during physical education. Students are recommended to change into their gym strip; however, they may remain in their STEM uniform. Students who choose to change must wear their mask in the change room.

### Volunteers and Visitors

To ensure the safety of students and staff, only scheduled volunteers and visitors will be allowed to enter the school. Parents dropping off or picking up students are required to wait outside.

## Dismissal

The area immediately in front of the school is intended for busses only. Parents picking up their child/ren will be required to park in alternate areas. Parents are asked to remain in their vehicles. Parents who leave their vehicle to meet their children are asked to wait at the entry to the school to limit congestion as most of our student body is relying on bus transportation.

## Questions

If parents have questions about the entry process, please visit the school's web page for the STEM Innovation's School Entry Handbook. All updates to the Plan will be highlighted as they relate to updates from Alberta Education and Alberta Health Services. Please also email Joanne Higgins, Superintendent, or contact the school office beginning August 23, 2021.

More information pertaining to the COVID-19 virus is available at:

<https://www.alberta.ca/k-12-learning-during-covid-19.aspx>

## Appendix A: Alberta Health Daily Checklist

### COVID-19 INFORMATION

# COVID-19 ALBERTA HEALTH DAILY CHECKLIST (FOR CHILDREN UNDER 18)

## Overview

This checklist applies for all children, as well as all students who attend kindergarten through Grade 12, including high school students over 18. Children should be screened every day by completing this checklist before going to school, childcare or other activities. Children may need a parent or guardian to assist them to complete this screening tool.

If your child has traveled outside Canada in the last 14 days, follow the [Government of Canada Travel, Testing, Quarantine and Borders](#) instructions, including any requirements for exempt travelers related to attending high-risk environments.

## Screening Questions for Children under 18:

1.	<b>Does the child have any new onset (or worsening) of the following core symptoms:</b>		
	<b>Fever</b> Temperature of 38 degrees Celsius or higher	YES	NO
	<b>Cough</b> Continuous, more than usual, not related to other known causes or conditions such as asthma	YES	NO
	<b>Shortness of breath</b> Continuous, unable to breathe deeply, not related to other known causes or conditions such as asthma	YES	NO
	<b>Loss of sense of smell or taste</b> Not related to other known causes or conditions like allergies or neurological disorders	YES	NO
<p><b>If the child answered “YES” to any symptom in question 1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The child is required to isolate for 10 days from onset of symptoms as per <a href="#">CMOH Order 39-2021</a> OR receive a negative COVID-19 test and feel better before returning to activities</li> <li>Use the <a href="#">AHS Online Assessment Tool</a> or call Health Link 811 to arrange for testing and to receive additional information on isolation.</li> </ul> <p><b>If the child answered “NO” to all of the symptoms in question 1, proceed to question 2.</b></p>			

2.	<b>Does the child have any new onset (or worsening) of the following other symptoms:</b>		
	<b>Chills</b> Without fever, not related to being outside in cold weather	YES	NO
	<b>Sore throat/painful swallowing</b> Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as seasonal allergies or reflux	YES	NO
	<b>Runny nose/congestion</b> Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as seasonal allergies or being outside in cold weather	YES	NO
	<b>Feeling unwell/fatigued</b> Lack of energy, poor feeding in infants, not related to other known causes or conditions, such as depression, insomnia, thyroid dysfunction or sudden injury	YES	NO
	<b>Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea</b> Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as anxiety, medication or irritable bowel syndrome	YES	NO
	<b>Unexplained loss of appetite</b> Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as anxiety or medication	YES	NO
	<b>Muscle/joint aches</b> Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as arthritis or injury	YES	NO
	<b>Headache</b> Not related to other known causes/conditions, such as tension-type headaches or chronic migraines	YES	NO
	<b>Conjunctivitis</b> (commonly known as pink eye)	YES	NO
<p><b>If the child answered “YES” to ONE symptom in question 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep your child home and monitor for 24 hours.</li> <li>If their symptom is <b>improving</b> after 24 hours, they can return to school and activities when they feel well enough to go. Testing is not necessary.</li> <li>If the symptom <b>does not improve or worsens</b> after 24 hours (or if additional symptoms emerge), use the <a href="#">AHS Online Assessment Tool</a> or call Health Link 811 to check if testing is recommended.</li> </ul> <p><b>If the child answered “YES” to TWO OR MORE symptoms in question 2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep your child home.</li> <li>Use the <a href="#">AHS Online Assessment Tool</a> or call Health Link 811 to determine if testing is recommended.</li> <li>Your child can return to school and activities once their symptoms go away as long as it has been at least 24 hours since their symptoms started.</li> </ul> <p><b>If the child answered “NO” to all questions:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your child may attend school, childcare and/or other activities.</li> </ul>			

**Please note:** If your child is experiencing any symptoms from the lists above, do not bring them to visit a continuing care or acute care facility for 10 days from when symptoms started or until symptoms resolve (whichever is longer), unless they receive a negative COVID-19 test result and feel better.