



**Valhalla Community School**  
Northern Alberta's First Rural Leadership Charter School

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March 14, 2020

## Parents, Students and Staff Members, Valhalla Community School:

On Saturday, March 14, from 11am to 1:pm, school administrators attended a phone conference with Alberta Health and Alberta Education leaders.

As of this meeting, Valhalla Community School, along with other Alberta schools have been instructed to remain open, and to increase measures to reduce the risk of transmission of respiratory illnesses, including COVID-19. It's important to note though, that this decision is based on current available information and is subject to change as new information on COVID-19 becomes available.

Based on current Alberta Health recommendations, following are measure VCS will be implementing immediately:

## Enforcement of Strict Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hand hygiene with plain soap and warm water is preferred in schools and child care settings as the mechanical action of hand washing is effective at removing visible soil as well as microbes. In instances where hand washing sinks are not available, supervised use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol may be considered. If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol based hand sanitizers may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses.

Students/children and adults in the child care setting should clean their hands:

- before leaving home and on arrival at school
- after using the toilet
- after breaks and sporting activities
- before food preparation
- before eating any food, including snacks
- after contact with saliva or nasal secretions
- after diapering a child
- before using shared materials such as arts and craft supplies
- before leaving school and on arrival at home

Respiratory etiquette in school/child care settings includes covering the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow and disposing of used tissues in a plastic-lined waste container, followed by hand hygiene.

## Communication

Parents/caregivers will be a major source of comfort and reassurance to their children. VCS will be doing everything it can to keep parents/caregivers informed of what we are doing to protect students/children including how we are preventing the spread of respiratory infections. Parents are encouraged to contact the school at any time with any questions or concerns. As new information unfolds, VCS will send up to date information to all our stakeholders.

## Management of Students with Respiratory Symptoms

Parents/guardians of students/children must understand that according to Alberta Health recommendations, there will be zero tolerance for children with any respiratory symptoms attending school or child care centres. Teachers and school staff will be asked to closely monitor their classrooms, and if any student is having respiratory symptoms such as cough or symptoms of a mild cold, the steps below will be followed. The same steps will be followed if a staff member begins to experience respiratory symptoms.

- If a student, child or staff member develops respiratory symptoms while at school, they will be removed from the school environment.
- The school will promptly separate the student or staff with symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, muscle aches, and including symptoms that may seem like a mild cold) in an area separate from others, with adequate supervision until they can go home.
- To help prevent transmission, the school will make every effort to reinforce strict respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene practices and to have the ill student/child or staff stay two meters away from others. If possible, the student will be placed in a separate room from other students/children with a closed door. Any rooms they have been in while symptomatic will be cleaned and disinfected as per guidelines before others enter them.
- While masks provide a level of protection when worn by a symptomatic person, it is acknowledged that it is neither practical nor feasible to have schools procure masks at this time, therefore VCS will adhere to strict respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection.
- VCS will notify parents/guardians if their child begins to experience respiratory symptoms while at school, and arrange for immediate pick up.
- Students/children who begin to show respiratory symptoms while at school must be picked up by their parent/guardian and avoid travel on public transport such as school buses.
- VCS will clean and disinfect any rooms the student/child was in while symptomatic.
- Bus drivers are actively disinfecting all high touch surfaces on their buses.
- Students/children or staff who develop respiratory symptoms should be kept home for 14 days after the start of the symptoms.

- If students/children are tested for COVID-19, those who test negative will be advised individually about return to school/child care settings.

## Extra School Activities

Due to the need to reduce risk of respiratory illness transmission, all school-based, non-essential and extra curricular activities have been cancelled, including sporting practices and events and face-to-face Parent/Teacher interviews.

VCS appreciates the great community that we have. With all of us exercising patience and faith, we will work through this current challenge together.