



# GUIDELINES TO MANAGE A POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

MESC would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support provided by the Maskwacis Health Services (MHS) and the Director's of Emergency Management (DEM's) for Samson Cree Nation, Louis Bull Tribe, Montana First Nation and Ermineskin Cree Nation in the development of this protocol hand book.

MESC has developed a 2020-2021 RE-ENTRY HANDBOOK to minimize the potential for transmission of COVID-19 and to provide students and staff with a safe and healthy learning environment. This Handbook is available on the [MESC website](#) or at [2020-2021 Re-entry Handbook](#)

MESC has also developed a 2020-2021 Parent/Guardian Back to School Information document. Available on the MESC Web site or at [2020-2021 Parent/Guardian Back to School Information](#)

The MESC Re-Entry Plan is anchored by four powerful cornerstones aimed at mitigating the spread of Covid 19.

- 1) Student Cohorts (no more than 15 in a classroom, includes Teacher, EA and Students)
- 2) Daily screening of staff and students and a strict stay at home policy when staff or students are sick
- 3) Enhanced cleaning and hand washing protocols and
- 4) Promotion and implementation of physical distancing and use of masks by staff and students.

To further underline MESC's commitment to provide a Safe and Healthy learning environment for students and staff, MESC has developed a Maskwacis protocol for school closure in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 at one of its schools. Referred to as the **“MESC GUIDELINES TO MANAGE A POSITIVE COVID-19 PROTOCOL”**

## 2. DEFINITIONS

### **Parent**

For clarification “**parent**” as used in these documents is intended to encompass the people in the child’s life that are the caregivers of the child.

### **COVID-19 Case**

A person with laboratory confirmation of infection with the virus (SARS-CoV-2) that causes COVID-19 as confirmed by Alberta Health Services and Maskwacis Health Services.

### **Outbreak**

A COVID-19 outbreak within a MESC school setting is defined by MHS as **one or more** confirmed cases (staff and/or student).

### **Cohort**

MESC has organized students into groups (referred to as Cohort 1 and Cohort 2) which attend in-school classes on alternating weeks. For this document Cohort will refer to all students in either Cohort 1 or Cohort 2.

### **Close Contact**

In a school setting, close contacts are individuals that:

- a) Provide direct care for an individual with COVID-19 or similar close physical contact OR who
- b) Had close prolonged contact (i.e., for more than 15 minutes cumulative and within two metres) with a case OR
- c) Had direct contact with infectious body fluids of an individual with COVID-19 (i.e., was coughed or sneezed on).

### **Symptomatic**

An individual who has signs or [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 illness.

### **Quarantine (facility)**

Closure of a facility for 3 days. No individuals will be permitted to enter during this time.

### 3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

#### MESC RE- ENTRY PLAN PRINCIPLES:

- Student attendance at MESC schools for 2020-21 is voluntary and based on parent choice. For parents who choose not to send their child back to school, MESC has prepared learning packages and offers online support. This requirement will be in place for as long as public health circumstances require adapted delivery of education;
- Students **must** be registered in a MESC school to avail themselves of MESC services;
- MESC will continue to model foundational values and norms to ensure we are flexible, patient and compassionate toward staff and students;
- The continuation of student learning is essential to realizing MESC's Vision and Mission;
- Planning, implementing, managing, collaborating, and demonstrating a continuous learning mindset ensures MESC is prepared for and adapting to any scenario (rolling closures, positive test);
- Engagement, collaboration and communication with all partners creates trust, a shared understanding, and commitment to Wahkohtowin;
- MESC will continue to support the directions of the Maskwacis Chiefs and Councils;
- MESC will continue to support the directions of Maskwacis Health Services.

## 4. MESC GUIDELINES TO MANAGE A POSITIVE COVID-19 CASE IN A MESC SCHOOL

- 4.1 Following MHS and Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) guidelines on an outbreak, if a positive COVID-19 case is confirmed (by AHS and/or MHS) at one of the MESC Schools then MESC will:
  - 4.1.1 Close the affected school for up to 3 days to allow for cleaning of the school, disinfecting the classroom(s) and to quarantine the facility. During this period school staff are expected to work from home as directed by their supervisor.
  - 4.1.2 Keep all other MESC schools open.
  - 4.1.3 Work with the Principal to notify the parents and school community, as appropriate, while respecting privacy.
  - 4.1.4 Require the affected school's student Cohort (1 or 2) to self-isolate for 14 days and be tested. This includes the bus(s) that may be affected.
  - 4.1.5 Keep the school open to the unaffected school's student Cohort (1 or 2). Unaffected students will be able to return to classes after the 3 day cleaning, disinfecting and quarantine of that facility.
  - 4.1.6 Direct only the staff who have had direct close contact with the classroom with a positive case to self-isolate for 14 days and be tested. (Refer to "[Close Contact](#)" in the definitions) All other school staff can return to the school after the school has been cleaned, disinfected and quarantined.
  - 4.1.7 Update the COVID-19 advisory web page on the MESC website that will notify families of positive cases in their child's school. No personal information will be shared.

4.2 The Executive Director of Student Services and Director of Health and Wellness will work with MHS to confirm if there are siblings, other MESC students or employees who reside in the same home as the individual who has tested positive and who attends or works in another MESC site.

4.2.1 MHS will reach out to parents of close contacts to let them know that a case has been identified and help them with the next steps including staying home, monitoring for symptoms and going for testing when appropriate.

4.2.2 Any close contacts (siblings, students and/or employees who reside in the same home) will be required to self-isolate for 14 days and be tested.

4.2.2.1 If a positive case results, refer to 4.1.

4.2.3 The Executive Director of Student Services will coordinate with Corporate Services for cleaning protocols and transportation implications.

4.3 Whether an entire school is required to close, will be a decision of MHS and the EOC. In this case MHS and the EOC will decide and announce when the school(s) can reopen.

4.3.1 MESC will notify parents once the school(s) are ready to re-open for students.

## **5. STATE OF EMERGENCY/COMMUNITY LOCKDOWN PROCEDURE FOR SCHOOLS**

5.1 If Maskwacîs Cree Nations declare a state of emergency and/or a community lockdown closes all MESC schools during the year:

5.1.1 The Superintendent of MESC will maintain communications with MHS and the EOC.

5.1.2 MESC staff will be declared essential workers.

5.1.3 MESC staff would be allowed to continue to work from the schools during the lockdown and closure.

5.1.4 MESC would limit the hours of operation and the number of employees in the buildings.

5.2 School(s) used for Emergency purposes:

5.2.1 MESC will require 5 days notice to have a school designated for emergency purposes.

5.2.2 Nipisihkopahk Elementary School and Ehpewapahk Alternate school will be designated by MESC for use by the EOC.

5.2.2.1 Staff at these schools would be reassigned to work from other MESC sites or from home.

### **Attached documents**

- **Responding to COVID-19 in a MESC School Flow Chart**
- **Template of letters**
- **Parent Guide- FAQ**

## 6. PARENT GUIDE- FAQ

### 6.1 What if my child tests positive for COVID-19?

- Your child must be isolated for 14 days.
- They may return after completing 14 days of isolation as long as they have no fever or symptoms.
- Depending on the circumstances of the case, MHS would provide advice to your child's principal on steps to take, if necessary.
- Testing requirements for the rest of your family are based on recommendations from MHS and/or AHS.

### 6.2 What if I or a member of my household test positive?

- Your children should stay home from school and isolate for 14 days if you test positive for COVID-19.
- You are not required to inform your child's school if you test positive for COVID-19, but it is strongly recommended that you contact your school Principal. MESC Principals will adhere to confidentiality.
- If you are informed of your positive test result while your child is at school, you should inform the school so that they can coordinate pick up and/or isolation as required.

### 6.3 What if someone at your child's school tests positive?

- The school Principal will be in contact with you.
- If your child is considered a close contact (within the same Cohort), an AHS and/or MHS case manager will contact you directly with information on how and when to be tested for COVID-19 and your child must self-isolate for 14 days.
- If someone at your child's school tests positive and is not in your child Cohort, you do not need to keep them home or have them tested for COVID-19.

### 6.4 What if my child gets ill at school?

- Your child will be moved to a safe place in the school and you will be notified by the school that your child is ill.
- You will be required to make arrangements for your child to be picked up from the school **ASAP**.
- You will be required to notify MHS and follow their guidelines.

### **6.5 What if another child gets ill at school?**

- Children who develop symptoms at school will be cared for in a designated part of the school while waiting to be picked up and taken home.
- If your child tells you that one of their classmates went home sick, it's recommended you monitor your child for symptoms, but they do not need to stay home.

### **6.6 How would I find out if there are cases in MESC schools.**

- MESC will update the COVID-19 advisory web page that will notify families of positive cases in their child's school. No personal information will be shared.

### **6.7 How would I find out if there are cases in Alberta schools.**

- Note that Alberta considers an outbreak to be two or more cases whereas MHS considers one case to be an outbreak.
- Alberta has provided a link to view school cases.

[Alberta online COVID-19 map to track cases in schools](#)