



September 16, 2021

Families and Staff,

Thank you for an outstanding start to our 2021-22 school year in Chinook schools. Students have brought an incredible energy to our buildings while being very respectful in following protocols. It is exciting to have students back in schools and to be able to support their learning and well-being. We appreciate the welcoming and positive atmosphere that staff have created in the schools. Students and staff are enjoying the return of extracurricular activities and other school related activities.

We are seeing an increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Chinook schools at a rate beyond what we experienced last year, including a recent school outbreak. There is also an unprecedented number of cases in our province. On September 15, 2021, nearly 22% (104) of the 475 new cases in Saskatchewan were children aged 11 and under.

According to our Medical Health Officer (MHO), cases in schools reflect COVID activity in the community. The MHO has warned that the Delta variant is much more contagious and severe, and this variant will continue to surge. He is also very concerned with the low student vaccination rates in Chinook schools. Our local area physicians have also recently recommended to the Chinook Board that they increase protective measures in schools. The local physicians and MHO strongly recommend mask wearing for all students and staff as an important protective measure in limiting transmission in schools.

As a result of these changing conditions, as well as the recommendations from local medical professionals, the Chinook Board of Education is updating mask protocols for all staff and students in Pre-K to Grade 12 in all Chinook Schools.

- **Effective Friday, September 17, 2021**, Prekindergarten to Grade 12 students and staff will be **required** to wear masks indoors in all areas of the schools.
- Periodic mask breaks will be provided to students and staff in schools.
- School visitors are required to wear masks indoors at all times.
- All students and staff are required to wear masks while on school buses.
- For outdoor activities such as recess or outdoor gym classes, there is no recommendation for students to mask.
- Masks will not be required for indoor extracurricular or strenuous physical education activities.

The Board will continue to revisit protective measures and follow the guidance of our local Medical Health Officer to ensure that the health and safety of all students and staff remains the top priority.

Thank you for the excellent communication between home and school this year. Communication moving forward is very important as we continue to support our learners and work together to keep our school community safe. We all have a shared responsibility to decrease the risk of COVID-19 impacting our schools. All staff and students are asked to stay home and report any absences if they are not feeling well. Please note the symptoms of COVID-19 as described on the Government of Saskatchewan's [COVID-19 website](#). Thank you for your support and understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Benesh".

Mark Benesh  
Director of Education

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kim Pridmore".

Kim Pridmore  
Chair, Board of Education