Dear ASD-S Families,

We have shared a great deal of information recently about how our schools are working to support the safety of our students and staff as we re-open schools and adjust to COVID-19.

We understand that some families and students may feel anxious to be returning to school. Attending school is important for learning and development. It provides a supportive community and structured routine that allows children to thrive. Public Health has worked closely with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to develop a Return to School plan that supports a positive environment for children to learn, while ensuring protective measures are in place for the school community.

It is important to note that you play an essential part in the effectiveness of these safety measures. We have a shared responsibility to help reduce the risk of COVID-19, by knowing what symptoms to look for and what to do if you spot them. Below you can find a list of Frequently Asked Questions related to your child's health, returning to school, and COVID-19. These are subject to change as we learn more about COVID-19. The most up-to-date information can always be found on the GNB website.

Does my child need to be screened for COVID-19 symptoms every day before school? What does that look like?

Parents are responsible for reviewing the screening questions with their child(ren) prior to leaving for school and only sending their child to school when they are well.

If a child has 2 or more of these symptoms of COVID-19, families should keep the child home from school and call 811 or their primary healthcare provider for advice:

- Fever above 38 degrees Celsius
- A new cough, or worsening chronic cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Headache
- A new onset of fatigue
- A new onset of muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- Loss of sense of taste
- Loss of sense of smell
- In children, purple markings on the fingers and toes
- Difficulty breathing

It is important to talk to your children about these symptoms so they can be aware of them and self-identify them to you or their teacher.

Will students have their temperature checked at school or on the bus?

Students will not be required to have their temperature taken prior to entering their school or boarding the bus. Instead parents/guardians are asked to check for signs of fever, like flushed face or chills, and/or take their child's temperature prior to leaving for school as part of the screening process.

These symptoms seem a lot like the common cold. Am I really supposed to keep my child home from school every time they have these symptoms?

In the past we might have thought it acceptable to attend school if a child had "just a cold" or felt "a little sick", however we are now working together to stay ahead of a global pandemic. While we still believe that "Attendance Matters", preventing the spread of illness is critical.

If a child displays 2 or more symptoms of COVID-19, they must stay home and 811 or your primary healthcare provider should be contacted to determine whether COVID-19 testing is required and for advice.

Students will not be penalized for staying home due to valid health concerns.

My child has allergies or a constant runny nose. Do I have to keep them home?

Students who have been identified by their primary healthcare provider as having asthma, seasonal allergies or who suffer from chronic runny nose/nasal congestion are not required to stay home based on these symptoms alone. Consider the list of symptoms when determining if your child should stay home from school. Are their symptoms different from what they usually experience? Do they have any other symptoms? If yes or you are uncertain, call 811 or your primary healthcare provider.

Will my child be sent home from school if they have symptoms?

As in previous years, if a student alerts their teacher to feeling unwell, the teacher will notify a parent/guardian to pick up their child. The student will be supervised in an area where physical distancing can be maintained, and will wear a mask while they wait to be picked up. If you get an urgent call regarding the health of your child during the school day, you will be required to pick them up as soon as possible, consistent with school practice. **It is important all families have a plan in place in case they need to pick-up their child from school early**. A sick child will not be sent home on the bus. Educators are not medical experts. It is important that you speak to your children about self-monitoring and what symptoms to be aware of so they can notify you or their teacher if they feel unwell.

Can the school or Public Health test my child for COVID-19 without my permission/parental consent?

No, testing is at the parent/guardian's discretion. However if a child is not tested, Public Health may require that child to remain home and isolate for 14 days.

My child had 2 symptoms and stayed home. When can they return to school?

If a child has 2 symptoms of COVID-19, families are asked to contact 811 or their primary healthcare provider to determine if COVID-19 testing is required. If COVID-19 testing is required, Public Health will inform you when isolation may be lifted. If testing is not required, they can return once fever (with no medications) and other symptoms have been resolved for 24 hours or if they have been directed to do so by a health care professional.

My child has health issues. Should they attend school at all this year?

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's health, you must consult with your child's primary healthcare provider.

If a student has a medical condition and is recommended by a health professional not to attend school in person this year, a learning plan will be provided by their assigned teacher with educational support. If a student has an immunocompromised household member who is required to stay home as recommended by a health professional, and this condition prevents the student from attending school, the student will be provided with a plan to continue learning at home. Families will be required to provide medical documentation in these cases.

If your child has received a recommendation from a health care provider to remain home from school this year, please contact your child's school.

I'm nervous to send my child back to school. Can I request the school provides them materials to learn from home?

Students who have **not** received a recommendation from a medical professional or the District to remain home from school, but whose family has decided not to send them to school for any reason will be required to complete an Annual Home-Schooling Request Form. In these cases, the child's family agrees to provide for their education. Students will not be assigned to a class or school and will not receive virtual or remote instruction from a teacher. Neither schools nor the District are required to supply resources or services for the educational programming of children being home schooled. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development publishes and makes available curriculum documents describing grade level outcomes for each area of the curriculum. More information about home-schooling in NB can be found here.

Does my child have to wear a mask?

Every student is expected to have two clean community masks with them every day. Masks must be washed frequently and should be labeled with their name.

Students in K-5 should wear them in common areas when they are outside of their class bubbles inside the building (e.g. going to the washroom, visiting the resource teacher, etc.) Students in grades 6-12 must use masks in common areas outside of their classes, such as in the hallways, lockers, lobbies, and stairwells. All students should also wear masks as they approach and board the school buses. Students in 6-12 will need to wear masks on the bus when not seated with a member of their household.

We recognize some children will deal better with wearing a mask than others at first. Students are more likely to be comfortable wearing a mask if they see members of their family wearing one at appropriate times, too.

Does it matter what mask my child brings to school?

When worn properly, wearing a mask can reduce the spread of respiratory droplets.

Non-medical face masks, also known as community masks, **should**:

- be made of at least 2 layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or linen)
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping
- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- not cover the neck
- not be made of plastic or other non-breathable materials

What happens if someone at my child's schools is diagnosed with COVID-19?

If someone tests positive for COVID-19, Public Health will work with the school to notify your school community while maintaining confidentiality.
Public Health will
- Do contact tracing to determine which individual(s) require self-isolation and possibly the need to be tested. This could include a class, classes, the entire school and others.
- Inform close contacts, who were required to self-isolate, when their isolation is complete and able to return to school/work.

As we return to school, how can I support my child(ren) and their school community?

Families have an important role to play in the safe return to school. Families can positively impact their children and contribute to the health of their communities by:

• modelling the behaviours needed to limit the spread of COVID-19, such as hand washing, proper cough and sneeze etiquette, physical distancing, mask wearing in public, and staying home when sick;

• monitoring children daily for symptoms and calling 811 or your primary healthcare provider if symptoms are present;
• talking to your children about COVID-19 and what symptoms to be aware of

Thank you for your cooperation and patience as we work together towards the start of an exciting and healthy new school year!