

December 7-11, 2020

Grade 4, 5, 6 in-person learning

We are receiving many questions from parents about keeping their grade 4, 5, or 6 students at home out of an abundance of caution, whether they can join Learning Together Anywhere (LTA), and how to continue supporting their learning at this time. The LTA program has three transition periods that align with reporting periods - November and March for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8. For a variety of reasons including disruption to student learning, maintaining appropriate staffing, and program capacity, NLPS will not be accommodating any transfers into or out of that program at other points in the school year, except in unique circumstances. This is not Aurora's decision to make; please direct your concerns to NLPS.

There are a couple of things to note about the current mandate for K-6 students to continue to attend in-person classes and 7-12 students to shift to learning online. The first is that this is a provincially-mandated decision. NLPS does not have the ability to operate outside of that mandate. Any shift from the current scenario mandated from the government requires approval from Alberta Education, whether that is for an individual school or for students across the division. So, for example, if NLPS wished for students at a particular school to learn from home for a week due to high numbers of COVID infections in a community, we would need approval from Alberta Education to do so; at this time, Aurora has only been approved for a one-day closure for deep cleaning that occurred a few weeks back.

We understand that with the shift to online learning for grades 7-12 students and the growing number of COVID-19 cases in our community that some parents would like to keep their children home and Aurora respects your decision to do so. However, we are not in a position, nor do we have the expectation that our teachers will simultaneously teach children in-person in their classrooms and online at home. With the mandate for 4, 5, and 6 students to continue to attend in-person classes, our focus will remain on students in our classrooms. We do have plans in place to support students who need to learn from home due to being sick, being directed to self-isolate or otherwise choosing to be at home for a period of time. All of our teachers have set up Google Classrooms and add assignments and activities to those classrooms on a regular basis that they are simultaneously using with students attending in-person in their classrooms. These would also be available to students at home. Aurora teachers are already further supporting their students who are at home by adding additional materials and activities to Google Classroom for them. This will not be as robust as what would happen if a whole class was self-isolating or shifted to online learning, but it will provide students who are at home with access to learning opportunities. Teachers will also check in with students who are at home on a regular basis to see how they are doing; please have your child connect via their NLPS email. If you are choosing to keep your child at home, please discuss your decision with your child's teacher to find out more about what may be available at your child's particular grade level. Offerings for a grade 4 student will naturally have to look very different from that of an older student, but we encourage you to speak to your child's teacher about any specific areas of growth your child should work on while at home.

[Google Classroom for Parents](#)

[Google Classroom: A Guide for Parents](#)



Grade 7 and 8 Move Online a Great Success!

After a few Monday-morning hiccups, all students should have detailed online schedules, Google Meet times, and regular instruction. Go to last week's [Thunderbird News](#) for the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) about online learning. In order to engage learners, our teachers are using Screencastify, Jamboards, EdPuzzle videos, Google Meet, and more!

COVID-19 Update: Outbreak Status moved to Watch Status

As most of you are well aware, our school has been affected by the recent rise in COVID-19 cases in our geographical area, and after we had 5 cases connected to the school, [AHS had declared outbreak status](#) at our site. We now have 13 confirmed cases connected to the school, though most of those cases are now recovered or were not present in school while infectious. Parents remain our primary source of information related to confirmed cases. If your child has received a positive test result, contact the school directly and immediately at 780 623 4129; after hours, please email conal.donovan@nlsd.ab.ca so we can begin our safety procedures and communication plan as soon as possible to reduce the spread.

If staff or students have not been identified as a close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case but develop symptoms as listed on the daily screening tool, please self-isolate at home and complete the AHS COVID-19 online assessment tool or call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible to arrange for COVID-19 testing.

To help minimize spread of any respiratory virus we always recommend the following:

- Make sure everyone in your household washes their hands with soap and water often. If soap and water are not available, you can use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if hands are not visibly dirty.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- Use a tissue when you cough or sneeze and throw it in a garbage bin lined with a plastic bag. Wash your hands immediately after that. If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- Stay home if you're sick. If your kids are sick, keep them home from school.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are used often and shared by everyone in your home such as door knobs, light switches and bathroom taps.
- Practice physical distancing outside the home (at least 2 metres) and wear a mask in public spaces if social distancing is not possible.
- Ensure your child's immunizations are up to date, including their annual influenza immunization.

For further information regarding COVID-19, please visit the [AHS website](#) for COVID-19 or call Health Link at 811 if there are any questions.

Now that we have had some positive cases in our community, some students and parents have confused the self-isolation requirements. **All individuals identified as close contacts are legally required to self-isolate for 14 days from their last exposure to this case to prevent the risk of spread to others.** It is also recommended that all staff and students identified as close contacts be tested for COVID-19 as a result of this exposure. To book an appointment for testing, they can go to <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx> or call 811 toll-free.

NOTE: A negative test result does not mean that the staff or students who are close contacts can come back to school, because they are required to self-isolate for 14 days.

If you were directed to isolate because of close contact (known exposure) to COVID-19, you are still legally required to quarantine for the full 14 days, regardless of test results. If you tested negative and have no known exposure to the virus, you are not legally required to quarantine, but you should stay home until your symptoms resolve so you don't infect others.

Last, we want to thank all the parents for the patience, understanding, and kind words in the face of the distressing news that their child may have been in contact with a positive case. We also appreciate when you book a COVID test immediately, as the sooner we have more information, the better we can plan to protect all our families in Aurora. Go to [AHS's Info for Close Contacts](#) for more information.

Please remind your child to follow school rules for masking, distancing, and hand-sanitizing. Students must properly wear masks whenever directed by staff, and students must comply in order to enhance our safety while at school. We have been sending home any students who do not comply with our safety guidelines, as they cannot continue in-person learning at Aurora without complying with our safety rules and staff direction.

Call for Parent Volunteers!

While BINGO operations are temporarily suspended due to the confirmed cases in Lac La Biche County, our future dates for BINGO worker days in 2021 are: **Jan 22, Feb 19, Apr 29, May 16, June 27, and Aug 28!** Enjoy a free meal while watching the bingo action and helping out the students of our school! The shift runs from 5pm to about 9pm and we require three people to work the shift. Free food and wonderful people make for a great Sunday night out. Please call or text our amazing and hard-working BINGO Fundraising parent volunteer coordinator Joyce Cloutier at (780) 623-8203 if you are able to volunteer.

Pre-Order Lunch and Snack Cards

All lunch orders must be made by midnight on the **Saturday before** that week of school. Go to <https://nlsd.schoolcashonline.com/> to order for lunches or for concession cards. Our breakfast program still runs with all safety precautions in place.