

November 29, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a new regulation within the Education Act which provides clarity to school divisions about in-school learning and masking in schools.

Red Deer Catholic Regional Schools (RDCRS), along with school divisions across the province, has experienced an increase in illness, absenteeism, and in some schools, a shortage of staff because of illness. We appreciate our staff who continually support students and one another to ensure learning continues. We are thankful to all of our parents who make sure they are keeping their child at home if they are sick and connect with teachers to support their child's return after illness.

Based on this new regulation in the Education Act, we will ensure there is access to in-person learning if we need to temporarily shift to at-home online learning. Our schools will be open to students, and staff will continue to support learning. In both learning situations, in-person and at-home, the integrity of educational programming will be maintained.

In addition, masking is a personal choice which will be respected. The new regulation ensures students can choose to wear or not wear a mask during in-school learning. Please note, if masking is required for safety reasons such as Career and Technology Studies (CTS) or chemistry classes, then the teacher will ask students to wear a mask.

Finally, in the case of a public health emergency, the *Public Health Act* remains the overarching direction for all health matters and will override this new regulation in the Education Act.

Click [here](#) to view a Letter to Parents from the Minister of Education ensuring access to education for all students.

Many, many thanks for your support as we work together to keep our schools safe, healthy, and caring communities. Being sick is not fun, and missing school is hard on students and their families. Please trust that our staff will work together to help your child continue learning when they return to school.

As we enter a very busy Christmas season in anticipation of Jesus' birth, may you find calm in small moments of reflection. God's blessings on your journey throughout Advent as you experience Christ's presence in your everyday life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Finnigan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Kathleen Finnigan
Superintendent of Schools