



WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Oh COVID-19, I am so tired of you. Sadly, we are not done yet, the battle continues and we need to find strength to endure. Living through this major historical event is taking all the positive coping skills we have ever learned. We are needing to teach ourselves and our children how to stay the course so we can remain mentally well.

At the end of August, Northern Gateway Public Schools, with Alberta Health Services and the Mental Health Capacity Building Team, offered for all NGPS staff an information session termed "We Are ALL In This Together". It highlighted strategies necessary to support each other while supporting students.

That phrase brings to mind a poem by Damien Barr about weathering storms. The analogy depicts that though we are in the same storm, we are each in a different boat. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just one oar, and so on. I think of this illustration often as I work with each school, supporting students with varying circumstances and levels of resilience. Some are home schooling, some are online/at home, others are face to face. Some students and families are immune compromised, others are struggling with job loss, poverty, addictions and neglect. Some are thriving academically while others are struggling mentally. Some are directly impacted by COVID-19, others don't know anyone who has tested positive. Regardless of the situation, we all need to survive the storm together.



Image Credits: Barbara Kelley

As COVID-19 carries on and we become more weary, it is important that we can recognize when mental distress becomes mental illness, when we need self care and when we need professional help.

[MENTAL DISTRESS vs MENTAL ILLNESS\(teenmentalhealth.org\)](https://teenmentalhealth.org)

[Mental Distress](#):symptoms do not last long;normal reactions to an abnormal situation (like a pandemic!)




[Mental Illness](#):symptoms present for 1-3 months. Impacts day-to-day functioning.

WHO IS MOST AT RISK?

Indigenous people, LGBTQ2S+, older adults, those living in poverty, those with chronic health conditions, previous mental illness, persons with disabilities, or those with a restricted income.

Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER 2020

1 Daylight Savings Time Ends 	2 ELA 30-1, 30-2 Diploma Part A - Diploma Writers Only	3	4 Grade 11/12 Morning Class exam at 9am No Diploma ELA 30-1, 30-2 Diploma Part B Diploma Writers Only	5 Grade 10 Core Course Grade 11/12 Afternoon Class exam at 9am No Diploma	6 PD Day Math 30-1, 30-2 Diploma Writers Only	7
8	9 Non-Instructional Day	10 Day in Lieu of PTI's	11  REMEMBRANCE DAY Remembrance Day	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 School Council Meeting 12:00pm (noon) via Google Meets	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER 2020

		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10 Virtual PTI's 4-7pm	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Christmas Vacation						
27	28	29	30	31	Christmas Eve	Christmas Day Boxing Day
Christmas Vacation						
					New Year's Eve	New Year's Day

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- ▶ Preferred payment method for school purchases are: SchoolCashOnline, Debit, Visa, Mastercard. Cash and Cheques are still accepted.
- ▶ The next School Council Meeting is November 23, 2020 @ 12:00pm via Google Meets. Please contact the school for access to the link.
- ▶ Scholastic Book Orders can still be placed online. Access Code: RC191137
- ▶ As directed in the Northern Gateway COVID reentry plan, there are no Vending machines currently available at the school.
- ▶ You can now have the newsletter emailed to you. Please contact Mrs. Staples in the Learning Commons at 780-524-3277.
- ▶ Cafeteria service available for Jr High only at this time.
- ▶ Hillside Webpage:

hillsidehigh.ca

Newsletter is Available on the Webpage!

Hillside Jr/Sr High School
Bag 3
4701-52 Avenue
Valleyview, AB T0H 3N0
Phone: 780-524-3277
Fax: 780-524-4205
e-mail: hillside@ngps.ca



Lunch

Sr High - 11:45-12:27

Jr High - 12:19-1:00

News, Sports & Events

RED FLAGS

- Change in eating habits/weight
- Isolating themselves
- Loss of interest
- Feeling very busy, hurried
- Guilt
- Physical changes
- Taking lots of time off school/work
- Memory or attention problems
- Conflict in relationships
- Increase in drinking/smoking/vaping
- Changes in sleep patterns

Anxiety is contagious... and so is calm.

HOW TO HELP?

The **Five Essential Elements** learned in *Psychological First Aid* is a great place to start:

1. **Promote Safety:** Wearing masks, floor signage, hand-washing for example reassures our physical safety and something as simple as providing accurate information fosters psychological safety. .
2. **Promote Calm:** Feeling anxious is normal. Practice controlled breathing, mindfulness and meditation to remain calm.
3. **Promote Self and Community Efficacy:** Carry on regular activities as much as possible. Look for ways to connect with the community. It boosts our confidence that our community can recover.
4. **Promote Connectedness:** Get creative in how to connect with others such as online concerts, physically distanced walks or outdoor visits.
5. **Instill Hope:** Envisioning a realistic and "normal" future can inspire hope and optimism.

To be healthy and successful we need to feel connected, safe and in control

Self care means different things to different people, but mostly, it is about cultivating a compassionate inner voice.

- Make small changes in daily routine/tasks
- Deep breathing
- Regular physical activity
- Be creative: paint, decorate, garden, knit,
- Focus on what you can control (your attitude, what you eat, what you watch/listen to, what you spend your money on)
- Set boundaries with toxic people, family, friends, and social media.
- Actively reduce and manage the stress in your life: organize that junk drawer, write up a budget, complete that to do list. Things that give you a feeling of accomplishment.
- Keep structure and routine of the day if you have chosen at home, online learning
- Punitive responses to problem behavior can lead to further trauma

We are all in this COVID-19 storm together. Regardless of the boat we are in, we need to believe that we will soon find safe ground. Each of us is seeking to survive this worldwide crisis as unscathed as possible. Let us navigate our route with respect, empathy, courage and responsibility. Throw a lifeline to the ones who are struggling, accept a lifeline if someone reaches out. We are ALL in this together.

[For Mental Health Support](#) Mental Health Help Line 1-877-303-2642, Kids Help Phone 1-800-668-6868

This article was submitted by Tammy Charko BA, BSW, RSW. Tammy is Northern Gateway Public School's Student Support Facilitator. She is a support for schools, students, parents and caregivers to promote success in school. Tammy advocates for students and families, providing a link to the community programs. Tammy has been a registered social worker for more than 20 years and is a mother to 4 teenagers.



Student illness

If a student has COVID-19 symptoms

Students with symptoms must not attend school. If a child develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies, chronic cough), the child should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms before returning to school.

Anyone that reports symptoms must stay home and seek health care advice as appropriate. Parents can call Health Link 811 or their primary health care practitioner, and fill out the [AHS Online Self-Assessment tool](#) to determine if their child should be tested.

Parents, household members, and contacts of a student who has symptoms but is not a COVID-19 case, are not required to quarantine.

Only the people identified as close contacts of an individual who is a case of COVID-19 need to quarantine. The contacts of the close contacts do not need to quarantine.

Book a test

Book a testing appointment online with the AHS assessment tool or call Health Link 811. <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>

Symptoms

You should get tested if you have any COVID-19 symptom.

If you have any of these symptoms you are [legally required to isolate for at least 10 days](#) from the start of your symptoms or until they resolve, whichever is longer:

- Fever
- Cough (new cough or worsening chronic cough)
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (new or worsening)
- Runny nose
- Sore throat

If you have any of these other symptoms, stay home and minimize your contact with others until your symptoms resolve:

- Chills
- Painful swallowing
- Stuffy nose
- Headache
- Muscle or joint aches
- Feeling unwell, fatigue or severe exhaustion
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite)
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Conjunctivitis, commonly known as pink eye

Monitor your child's health and call [Health Link 811](#) if you have questions or concerns. Call 911 immediately if experiencing severe symptoms of COVID-19, including difficulty breathing, severe chest pain, feelings of confusion or loss of consciousness.

COVID-19 INFORMATION

Isolation requirements

Albertans with symptoms

- You are legally required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days if you have a cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose, or sore throat that is not related to a pre-existing illness or health condition.
- The mandatory isolation period is 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer.

Tested positive for COVID-19

- You are legally required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days if you have tested positive for COVID-19.
- Isolation period is 10 days from the start of symptoms, or until symptoms resolve, whichever takes longer.

Have symptoms but tested negative for COVID-19

- If you tested negative and have known exposure to COVID-19, you are legally required to quarantine for 14 days from the last date of your exposure.
- If you tested negative and have no known exposure to the virus, you are not legally required to isolate. However, it is important to stay home until your symptoms resolve so that you do not infect others.

Close contacts of confirmed cases

- You are legally required to quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms if you are a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 (provides care, lives with or has close physical contact without appropriate use of personal protective equipment, or comes into direct contact with infectious body fluids).
- If you become sick with cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat during this time, you must isolate for an additional 10 days from the beginning of symptoms or until you are feeling well, whichever takes longer.

If you are self-isolating:

- Stay home — do not go to school, work, social events or any other public areas or community settings.
- Avoid close contact with other people, including household members but especially seniors and people with chronic conditions or compromised immune systems.
- Do not use public transportation or ride sharing.
- Do not go for walks in public places. This includes children in mandatory self-isolation.
- If you go outside, you must remain on private property not accessible by others.

If a student has symptoms related to allergies or a pre-existing medical condition

- The student should be tested at least once before returning to school and have a negative COVID-19 test result.
- These symptoms would be their baseline health status. As long as the cough or runny nose is always the same and does not get worse, the student can attend school.
- Talk to your school about your child's pre-existing medical condition so the school may keep a confidential record of this condition.

Note

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, information regarding COVID-19 will be updated as required. Please check online for the latest information and links to testing, symptoms and isolation requirements: alberta.ca/covid19

For more information: alberta.ca/covid19

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Alberta

COVID-19 Information—Student illness

STAY AT HOME GUIDE

This summary, based on the September 2020 Government of Alberta update, [COVID-19 Symptom-Student illness](#), provides further clarity to parents about the 'isolation' period or 'stay home and minimize contact with others' period if a child has presenting symptoms.

It is still expected that parents complete [Alberta Health's Daily Checklist](#), each day, before sending your child to school.

My child has COVID-19 symptoms. How long must my child stay home?

If my child has any of these core COVID-19 symptoms:	If my child has any of these (secondary) symptoms:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever Cough (new cough or worsening chronic cough) Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing (new or worsening) Runny nose Sore throat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chills Painful swallowing Stuffy nose Headache Muscle or joint aches Feeling unwell, fatigue or severe exhaustion Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite) Loss of sense of smell or taste Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
What should I do next?	What should I do next?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete AHS' Online Self-Assessment Tool and call 811. 2. You are legally required to have your child isolate for at least 10 days from the start of symptoms or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer. 3. It is strongly recommended that your child be tested for COVID-19. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete AHS' Online Self-Assessment Tool and call 811. 2. Keep your child home from school and minimize your child's contact with others until symptoms resolve. 3. It is recommended that your child be tested for COVID-19.
When can my child return to school?	When can my child return to school?
<p>Your child may return to school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once the 10-day isolation is complete and symptoms have resolved, OR When your child has received a negative COVID-19 test result, has no known exposure to the virus, and symptoms have resolved. 	<p>Your child may return to school once symptoms have resolved and your child is feeling better.</p>
<p>Please see Alberta's COVID-19 Symptom-Student illness document for information regarding pre-existing conditions.</p>	

COVID-19 INFORMATION

Screening Questionnaire

COVID-19 ALBERTA HEALTH DAILY CHECKLIST

PARENTS/GUARDIANS/STUDENTS MUST USE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE DAILY TO DECIDE IF THE STUDENT SHOULD ATTEND SCHOOL

The tool is meant to be used to assist with assessing attendees who may be symptomatic, or who may have been exposed to someone who is ill or has confirmed COVID-19.

Attendees should fill out this checklist prior entering school daily. If an individual answers YES to any of the questions, they must not be allowed to attend school. Children and youth will need a parent to assist them to complete this screening tool.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve, this screening tool will be updated as required.

Screening Questions

1.	Does the attendee have any new onset (or worsening) of any of the following	CIRCLE ONE	
		YES	NO
	• Fever	YES	NO
	• Cough	YES	NO
	• Shortness of Breath / Difficulty Breathing	YES	NO
	• Sore throat	YES	NO
	• Chills	YES	NO
	• Painful swallowing	YES	NO
	• Runny Nose / Nasal Congestion	YES	NO
	• Feeling unwell / Fatigued	YES	NO
	• Nausea / Vomiting / Diarrhea	YES	NO
	• Unexplained loss of appetite	YES	NO
	• Loss of sense of taste or smell	YES	NO
	• Muscle/ Joint aches	YES	NO
	• Headache	YES	NO
	• Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	YES	NO
2.	Has the attendee travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3.	Has the attendee had close contact* with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
4.	Has the attendee had close contact with a symptomatic** close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days?	YES	NO

* Face-to-face contact within 2 metres. A health care worker in a occupational setting wearing the recommended personal protective equipment is not considered to be a close contact.

** 'Ill/symptomatic' means someone with COVID-19 symptoms on the list above