

Students returning to in-person learning Jan. 10

January 5, 2022

To support their overall well-being, Early Childhood Services to Grade 12 students will return to classrooms on Jan. 10 with measures in place to continue learning safely. A new tool to address learning disruption for grades 4-9 students is also being introduced.

Students will return to in-person learning with the added safety of access to rapid tests and medical-grade masks that will be distributed through schools as an added layer of protection against the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

Shipments of rapid tests and masks will start this week and all schools will have their initial shipments by the end of next week. Distribution to students and staff will occur as individual schools receive their supplies. Both rapid tests and masks will be shipped in phases.

Important health measures already in place will continue to protect students in classrooms. These include requirements for masking, physical distancing, cohorting, enhanced sanitization and hygiene practices, the availability of vaccinations for everyone five years of age and older, and encouraging school authorities to have proof of vaccination policies for adults.

New tool to address learning disruption

In addition to having supports for safe in-person learning, next week students in grades 4 to 9 and their parents will be able to view free online tutoring resources, through the e-Tutoring Hub, to catch up on important skills and learning students may have fallen behind on due to the pandemic. This new resource builds on government's investment of [up to \\$45 million](#) to address COVID-19-related learning disruptions for students in grades 1 to 3.

The e-Tutoring Hub will be launched with pre-recorded video tutoring sessions students and their parents can access any time to build literacy and numeracy skills. Later this year, Alberta Education will expand the online tutoring services to cover more grades and subjects, including live tutoring. Feedback from school authorities, parents and students will inform topics and needs for new tutoring sessions.

Shifting to at-home learning

The government will continue to work with school authorities on shifts to at-home learning, if needed. School authorities will continue to have the flexibility to shift a class or an individual grade to short-term at-home learning if needed to address operational challenges at a school. Decisions on shifting entire schools or school authorities to at-home learning will continue to be made by the Alberta government, with input from school authorities. For both situations, consideration will be given to student absentee rates, the ability of a school or school authority to have staff available to operate in-school classes and other relevant information, including local health data, if available.

Quick facts

- Both at-home rapid test kits and medical-grade masks will be distributed using a phased approach, with shipments being sent to schools as they are received by the province.
- Initially, boxes of five at-home rapid test kits will provide enough supply for each student and staff member to test twice per week for 2.5 weeks and a two-week supply of masks for each student and staff will also be shipped. A medical-grade mask has been tested and meets international standards.
- Shifts to at-home learning:
 - Authorities wishing to shift an entire school or school authority to short-term at-home learning will need to request approval from the Minister
 - Criteria for approving a shift will be based on operational needs due to student and staff absences, measures already taken and local health data, if available
- Online tutoring sessions on the e-Tutoring Hub will be:
 - free, with unlimited access for all students, parents, and school staff
 - up to 15 minutes in length for younger students and up to 60 minutes for older students
 - offered live during the school day, late afternoons and evenings to meet the needs of students and their families
 - designed and delivered to protect individual privacy
 - available 24-7 as recorded video
 - developed by Alberta certificated teachers working at Alberta Education
- During the pandemic, school authorities have had access to more than \$1 billion in taxpayer funding for COVID-19. This includes a \$120-million increase in operating funding for all school authorities across the province in the 2020-21 school year, \$250 million in accelerated capital maintenance and renewal funding during the 2020-21 school year, access to taxpayer-funded board reserves, as well as \$130 million in COVID-19 mitigation funding for the 2021-22 school year.

- School authority operating reserves have grown by \$80 million to \$464 million as of Aug. 31, 2021, over the 2020-21 school year. Overall capital and operating reserves sit at more than \$700 million.

Related information

- [Staying safe and healthy this year](#)

Related news

- [Winter break extended for K-12 students](#) (Dec 30,2021)
- [Helping students catch up](#) (Oct 27, 2021)

Multimedia

- [Video: At-home rapid testing](#)
- [Watch the news conference](#)

Media inquiries

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