

Staff & COVID-19

Background

On June 9, 2020, the Government of Saskatchewan announced that in-classroom learning will resume for the 2020-21 school year. To help school divisions prepare for the return of students and staff, provincial guidelines have been developed to inform local planning. This procedure has been created to ensure a safe return to the workplace for all staff. These protocols will continue to be adjusted as necessary following the direction of the Chief Medical Health Officer of Saskatchewan.

Procedures

1. General Guidelines

- 1.1 When practical, physical distancing between individuals should be maintained. If this is not possible, other measures should be used, such as the use of appropriate personal protective equipment and the self-monitoring of personal health.
- 1.2 Proper hand hygiene is expected from all employees. Practices include using soap and water when hands are soiled and hand sanitizer when visibly clean. Cough and sneeze into your elbow and avoid touching your face, mouth, nose and eyes.
- 1.3 Employees are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for personal use to supplement what the school division will be providing.
- 1.4 Mask usage will be in accordance with school division protocols.
- 1.5 Employees shall limit physical contact throughout the school day and avoid close greetings such as handshakes.
- 1.6 Employees are expected to keep their personal workspace(s) clean and free from clutter.
- 1.7 Employees are expected to keep their own desk space clean and sanitized. Disinfectants will be provided by the school division.
- 1.8 Sharing food, drinks or other personal items is to be avoided.
- 1.9 Employees shall not enter private residences or provide personal transportation to students.
- 1.10 Employees shall avoid unnecessary work-related travel.

2. Guidelines for Illness

- 2.1 All employees are expected to self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms. Common symptoms include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Headache
- Muscle and/or joint aches and pains
- Sore throat
- Chills
- Runny nose
- Nasal congestion
- Conjunctivitis
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Nausea/vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Loss of sense of taste or smell
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing

2.2 If an employee has symptoms of COVID-19 illness they are to stay home and call Healthline 811. The employee shall follow the recommendations and directions provided.

2.2.1 The employee must request their absence using the normal process established at the school level and enter the absence into Atrieve selecting “illness” leave. If the employee does not have sufficient sick leave credits they are to enter their absence using unpaid sick leave, pressing leave, vacation leave, time in lieu, earned day off or service recognition days.

2.2.2 The employee should stay home for 48 hours after symptoms have resolved or when public health advises it is safe to return.

2.2.3 If it is determined that the employee is eligible for quarantine leave as outlined in section 3, contact human resources to request quarantine leave and provide the required documentation. Such leave will be retroactively changed to quarantine leave if the conditions in section 3 are met.

2.2.4 If an employee feels well enough to work and the supervisor confirms the employee can continue to perform meaningful work while at home then the supervisor is to email the applicable Superintendent of School Operations and the Superintendent of Human Resources.

2.3 If an employee has an existing or underlying medical condition, or the employee is the primary caregiver for a family member that has an existing or underlying medical condition, and feels they are unable to perform their duties without an accommodation, the employee is to contact their principal/supervisor and the Superintendent of Human Resources. Additional information regarding the duty to accommodate process can be found in Administrative Procedure 403, [STF Duty to Accommodate Guidelines](#) or [CUPE Duty to Accommodate Guidelines](#).

3. Public Health Order

3.1 All employees will follow the directives outlined in the most recent Public Health Order available at www.saskatchewan.ca/coronavirus. A medical health officer refers to a public health officer designated as such under *The Public Health Act, 1994*. Family doctors and other medical personnel are not medical health officers and do not have the authority and cannot order mandatory self-isolation.

3.2 The following employees will be eligible to access quarantine leave:

- 3.2.1 Employees that have been identified by a Medical Health Officer as having novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19). These employees shall go into mandatory self-isolation until such time as a Medical Health Officer determines that they no longer pose a public health threat.
- 3.2.2 Employees that have been identified by a Medical Health Officer as a close contact of a person or persons with COVID-19. These employees shall go into mandatory self-isolation for 14 days from the date of last having been exposed to COVID-19.
- 3.2.3 Employees who are household members or contacts of a person with COVID-19. These employees shall go into mandatory self-isolation for 14 days from the date of last having been exposed to COVID-19.
- 3.2.4 Employees who are symptomatic that have been directed to receive a test for COVID-19 or are awaiting test results. These employees shall go into mandatory self-isolation until such time as a Medical Health Officer determines that they no longer pose a public health threat.
- 3.2.5 If clauses 3.2.1 to 3.2.4 apply to an employee, the employee shall:
 - 3.2.5.1 Enter the absence into Atrieve selecting “illness” leave for the entire duration they have been advised to self-isolate;
 - 3.2.5.2 Email the Superintendent of Human Resources the following information:
 - 3.2.5.2.1 Evidence of direction from Public Health directing the employee to self-isolate. Evidence includes a minimum of written details of the phone call including date, time, Public Health official spoken to, and details of information provided.
 - 3.2.5.2.2 The first and last day the employee has been directed by Public Health to self-isolate.
 - 3.2.5.2.3 A request to have this period of illness leave changed to quarantine leave.
 - 3.2.5.2.4 Confirmation from the supervisor, if applicable, that the employee can perform meaningful work from home.
- 3.3 Until further notice, staff who have out-of-Canada travel scheduled should cancel travel plans. In the event that the staff member considers travel to be essential, contact with the Superintendent of Human Resources is required prior to travel. Employees who have traveled internationally and are subject to the mandatory 14 days self-isolation period upon their return to Canada will not have access to quarantine leave during that self-isolation period.
 - 3.3.1 Employees may apply in advance for any other leaves for which they may be eligible in order to cover the 14 days self-isolation period. If an employee does not make arrangements, in advance of travel, for leave to cover the 14 days self-isolation period, the employee may be considered on an unauthorized absence.

- 3.3.2 The employee must not return to work during the 14 day mandatory self-isolation period.
- 3.3.3 The employee must provide the division with the following documentation:
 - i. request for leave in advance of travel; and
 - ii. the date of return to Canada.
- 3.4 Any documentation required to be provided to the division by the employee may be provided by:
 - 3.4.1 paper copy;
 - 3.4.2 electronic copy;
 - 3.4.3 screen shot of information or message;
 - 3.4.4 copy of an email;
 - 3.4.5 written details of phone call including date, time, Public Health official spoken to, and details of information provided.

If the documentation provided by the employee is not clear or if the division has reasonable doubts or concerns about any of the documentation provided by the employee, the division may require further details or confirmation of the documentation.

4. Additional Health Supports

- 4.1 Healthline 811 (All Staff)
- 4.2 Member and Family Assistance Program (STF members) 1-833-485-4245
- 4.3 PSTA Counselor (STF members) Evelyn Steginus 1-306-529-4235
- 4.4 Employee Family Assistance Program (CUPE Members and Out of Scope Staff) 1-833-515-0766.

5. Guidelines for Work Refusal Due to COVID-19

- 5.1 Section 3-31 of *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* states that an employee may refuse to perform any particular act or series of acts at a place of employment if the employee has reasonable grounds to believe that the act or series of acts is unusually dangerous to the employee's health or safety or the health or safety of any other person at the placement of employment until:
 - 5.1.1 Sufficient steps have been taken to satisfy the employee otherwise; or
 - 5.1.2 The occupational health committee has investigated the matter and advised the employee otherwise.
- 5.2 An employee's right to refuse to perform work as a result of COVID-19 will be contingent upon factors including (but not limited to) the following:
 - 5.2.1 the state of the COVID-19 situation in the employee's particular community and workplace at the time the refusal to work is being exercised;

- 5.2.2 the age and health of the specific employee;
 - 5.2.3 the type of workplace where the employee usually performs their functions;
 - 5.2.4 the specific field of work and their normal duties or tasks;
 - 5.2.5 the measures adopted by the Prairie South Schools to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, including workplace hygiene and personal protective equipment (PPE), where applicable;
 - 5.2.6 whether or not there has been a diagnosed case of COVID-19 within the school community;
 - 5.2.7 whether the employee or the circumstances fall in one of the legislative exceptions to the right to refuse unsafe work; and
 - 5.2.8 any other factually relevant considerations in assessing whether there is a hazard, a risk or a danger.
- 5.3 If an employee has reasonable grounds to believe they have been asked to perform an unusually dangerous act, the employee shall notify their principal/supervisor, the applicable Superintendent of School Operations and the Superintendent of Human Resources.
- 5.4 If an employee has refused to perform an act or series of acts pursuant to section 3-31, the employer shall not request or assign another employee to perform that act or series of acts unless that other employee has been advised by the principal/supervisor, in writing, of:
- 5.4.1 the refusal and the reasons for the refusal;
 - 5.4.2 the reason or reasons the employee being assigned or requested to perform the act or series of acts may, in the employer's opinion, carry out the act or series of acts in a healthy and safe manner; and
 - 5.4.3 the right of the employee to refuse to perform the act or series of acts pursuant to section 3-31.
- 5.5 Following notification, the school OHS committee will investigate the concern and communicate the decision to the above noted central office staff. The OHS committee should consider the following questions:
- 5.5.1 Does the employee have an underlying health concern that puts them at greater risk if infected?
 - 5.5.2 Are the job duties being assigned outside of the normal duties or tasks of the position?
 - 5.5.3 Has the workplace implemented strategies in alignment with the most recent Re-Open Saskatchewan guidelines for educational institutions and the current Public Health Order for that type of workplace?
 - 5.5.4 Is the workplace unsafe even with increased hygiene and personal protective equipment?
 - 5.5.5 Does the workplace have an employee or student who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

- 5.5.6 Are there any other factually relevant considerations in assessing whether there is a hazard, a risk or a danger?
- 5.6 Upon the conclusion of the investigation of the refusal, the school OHS committee will report their findings to the applicable Superintendent of School Operations and the Superintendent of Human Resources.
- 5.7 If the concern cannot be resolved within the school or workplace (the vote by the school OHS committee must be unanimous for or against the refusal), the Superintendent will contact an occupational health officer at the Occupational Health and Safety Division. The officer will investigate the refusal and rule on the matter.

Reference: Re-Open Saskatchewan: A plan to re-open the provincial economy
Primary and Secondary Educational Institution Guidelines June 18, 2020
The Saskatchewan Employment Act
AP 159 Health and Safety
AP 160 Student and Staff Safety
AP 164 Communicable Diseases
AP 403 Duty to Accommodate

November 30, 2020