



Palliser School Division

Palliser Centre

#101, 3305 - 18 Avenue North, Lethbridge, AB T1H 5S1

Phone: 403-328-4111 Toll-free: 877-667-1234

Fax: 403-380-6890 www.pallisersd.ab.ca

AUGUST 25, 2020

DEAR PARENTS AND STUDENTS:

Welcome back to the new school year. Since the abrupt shut down in March, School Divisions and Transportation Departments across the province have been hard at work putting plans in place to make sure that students can ride to and from school in as safe a fashion as possible. Based on recommendations by Alberta Health Services and following their advice, we have been developing plans for cleaning buses, loading and unloading students safely, what PPE, if any, drivers and students should wear, student health screening and student behavior expectations to maintain safety of everyone on a school bus.

Palliser School Division would like you to know that we have implemented a new cleaning protocol on all school buses in the division. Buses will be electrostatically cleaned (Similar to what airlines are now doing) at a minimum of once per week, which will reach all surfaces on the bus, including the ceilings and floors. This will kill 99.9% of any germs and viruses that might be lurking on surfaces. Drivers will be cleaning all high touch surfaces twice daily, at the end of the morning and afternoon runs with the same cleaner that will kill those same 99.9% of germs and viruses. Additional deep cleaning of our buses will be undertaken as required.

Drivers have been informed that wearing masks is now mandatory when driving and loading and unloading students. We are providing each driver with a face shield that they can wear as added protection for themselves during the loading and unloading process of students. The seat directly behind the driver will be kept empty when possible as another safety protocol. Parents are reminded that the government is mandating all students in grades 4 to 12 to wear face coverings. Students from kindergarten to grade 3 are encouraged to wear them at this time. Each bus will have hand sanitizer that drivers and students can utilize as required. Students will be offered a squirt of hand sanitizer when they board the buses and we encourage that they use it but understand if they have sensitivities and wish not to. This is totally optional and parents should let the driver know if there are any concerns with respect to their children using the sanitizer.

Parents are expected to perform the Alberta Health Services screening questionnaire on each of their children before sending them to school. Should a child have any of the symptoms on the questionnaire, they must be kept at home for the safety of everyone. We understand that children may be riding the school bus and become ill even after having presented no symptoms when leaving home. In cases like that, we have outfitted each bus with some disposable masks and we will have that student wear one until they can safely be picked up by the parents. We will separate the student from the rest of the students riding the bus and inform the school to meet that bus as it gets to the school.

***Together we will ensure learning success for all students
to develop their unique potential as caring citizens in a changing world.***

In order to minimize students walking past each other numerous times on the bus, we are implementing loading buses from the back to the front and unloading from the front to the back, wherever possible. Students will be directed by the driver as to which seat they will be sitting in for the foreseeable future on each route. Students should expect to be sitting with their siblings on routes that are at or near capacity, in order that we can do our best to protect everyone on the bus. We are temporarily suspending all ride-a-longs requests to special events like birthday parties and other similar parties. Students will be limited to the one bus that they take to school in the morning and utilize to go home in the afternoon.

We will need parents to discuss with their children how important it will be that each of them are sitting properly and following all the rules of the bus. Now more than ever we will need each and every student to do their best to follow the rules as stated on the yellow card (Example attached) that each bus family receives. Riding a school bus is a privilege and because of the pandemic it is more important than ever that we follow the rules. Students that do not follow the rules will unfortunately have their bus privileges revoked and parents will need to make their own arrangements to get them to and from the school. There will be zero tolerance with respect to students breaking the rules and placing other students or drivers in harm's way. Principals will contact parents and let them know if an incident has occurred and a student has been removed from the bus for a period of time.

We are excited to be back at school and trust each student is as well. We will be doing our best to continue to provide a safe and healthy ride to and from school and trust all families will do their best to help with meeting that expectation. Should you have any specific questions or concerns, please call the Transportation office at 403-380-2612 and we will be happy to answer them.

Signed

David Shaw
Transportation Services Supervisor