

## ***CAPE COVID-19 Safety Plan***

*Based on CAPE's First Response to COVID-19*

*Adopted August 17, 2021*

*Implemented August 30, 2021*

*Revised October 9, 2021*

1. As previously indicated in our CAPE communications, we adhere to the Personal Information Protection Act and the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act and do **not ask about vaccination status**. However, some decisions require data and therefore CAPE may be sending out from time to time anonymous and voluntary surveys.
2. **Vaccination clinics** are available in school for eligible students, parents and staff who have a signed permission form, similar to other vaccinations, if there is enough of a demand as determined by the AHS.
3. **All students, staff and visitors are to wear masks while on school grounds at all times.** This includes in teaching spaces, hallways, common areas, gym, playground, and parking lot. If a child attended CAPE last year, they were provided with 5 reusable masks. All children new to CAPE have been provided with reusable masks. Disposable masks are available for guests and for students who forget their masks in the main door airlock.
4. If a student or staff member has respiratory issues and requires a shield, **the school provides the shield**. If a student had the arrangement for a shield last year, we are honouring this same arrangement to prevent extra work for parents. CAPE provides children with a shield based on the child's physician written recommendation/note.
5. If a student or a parent objects to the wearing of the mask they are assisted in locating a suitable **On Line Learning Program**.
6. For staff peace of mind, CAPE has acquired **rapid test kits** and distributed these to all staff so they can be taken home for use by the staff member or an immediate family member. Additional kits are available at the school. This is a completely voluntary and private measure to provide staff with a bit more support to monitor themselves and their family members and stay as safe as possible.

## 7. Best Practices to Prevent the Spread of Illness:

- **Sick students and staff must stay home. Symptomatic children** and adults need to be tested at an AHS assessment centre and should not use the rapid tests. Isolating close contacts at home also prevents the spread and is very strongly requested. If only healthy children and staff attend school, the threat of spread is reduced substantially. An updated screening checklist is provided to families for screening at home.
- If a student or staff member has symptoms, they are advised to **use the screening tool** and follow the AHS recommended guidelines prior to coming to school.
- **Regular hand hygiene** is done throughout the day, especially around transition times such as between classes, before lunch, after lunch, after using the bathroom, before going out for recess, after returning from recess.
- **Increased cleaning and sanitizing** continues throughout the day. This ensures common surfaces and bathrooms are sanitized regularly. In addition, all surfaces are sanitized before a new numeracy, literacy or project group enters a room.
- The **ventilation system** has been inspected to ensure proper air flow throughout the building. The HVAC system was completely revamped during the summer of 2019.
- Classes are strongly encouraged to have windows open as weather permits and outside activities are encouraged.
- The CAPE Board is considering investing in portable **hepa filters** for each teaching space within the building.

## 8. Measures to Promote Responsible Contact with Others:

- **Access to the building is limited** to control how many people are in contact. Parents are to deliver their students to the playground where supervisors are waiting. Kindergarten parents drop off and pick up at the playground doors. Likewise, parents who are accessing our Out-of-School Program pick up at the doors.

- Students enter the school at the beginning of the day at **staggered times** and are also dismissed at staggered times to facilitate orderly, distanced movement. It is of particular importance this September as our numbers for the 2021-2022 year have increased to approximately 300 students. By staggering times by 10 minutes, the number of students in the hallways and common areas at one time are greatly reduced. We have also installed more lockers in classrooms to reduce hallway traffic by 20%.
- **Intake meetings and subsequent parent meetings are virtual.** Families new to CAPE were contacted to arrange an on-site intake meeting which allowed time for areas to be sanitized between families. All subsequent meetings are held online. When this is not possible, meetings are held with screening, distancing, masking, and sanitation.
- **All meetings** such as Board and School Council meetings, staff meeting and Admin meetings **are virtual**, via Zoom.
- **Guests to the school are screened** using the COVID questionnaire. People exhibiting symptoms or those who do not pass the screen are not granted admittance. All guests are provided with a mask if they do not have one, and must sanitize before entering the premises.
- Should CAPE become aware of a positive case at school, we will report to AHS and AHS will complete **contact tracing**, with support from the school. Notification letters will be sent to inform parents and affected staff. It is strongly recommended that close contacts isolate.
- Children accessing **Out-of-School Care are cohorted** as per child care guidelines. Parents need to prebook their days. Please see the parent information provided with OSC registration.
- **Only walking field trips are approved.** Conversely, no bussed field trips will be approved. Only trips to locations that implement COVID-19 safety measures are approved. While walking to and from the location and while at the location, all students and staff are to be masked, and sanitizers must be made available and used.
- **Directional signage** is in place to promote single file distanced movement within the building.

- **Large gatherings** such as assemblies are not permitted. Presentations to large groups can be made using streaming in each of the teaching spaces.

## 9. Measures to Promote Safe Learning:

- **Students are not cohorted** as it inhibits learning within our personalized program. However, added measures for students to safely change groups are implemented. This includes surface cleaning of tables and desks between groups and the wearing of masks or shields. Students distance, if at all possible. Whenever possible, students also sit at tables with students from their homerooms **for literacy, numeracy, and projects**.
- **CAPE is not offering a general online choice program.** If a child is in need of strategies to support health issues of concern, families are directed to contact administration to discuss alternatives.
- Use of **Google Classroom continues to support all students** with classroom information. A parent support document for how to effectively use this program is made available.
- **Field trips within walking distance** of the school promote access to fresh air and remove the exposure to shared buses.
- **Extra curricular activities return but are limited and with continued health measures.** These measures are communicated to parents based on the type of activity.
- **Administration continues to monitor** AHS and Education guidelines and amend this plan as needed.
- **Administration will re-assess these measures at the end of term 1**, which is at the end of November 2021. CAPE monitors the effectiveness of our measures in keeping our students, staff, and parents as safe as possible while ensuring that students are learning and track the local COVID situation over time. We believe that this cautious approach is the best course of action to protect the health and wellness of all our stakeholders.
- The school has provided each teacher with a **sound enhancing device** that is worn like a microphone and clipped to a belt to ensure that students are able to hear the teacher clearly when the teacher is masked.

## **10. Measures to support transparency and communications:**

- Alberta Health is reporting publicly about COVID-19 cases in schools, i.e. outbreaks pertaining to the last 14 days prior to the posting.
- **Contact notification** within schools are now mandated. CAPE has maintained this practice. Formal AHS notification letters will be supplied to schools to send to parents.
- CAPE's new website will support posting of the **CAPE COVID-19 Safety Plan**. This plan is updated as often as needed and board-approved.
- The CAPE site administration (principal) routinely updates via **e-mails** parents/guardians and staff as to cases, latest protocols, Alberta Guidelines, etc. and includes links for parental ease of access.
- The site administration responds to e-mails as soon as possible. However, it is to be clearly understood that at times a reply may not be possible until the **next workday** at the earliest. The CAPE administration is pleased and honoured by the confidence parents have shown towards the staff and the school protocols. However, administrators also need and deserve downtime.

## **11. Response to Identified Positive Cases within the School:**

If three or more COVID-19 cases are identified within a five day period in one of our Kindergarten to Grade 6 classes, AHS will issue an exclusion notification, shifting students to at-home learning. Exclusion letters will be issued on a class-by-class basis and any classes in receipt of an exclusion letter will be required to shift to at-home learning for 10 days.

## **12. Provincial and Federal Programs:**

- Starting in late-October, **rapid testing kits** will be provided to school authorities for

distribution for Kindergarten to Grade 6 schools, starting first with schools that are experiencing an outbreak status. The rapid testing program will be voluntary. If they choose, children, students, and staff will be provided with rapid testing kits to test twice per week for four weeks. This is a federal program and the requirement to report (on line reporting process) applies to anyone choosing to participate in this program.

### **13. Ministerial Request:**

The Ministers of Education and Health have sent school boards a letter strongly encouraging all school authorities, as employers and operators of school facilities, to develop policies that require proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test for teachers, staff and any adult who enters a school. The suggestion is two tests per week. The CAPE Board of Directors is collecting information, discussing this request and making decisions which best suit our environment.

### **14. CAPE's protocols for proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test or a current medical exemption letter for teachers, staff and any individual age 12 years old or over other than CAPE students who enters our CAPE school facility.**

## **BACKGROUND**

COVID-19 represents an identifiable workplace hazard. COVID-19 is an acute respiratory illness caused by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-COV-2). Exposure to the virus typically occurs through: (1) inhalation of fine respiratory droplets and aerosol particles; (2) deposit of respirator droplets and particles on exposed mucous membranes in the mouth, nose, or eye by a direct splash or spray; or (3) touching mucous membranes with hands that have been soiled by virus-containing respiratory fluids (or touching surfaces with the virus on them).

Our school has identified an extremely low number of cases of confirmed COVID-19 infection among both its staff and student population since the beginning of the pandemic. Administrative controls (including social distancing and cohorting) and through personal protective equipment (such as masking), additional sanitation, and other safety measures as well as support from staff and parents seem to have proven effecting in limiting the spread of the virus. However, these administrative protocols are a prudent step in increasing the safety of our school community.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS STATEMENT**

The CAPE Board of Directors is committed to providing safe and healthy learning and working environments. The CAPE Board of Directors commits to protecting students and employees from injury, illness, and accidents as required by Occupational Health and Safety Legislation, the Education Act, and common law. Transmittable diseases, including COVID-19, are identifiable workplace hazards. Such hazards can have a detrimental effect on health and safety, school operations, student learning, employee productivity, school costs, and employee morale. The CAPE Board of Directors has the legal obligation to take all reasonable steps to identify, eliminate, and control workplace hazards like COVID-19.

The purpose of these administrative protocols is to mitigate the risk of spread of COVID-19 infection in our CAPE facility to protect staff, students, and their families from the highly contagious illness during a global pandemic.

## **SCOPE**

These administrative protocols apply to all employees. It also applies to all persons carrying out duties or activities on CAPE school property, and volunteers of CAPE school. Any employees newly hired to CAPE school on or after November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 will require proof of vaccination or proof of a negative rapid test or a current medical exemption letter as a condition of employment.

## **TEMPORARY PROTOCOLS**

These administrative protocols are temporary. Current rates of transmission in Alberta indicate rapidly increasing numbers of individuals are exposed to COVID-19. The Board of Directors will reevaluate the need for these administrative protocols when the government and medical authorities no longer support the identification of COVID-19 as a workplace hazard. The Board of Directors will review these administrative protocols for amendment or elimination a minimum of every 6 months, or as deemed necessary.

## **1. GENERAL GUIDELINES**

- 1.1 These administrative protocols are in addition to other employee requirements mandated by government authorities and by the CAPE Board of Directors with respect to COVID-19 (e.g., mask wearing requirements) and does not supersede or replace any other measure or semi-weekly rapid testing.
- 1.2. All employees who are not yet fully immunized against COVID-19 are required to be fully immunized against COVID-19 with a vaccine required for efficacy, as recommended by Health Canada or Alberta Health Services, **no later than November 30, 2021.**

- 1.3. Any employee who requires an exemption to these administrative protocols must inform CAPE school before November 30, 2021, or as soon as reasonably possible.
- 1.4. Any employee who chooses not to be vaccinated must inform CAPE school before November 30, 2021, or as soon as reasonably possible.

## **2. PROOF OF VACCINATION REQUIREMENT**

2.1 The Employee must provide the site administrator proof of vaccination.

2.1.1 Proof of vaccination includes:

- 2.1.1.1 The employee's vaccination record received post-vaccination; or
- 2.1.1.2 the record of vaccinations/immunizations from Alberta Health Services (including My Health Records); or
- 2.1.1.3 such other valid and legitimate proof as the Board of Directors may deem sufficient acting reasonably.

2.1.2 Site administration will view the proof of vaccination but will not retain any document (electronic or physical) from the Employee, except as may be necessary.

2.2 Employees providing proof of vaccination are confirming that they have read, acknowledged, and accepted the information found in this safety plan.

2.3 All employees are entitled to paid leave to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination.

## **3. SEMI-WEEKLY RAPID TESTING REQUIREMENT**

An employee who does not provide proof of vaccination may comply with these administrative protocols by providing proof of rapid testing on a semi-weekly basis, at the school's expense.

To comply with this alternative, the employee must:

- 3.1 Obtain a valid rapid test which demonstrates a negative result for COVID-19 infection. Proof of rapid testing remains valid for 72 hours from the time and date of the test.
- 3.2 Provide site administration with proof of a negative COVID-19 rapid test result.
  - 3.2.1 site administration will view the proof of rapid testing but will not retain any document (electronic or physical) from the employee, except as may be necessary.
- 3.3 Site administration will approve the employee to work for a period of 72 hours dated from the time of the rapid test.
- 3.4 The Employee will repeat steps in paragraphs 3.1 – 3.4 for the duration of these administrative protocols.



#### 4. SITE ADMINISTRATION DUTIES

- 4.1 Site administration is generally responsible to ensure the confidentiality of information obtained in these administrative protocols. Site administration shall be responsible for taking all prudent and reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality and security of all personal information disclosed to CAPE school under administrative protocols.
- 4.2 Where CAPE school has a legal obligation under the *Alberta Human Rights Act* to modify the requirements or expectations of these administrative protocols, site administration will do so on behalf of CAPE school.
- 4.5 In regard to *proof of vaccination*, site administration shall be responsible for:
  - 4.5.1 Collecting information from employees regarding proof of vaccination.
  - 4.5.2 Verifying proof of vaccination prior to permitting employees to work, as of November 30, 2021. Site administration will not retain physical or electronic copies of records from employees, unless absolutely necessary.
  - 4.5.3 Determining that the proof of vaccination is authentic and relates to the employee submitting the proof of vaccination.
  - 4.5.4 To protect employee private information, site administration will not store proof of vaccination. site administration will record employee compliance (proof of vaccination or rapid testing) by making a coded notation in a secured file. For proof of vaccination, the coded information will indicate number of vaccinations, and the date for each, in respect of each employee. A number will be used to avoid collection of the employee's name, and a code will be used in place of the term "vaccination" so that the file makes no reference to vaccination or employee name.
  - 4.5.5 Ensuring that information gathered under these protocols is only used for the purpose of ensuring compliance with these administrative protocols. Such information will not be shared with any other person except when required to manage the employee's employment relationship with CAPE school or as otherwise permitted under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
  - 4.5.6 Destroying any notation or record in their possession gathered from the proof of vaccination.

- 4.5.7 Answering questions from employees with respect to the use, collection, and storage of information gathered under this policy.
- 4.6 In regard to *proof of rapid testing*, the site administration shall be responsible for:
  - 4.6.1 Collecting information from employees regarding proof of rapid testing.
  - 4.6.2 Verifying proof of twice-weekly rapid testing prior to permitting employees to work after November 30, 2021. Site administration will not retain physical or electronic copies of records from employees, except if absolutely necessary.
  - 4.6.3 Determining that the proof of rapid testing is authentic and relates to the employee submitting the proof of rapid testing.
  - 4.6.4 Advising the employee that the proof of rapid testing is valid only for a period of 72 hours, and that another test and proof will be required prior to commencing work after that 72 hour period.
  - 4.6.5 Recording the date the rapid test was provided and ensure that a reminder is in place to obtain a new valid proof of rapid testing from the employee before 72 hours has expired.
  - 4.6.6 Ensuring that information gathered under these administrative protocols is only used for the purpose of ensuring compliance with this policy. Such information will not be shared with any other person except when required to manage the employee's employment relationship with CAPE school or as otherwise permitted under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
  - 4.6.7 Destroying any notation or record in their possession gathered from the proof of rapid testing.
  - 4.6.8 Answering questions from Employees with respect to the use, collection, and storage of information gathered under this policy.
- 4.7 If site administration is unable to determine the authenticity or veracity of proof of rapid testing or proof of vaccination, then site administration shall retain the proof of rapid testing or proof of vaccination (as the case may be) until the record has been verified. Once verified, site administration shall immediately destroy all copies of this information in their possession.

## **5. EXEMPTIONS– INABILITY TO COMPLY - EMPLOYEE DUTY TO DISCLOSE**

- 5.1 Any Employee who is unable, or believes that they may be unable, to comply with these protocols must disclose that inability (or perceived inability) to site administration before breaching these administrative protocols or as soon as possible.

- 5.2 Site administration will treat any such disclosure in confidence and will only share the information as is reasonably necessary to:
  - 5.2.1 determine the validity of the claimed inability to comply;
  - 5.2.2 determine the obligation of CAPE school to respond to, or accommodate, the inability to comply; and,
  - 5.2.3 determine the ability of CAPE school to accommodate the individual.
- 5.3 CAPE school will meet its legal obligation under the *Alberta Human Rights Act* to modify the requirements or expectations of this policy.
- 5.4 No employee will be disciplined for disclosing an inability, or perceived inability, to comply with this policy.
- 5.5 The protection in paragraph 5.4 shall not shield the employee from discipline from any breach of these administrative protocols which occurred before the disclosure in paragraph 5.1 (although no discipline is appropriate where prior disclosure was not reasonably possible).

## **6. NON-EMPLOYEE REQUIREMENTS**

- 6.1 Contractors must ensure their workers who carry out duties or activities on CAPE school property comply with these protocols by meeting the requirements under paragraph 2.1 or 3.1. Contractors must produce proof of compliance upon the request of the system manager responsible for supervision for their contract.
- 6.2 Volunteers of the school are required to follow the same process as employees.

## **7. CONSEQUENCES FOR BREACH**

- 7.1 Compliance with these protocols is mandatory. Any employee in breach of these safety protocols is subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- 7.2 All persons scheduled or required to carry out duties or activities on CAPE school property, who are not in compliance with this policy, will not be allowed on school property.

## **ADDENDUM**

### **Rationale for A Return to Tiered Literacy, Numeracy & Projects Programming**

CAPE's population is diverse and comprised of a large number of students that are coded or require additional support.

In the 20-21 year, about 10% of our population had a mild/moderate or a severe code; about 3% were coded as gifted & gifted/disabled; about 87% were not coded.

However, about 95% of our population require extra support. This percentage varies slightly from year to year. Anxiety issues, social and emotional issues, ADHD, behavioural issues, processing speed issues, learning disabilities of different types, Autism Spectrum Disorders, OT/PT needs, ESL issues, and more are part of the daily school lives of our students. During the last 18 months the learning disruptions, the lack of access to a stable supportive school environment, stress and isolation, trauma, lack of routine, intensive one-on-one face to face support and intervention, and many other factors have caused a severe loss of learning. The learning curve has flattened significantly. Staff has noted that the ability to function in a classroom has decreased significantly. Basic skills such as raising ones hand to ask a question, walking in line, following directions, taking turns, respectful behaviour, attention and academic endurance have all decreased.

Data gathered from Alberta Education suggested assessments for K-3 literacy and numeracy seem to indicate that a significant percentage of our 2021-2022 population requires much more intensive and sustained support. This is in stark contrast to our Education Report data from the pre-COVID-19 year, 2018-2019.

	2018-2019 Education Report K-9	School Assessments September 2021 K-9	Alberta Education K-3 Literacy & Numeracy Assessments
Urgent/Severe Literacy Intervention	19.1%	77%	61.1%
Mild/Moderate Literacy Intervention	26.2%		94.5%

Urgent/Severe Numeracy Intervention	27.9%	79%	30.4%
Mild/Moderate Numeracy Intervention	19.6%		85.2%
Social/Emotional/ Behavioural Supports Required	31.5%	36.8%	49.8%

The learning disruptions brought about by COVID-19 has caused significant deficits in student growth, as indicated by the data. It is imperative that we return to our tiered multigrade grouping for literacy and numeracy. The learning deficits are only going to increase exponentially if we do not.

Friday projects engage students in learning activities that are selected by the student, open-ended, high interest, multi-faceted, community-oriented, and allow for students to work at their own pace, demonstrate their learning in very different and personal ways, and also support the development of social skills. The students absolutely love projects. Sadly, cohorting significantly reduced student choice, access to off-site learning, and leadership between mixed-age groups. Students have been deprived of the rich project learning environment for way too long and they were very eager to come back to these projects. When students engage in meaningful learning experiences they thrive.

CAPE has implemented very stringent COVID-19 safety measures so that we may get back to supporting our students in the best possible way.

Core classes are cohorted, as are PE classes. These constitute over 75% of the school day.

T. Di Ninno  
 Superintendent  
 CAPE Charter School  
 Medicine Hat, Alberta