

COVID-19 Pandemic: Return to School - Manitoba Physical Education Guidelines

This document is meant to be a companion document to the *COVID-19 Pandemic: Return to School Canadian Physical and Health Education (PHE) Guidelines* developed by Physical and Health Education Canada (PHE Canada). The goal has been to maintain the integrity of the PHE Canada document and to reflect Manitoba provincial guidelines and protocols. In certain places school divisions and/or schools will have to refer to their respective policies, guidelines, and protocols.

The Manitoba Association of Physical Education Supervisors' (MPESA) and the Physical and Health Educators' of Manitoba (PHE MB) have worked together to prepare this document for school reopening in accordance with current Manitoba Health guidelines.

We hope that by doing some detailed thinking around concerns that are specific to physical education, we can offer some meaningful parameters for school reopening, while being cognizant of the changing landscape of our situation and the need to respond to new information from government as the situation unfolds.

In addition to the work by PHE Canada we also acknowledge the Association of Music Administrators of Manitoba (AMAM) and the Manitoba Music Educators' Association (MMEA) for their work on recommendations for school reopening. Some recommendations have been adapted for use in this document. We will continue to update and share this working document as more information comes from government, Manitoba School Boards Association, Provincial Sport Organizations, PHE Canada and the like.

The benefits of participation in physical education classes, intramurals and interscholastic activities/clubs/teams needs to be balanced with the risks of increased COVID-19 transmission. Participation in such has numerous physical, mental and emotional health benefits. As we begin to see schools re-open again, we need thoughtful planning to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

We hope the following recommendations will assist school divisions in understanding the unique considerations needed in the physical education environment, while stressing the importance of continuing to provide quality physical education programming for all.

Recommendations

A. Physical Space

- If the gymnasium is unavailable, physical education (PE) classes should take place outdoors or in alternate spaces (e.g., classrooms, fitness rooms, cafeterias, hallways, community facilities).
- Re-evaluate exit/entrance and line-up procedures, and designate entrance and exit in rooms or facilities with more than one door.
- Follow guidelines for number of students in a group/space.
- Use floor, tarmac and field markings (floor tape, peel and stick vinyl decals, non-permanent poly spots, hula hoops, cones, tarmac and field paint) and general signage to indicate where students can sit/stand/participate according to physical distancing guidelines.
- The use of changerooms is not recommended due to difficulty in maintaining physical distancing and cleanliness.

B. Equipment

- Sharing of equipment should be minimized. If equipment is used the transfer between students should also be minimized.
- Consideration should be given to a rotation of washable equipment so that the same equipment is not used in back to back classes.
- There should be a clearly identified location for students to return equipment in order for it to be properly cleaned before its next use.
- No sharing or use of pinnies.
- Teachers need to be mindful of the equity if they are asking students to bring own equipment. Consider adding simple PE manipulatives and a clearly labeled water bottle to school supplies lists.
- PE teachers/departments may need to propose different budget requests to support students and new programming ideas.

C. Equipment and Facilities Cleaning

- A routine should be implemented for proper cleaning of equipment and facilities.
- Cleaning products must comply with disinfecting guidelines without damaging equipment. Refer to school division safe work procedures.
- Implement handwashing or hand sanitization procedures before entering gymnasium and before returning to classrooms.
- No small equipment left out at the end of the day to facilitate wiping down of all hard surfaces by custodial staff.
- Provide disposable gloves available for use by teachers for equipment and facilities cleaning.

D. Timetable and Scheduling

- Maintain the mandated time for physical education at all levels and for grades.
- Ensure there is collaboration between teachers and administrators when adjusting schedules in response to physical distancing and cleaning/sanitizing facilities and equipment.
- Extra time may be needed between groups for cleaning/transitions.

E. Programming

- Use this opportunity to reimagine physical education programming for the success of all students, considering what will you keep, move away from, and add.
- Focus on personal and social management outcomes early on, making connections to school wide social emotional learning, mental health and trauma informed teaching.
- Consider cross curricular planning to include Physical Education, Health Education and other subject areas.
- Use the [Physical Education and Health Planning Tools](#) to plan for the big ideas in the curriculum.
- Initially plan for activities that can be used during in school instruction as well as remote learning environments.
- Consider sharing programming ideas and experiences to collectively.
- Plan activities in larger outdoor spaces as much as possible.
- Consider individualized activities, body weight exercises, non- touch folkdances etc.
- Project teaching instructions and examples/exemplars on screens when possible for viewing from a distance.
- Suspend in person interactions with guest instructors. Consider virtual visits.
- Request a budget to purchase necessary supplies (e.g., suitable PE equipment, floor markings, signage, mic system, carts for transporting teachers supplies etc.)

F. Intramural and Extra-Curricular Programming

- Reimagine divisional activities and events to comply with physical distancing, equipment sharing, travel guidelines, spectators etc.
- Consider hybrid models where students can participate at school and at home/in the community.
- While restrictions on large gatherings remain in place, no live events.
- Consider streaming live or pre-recorded events.

G. Staffing

- Ensure there is collaboration between teachers and administrators for additional staff support as needed to follow provincial guidelines.
- Consider having homeroom teachers and EA's assist with transitions and sanitizing/cleaning.
- More staff may be needed to provide intramural and extra-curricular activities/teams/clubs.

H. Off-School Site Excursions

- Off-School site excursions (I.e. Field trips) should comply with divisional policy.

I. Technology/Remote Learning

- Ensure that all students have equitable access to devices and internet at home.
- Teachers need professional development in new technology and planning for remote learning .
- Students need training in online learning technology and remote learning (building autonomy).
- Additional purchases of equipment may be necessary to provide each child with equitable opportunity.
- Licensing fees for new technology and online learning platforms may be needed.
- Consider wireless\portable microphone for teachers because of spacing issues (no sharing of microphones).
- In the event that physical education is taught in regular classrooms or elsewhere, consider a mobile cart to facilitate transporting equipment and resources.