



**Deputy Minister's office (E-1)**  
**PO Box 2703, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 2C6**

August 12, 2020

Dear parents/guardians:

**RE: School operational plans and school bus routes now available**

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Planning for the 2020-21 school year has been ongoing throughout the summer to ensure students and school staff can safely return to face-to-face classes in schools.

We acknowledge that the start of this school year will be different than others. As students and staff begin their return to face-to-face learning, we will continue our engagement with students and families and we will monitor and adjust our planning and school routines as needed based on recommendations and advice from Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

In July, the Chief Medical Officer of Health set specific health and safety guidelines for Kindergarten to Grade 12 school settings. To ensure the health and safety of students and staff at their school, school principals have been working with central administration staff, public health officials, school councils and the local First Nation to develop a school-specific operational plan that outlines how school routines and programming will be adapted at their school.

School operational plans for the 2020-21 school year are now being shared out to school communities and on school websites. A few schools may still be finalizing some of the details of their plans with the local First Nation, their school council and/or health officials and will be sharing them to their school communities as they become available.

Find your school's website by visiting: [yukon.ca/en/education-and-schools/kindergarten-grade-12/directory](https://yukon.ca/en/education-and-schools/kindergarten-grade-12/directory). Follow the link to your school, and click on the school website link.

Please also view the attached "School during COVID-19" handout at to learn more about how operations, learning and health and safety fit into planning for the 2020-21 school year.

### **First day of school for students**

Whitehorse schools will now start on August 20 for students instead of August 19. Teachers and school staff will be doing health and safety training and reviewing their adapted school routines on August 18-19 and learning more about how to support safe and healthy habits in students.

Rural schools have also been provided an additional Professional Development day for health and safety training. Parents should check with their school for any updates to their school calendar.

## **Health and safety at school**

While each school is following a specific operational plan based on their school's size, layout and student population, they are also following key health and safety measures common to all schools, including:

- Physical distancing in classrooms and common areas where possible;
- Limiting mixing of groups of students and staff where possible;
- Washing and sanitizing hands regularly all day;
- Regular cleaning and disinfecting of the school;
- Following the plan if a student or staff gets sick while they're at school;
- Keeping students and staff home if they have symptoms or are sick.

### *Wearing a mask at school*

During the course of the pandemic, we will continue to follow the advice of Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health and adjust school operations and routines based on any updated recommendations.

We recognize there are situations in schools where masks may be needed. We are committed to ensuring all schools have the resources they need to protect the health and safety of students and staff and including ensuring all schools have access to masks for situations where they are needed or recommended by Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

### *Staying home when sick*

Staying home when sick is the most important rule we can all follow. You should monitor your child every day for symptoms before sending them to school. To help assess symptoms, use the attached poster or use the COVID-19 self-assessment tool at: [service.yukon.ca/en/covid-19-self-assessment](https://service.yukon.ca/en/covid-19-self-assessment).

Check for new or worsening symptoms when monitoring. For example, a child with asthma may have a cough that is not new. Symptoms you should monitor for include: Fever/chills, cough, shortness of breath, running nose, sore throat, headache, loss of sense of taste or smell, fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea and muscle aches.

## **School busing for the 2020-21 school year**

### *School bus routes*

School bus routes for elementary students in Whitehorse are now available on Yukon.ca. The bus routes for high school students are still being finalized, including for students in Grades 10-12 rotating

between classes in school and learning away from school. Routes will be posted and updated by the end of the week and as they become available.

As the school year starts, we will be monitoring our bus services and identifying where we can make adjustments to ensure we continue to accommodate as many students as possible. Families will be updated as adjustments are made across the school year.

You can find school bus routes by visiting: [yukon.ca/en/school-bus-schedules](http://yukon.ca/en/school-bus-schedules).

#### *Health and safety and adapting bus services*

School bus services this school year are being adapted based on the health and safety guidelines for school bus operations set by Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health, including:

- maintaining physical distance of 2-metres when waiting for the bus;
- loading students on the bus back to front and unloading students from front to back to support physical distancing;
- seating students at a 2-metre distance from school bus drivers;
- limiting students to 2 per seat, unless they are family members or part of a household bubble with another student who rides the school bus;
- ensuring students and bus drivers are washing or sanitizing their hands before and after boarding the school bus; and
- cleaning and disinfecting buses, including high-touch areas after each trip.

To meet health and safety guidelines, including fewer students on each bus, students are being prioritized for school busing based on their eligibility as outlined in the [Education Act](#) and the [Student Transportation Regulations](#).

Students are eligible to ride the school bus to the school and back home if they live more than 3.2 kilometres from their attendance area school.

All students who are eligible to ride the school bus will be able to do so. The Government of Yukon is working with its bus service provider to add additional school buses for the 2020-21 school year to accommodate as many students as safely possible on the school bus.

Based on available space on the bus, the Government of Yukon will also consider accommodating requests to bus students beyond the eligibility requirements in the following order of priority:

- Kindergarten to Grade 3 students; then
- Grade 4-7 students who live within 3.2 kilometres of their attendance area school; then
- Students who attend school outside of their attendance area; and finally
- Special requests, including busing to stops other than from home to school and back.

Families are being directly notified if they can be accommodated on the school bus at the start of the school year.

### **School bus passes**

To support our efforts to assign bus seats for students, students will be provided a school bus pass on their first day of school that includes their bus number.

High school students also have the option to register for a City for Whitehorse transit pass instead of a school bus pass. Students are encouraged to register for a city transit pass to allow for room on buses for students without other means of transport.

City transit passes also provide flexibility for students who will have different schedules than normal this school year.

### **De-registering for the school bus**

The Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Department of Education continue to encourage students and families who can to walk, cycle, drive or carpool to transport students to and from school if possible, to allow for room on buses for students without other means of transport.

If students and families are able to support their own transportation to school, or are able to use city transit, we ask that you please de-register for the school bus by contacting the Student Transportation Officer at the Department of Education at [student.transportation@gov.yk.ca](mailto:student.transportation@gov.yk.ca).

De-registering will also support our efforts to accommodate as many students as possible on the school bus.

### **More information**

As we plan for the 2020-21 school year, the health and safety of students, staff and community members is and will continue to be our first priority.

For more information, visit:

- Planning for the 2020-21 school year (including more information on health and safety, learning during the pandemic, etc): [yukon.ca/planning-for-2020-21-school-year](https://yukon.ca/planning-for-2020-21-school-year)
- Find a school bus schedule: [yukon.ca/en/school-bus-schedules](https://yukon.ca/en/school-bus-schedules)
- Register for City of Whitehorse transit pass: [yukon.ca/en/education-and-schools/kindergarten-grade-12/school-bus-and-other-student-transportation-options](https://yukon.ca/en/education-and-schools/kindergarten-grade-12/school-bus-and-other-student-transportation-options)
- School calendar dates: [yukon.ca/en/school-holiday-dates](https://yukon.ca/en/school-holiday-dates)

Please do not hesitate to contact your school principal if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole Morgan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole Morgan  
Deputy Minister of Education