



GILBERT PATERSON MIDDLE SCHOOL

CONQUER THYSELF, THEN CONQUER THE WORLD

2109 - 12 Avenue South, Lethbridge Alberta T1K 0P1

Phone: (403) 329 - 0125 Fax: (403) 320 - 8418

August 6, 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians,

We hope that this letter finds you and your family healthy and enjoying a wonderful summer. With the recent announcement that schools in Alberta will be back to “near normal” operations this fall, we are very excited to have our students back. We are also aware that the reality of the covid-19 pandemic will necessitate adjustments at school. What does “near normal” mean? I encourage you to access the School Division documents that were sent home below - **Parent Re-entry Guide** and **Lethbridge School Division – Q and A** that outline details about safety protocols, in school learning structure and at home learning options for families.

<https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/download/283103>

<https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/download/283106>

Near normal operations entail classes resuming as they would in any other year with a few alterations addressing safety and wellness as our combined responsibility. Class size at Gilbert Paterson will not necessarily allow for 2m of distance between people in all situations. This means we will rely on our staff and students to practice heightened hand hygiene, mask use, social distancing, staying home with signs of illness, and getting tested should symptoms of covid-19 appear. There will also be protocols in place for hallway travel, entrance and exit from school, lunch and other routines to enhance safety and physical distancing. During the day, students and staff will work together to ensure surfaces are sanitized. Our capable and committed caretaking team will follow division cleaning protocols during the school day and each night. If covid-19 presents itself at Gilbert Paterson, Alberta Health Services will provide direction to stop the spread and take care of effected individuals. Students who become ill and then stay home will have their learning supported by their classroom teacher. To limit the contact of students within the school, they will be placed in cohorts that remain together for all their classes during the day.

What is a cohort? You might have heard that Alberta schools will schedule students in cohorts when possible. A cohort is a grouping of students who stay together to limit interactions, like those in a homeroom class. Scheduling at Paterson and all division middle schools will ensure students are limited to one cohort that will stay together for the 4 core classes, PE/movement class and a common “elective” class where students will receive a variety of “option” like activities that will be common across the grade level. Teachers will come to the students in one room except for the use of gymnasiums and outside for activities. The number of teachers in contact with a grade level cohort will also be limited. The cohort model does not allow for students to mix in traditional option classes. We will hopefully be able to return to our option class model later in the year. Students will be self-contained with backpacks and lockers will not be in use. We will send home more information prior to school to help prepare students for this transition. As a school, we will make all decisions on programming, routines, activities and structures with the safety and wellness of all as our number one priority.

Our school division sent out a survey asking parents if students will opt-out of at school learning. **It is imperative for parents to inform us of their choice for their child so we can begin staffing and forming cohorts for both types of learning. If you have not completed the survey, please do so at this link by August 10th:**

<https://www.lethsd.ab.ca/parents/survey>

If students opt out of at school learning, they will be enrolled in home programming co-supported by the division middle schools. For example, students who learn at home may have a subject teacher from other schools and learning from home may have limited elective options. It is assumed students who do not opt out will attend at Paterson and will follow the heightened safety protocols directed by the government. Once it is determined where students will attend, classes and schedules will be developed, and then communicated nearer to the start of the school year. Please check the website and synervice for more information as we near the start of school. We look forward to working together for the safety, learning and well-being of all in the coming year.

Darryl Christiansen - Principal