

Learning to Be Together Again

Support for Nunavut Schools in 2021-22





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 Building *Nunavut* Together
Nunavut liuqatigiingniq
 Bâtir le *Nunavut* ensemble

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 Department of Education
 Ilinniaqtuliqiyikkut
 Ministère de l'Éducation

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Learning to Be Together Again

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Introduction

In the 2021-22 school year, the Department of Education, in collaboration with Nunavut's Chief Public Health Officer (CPHO), will focus on how Nunavut schools can learn to live with COVID-19, mitigate risk, and respond to outbreaks on a community basis.

All health and safety decisions related to school operations are at the full discretion of the CPHO.

How schools respond to COVID-19 will look different this year. Instead of the 4-stage approach used in 2020-21, the CPHO will consider the following factors to determine the impact on school operations:

- The status of COVID-19 in each community, including transmission of COVID-19 variants
- Healthcare capacity to respond to COVID-19 in a community
- Public health capacity to test, trace, and isolate cases
- Vaccine coverage within certain age groups, schools, and communities

All schools will be open for 100% in-class learning for all students at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, unless otherwise advised by the CPHO.

The K-12 school system must be flexible and ready to adapt to changing public health guidelines at any time. Building confidence and mitigating risk will be key to full participation for staff, students, and families.

Although the circumstances and environment may be new or evolving this year, it is important to remember that we know how to do this. **We know how to be together, we know how to learn together, and this pandemic has proven that we know how to care for one another.**

Our Goals for Learning to Be Together Again

Based on our individual and collective experiences of COVID-19 and the outlook for the new school year, the Department of Education has created *Learning to be Together Again: Support for Nunavut Schools in 2021-22*. The goal of this document is to support

school leaders and their teams in a smooth transition back to school and ensure that supportive recovery learning and effective remote instruction can take place, while recognizing the challenges and opportunities schools have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is supported by the [Educator Toolbox](#), which is a SharePoint folder accessible to all school staff that includes key documents, guidelines, templates, and other supporting resources that schools can use, adapt, and share.

This document and the [Educator Toolbox](#) consolidates and updates information in the *Recovery Learning Framework for School Leaders* and the *Educator Toolkit for Nunavut Schools*, which were provided to school staff at the beginning of the 2020-21 school year.

This school year, school staff should focus on planning and implementing three key elements: **recovery learning, assessment, and remote instruction**. While this document is not exhaustive, it provides guidance for schools to determine their actions for each of these topics.

Schools should adapt the advice provided in this document based on lessons learned last year, and their own professional judgement based on the needs and context of their school community.

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq Schools in 2021-22

As students and school staff return to school in 2021-22, it will be vital to actively listen and understand the varied experiences of students, staff, and families. For some, the COVID-19 pandemic has been an opportunity for deep connection with family, interests, or new and cherished experiences. For others, these unprecedented times have been challenging, and even traumatic. Students may have struggled with disruption to in-class learning, adapting to a remote learning environment, or the uncertain realities of the pandemic.

Upon their return to school, students and staff alike may find it challenging to adapt to classroom environments, develop routines, follow health and safety protocols, or feel comfortable in large groups of people. Students may also feel pressure to keep up with their peers in the classroom or overwhelmed by the social energy of a school environment.

Schools should consult the *RESTORE Toolkit for Nunavut Schools*, found in the [Educator Toolbox](#), for practical supports and guidance around how to respond to the social and emotional needs of your school community. This toolkit focuses on how to recognize the recent past and your school community's experiences, and consider the opportunities, relationships, and engagement with our own health and well-being moving forward.

All these lived experiences will inform and guide the way we learn to be together again and reinforce what we know is true: Nunavut schools are grounded in Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit and must continue to be safe, supportive, and inclusive environments.

Inuuqatigiitsiarniq school communities practice the actions in the *RESTORE Toolkit for Nunavut Schools* and are guided by these five core IQ principles:

- **Pilimmaksarniq** is the principle of skills and knowledge acquisition. By truly paying attention to others' perspectives, we can learn more about supporting the vulnerability and resiliency of learners. **Everyone has a unique perspective.**
- **Inuuqatigiitsiarniq** is the principle that respect and civility should be extended to every single individual within the community, and that every individual is an important contributor to the community. **Our thoughts and feelings influence our behaviours.**
- **Qanuqtuurunnarniq** is the principle of coming up with resourceful solutions within the community. It will require the actions of everyone to come up with relevant and practical ways to tackle how to return to safe, caring, and healthy schools. **Our actions have a ripple effect.**
- **Tunnganarniq** is the principle of connection: by meeting the challenges to build a welcoming and inclusive environment in every room of our schools. **We have needs that connect us to people and purpose.**
- **Pijitsirniq** is the principle of public service – taking the time to learn about the issue and develop an action plan to deal with the issue. **The people best placed to find solutions to problems are the people affected by the problem.**

Recovery Learning

In the early weeks of this new school year, school staff should focus on recovery learning. **Recovery learning** is a responsive process that enables students to transition back to in-class learning, while addressing mental and physical well-being and student achievement. Students may be required to engage in remote learning at any time during the school year depending on the impacts of COVID-19 in their household or community.

Recovery learning is the process educators use with students after any break from learning, whether after the summer months or after a disruption caused by a pandemic, for example. As we learned in 2020-21, recovery learning will differ based on the opportunities and constraints of the school year. School staff are encouraged to continue to use a flexible learning approach and implement recovery learning to meet the needs of the students, the school schedule, and available resources. As always, school staff should confer with their superintendents if there are questions related to recovery learning, assessment, or remote instruction.

Recovery learning is grounded in **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**, which is a way of thinking about teaching and learning that gives all students an equal opportunity to succeed. UDL offers flexibility in how students access and engage with material and show what they know. More information about UDL can be found in the [Educator Toolbox](#).

Implementing **core learning outcomes** and providing **differentiation** in instruction and assessment, to understand where students are now and determine where they need to be, are key components of recovery learning and are a regular part of a teacher's professional practice.

Differentiated instruction can look like:

- Using types of content (audio, visual, readings) that match students' varied learning levels
- Offering different levels of support on the same activity or process
- Varying the length of time students may use to complete a task in order to get additional support or deepen understanding
- Giving students options for how to express required learning in different products
- Providing quiet places for students to work with minimal distractions
- Providing culturally relevant learning materials

Risk mitigation or outbreak management protocols may require students to isolate and therefore learn remotely for a period of time. Teachers should continue supporting these students with differentiated remote instruction and assessment during this time. More information on remote instruction is included later in this document.

Nunavut Core Curriculum Outcomes

To help create time and space for recovery learning, the Department of Education has analyzed approved curriculum documents and identified the core learning outcomes for each subject area for Kindergarten to Grade 9, which can be found in the *Nunavut Core Curriculum Documents* in the [Educator Toolbox](#). These documents are not intended to replace the original curricula but will help teachers focus on core learning outcomes in each subject area.

Teachers should use these documents, along with their existing assessment processes and information shared by their students' previous teachers, as a starting point for instruction and assessment to guide recovery learning throughout the school year. Literacy (reading and writing), numeracy, and wellness will take priority in recovery learning. These documents outline specific goals for competency- or skills-based development for each grade. Skills development will take priority over content-based knowledge outcomes. Cross-curricular content (social studies, science, etc.) may be included where outcomes can be seamlessly integrated with literacy and numeracy learning outcomes.

At the high school level, recovery learning for required courses can be delivered through instruction that is rich in literacy and numeracy while ensuring students are meeting credit hours. School leaders can contact their superintendent to discuss how to modify courses for a recovery learning context.

Life Skills and Land-based Learning

Life skills and land-based learning is an important way to provide students with varied and practical learning opportunities that include the promotion of Inuit culture and values. This type of learning can be particularly supportive of recovery learning as it can take place in the home, or safely outdoors. Teachers can make connections between life skills and land-based learning and curriculum outcomes to incorporate them into K-12 programming, including during recovery learning and remote instruction.

High school students should have the opportunity to incorporate land-based learning into their credit courses through Career and Technology Studies (CTS) or Nunavut Cultural Studies courses. In the [Educator Toolbox](#), you will find a *Life Skills and Land-based Learning Template* that teachers can use to identify curricular outcomes connected to life skills and land-based learning. Consult your superintendent for further information on these opportunities.

Teachers can use this template to identify potential credit opportunities for life skills and land-based learning outside the typical classroom setting. Teachers should communicate with both the student and the parent or guardian to determine how the objectives will be met and provide a series of assessment strategies that link prior knowledge to their land-based learning. Teachers must ensure that all land-based learning follows the approved Department of Education *Excursion and Land Trip Policy*, and that all necessary forms are completed.

Assessment

Teaching, learning, and assessment combine in a dynamic process referred to as *ilitaunnikuliriniq*. This represents the connection between using what you know about your students – who they are, what they know, and what they want to know – to identify learning goals, monitor that learning to inform your ongoing instructional decisions, and make judgements at the end of a teaching cycle. Seven key principles guide assessment in Nunavut schools:

- Support continuous learning for all students
- Show respect for all learners
- Recognize each student's unique talents and skills
- Emphasize the interdependence, growth, and success of the group
- Ensure assessment is outcome-based
- Have different purposes for assessment
- Ensure assessment is authentic, meaningful, and builds on student strengths

Educators should refer to *Ilitaunnikuliriniq: Foundation for Dynamic Assessment as Learning in Nunavut Schools* for more information about each of these principles.

After a time of transition, especially this year, assessment should identify assets and the next area that students can build upon, rather than highlight deficits. This can be done by gathering authentic evidence that builds on student strengths. Assessment from a recovery learning perspective does not need to be time-consuming or cumbersome. Instead, it should involve short interactions with students that will provide enough evidence to determine where the student can or needs to go next. Assessment strategies should require students to demonstrate their learning using knowledge and skills that are used in real-life settings and should be adapted for remote instruction scenarios. The *Nunavut Core Curriculum Documents* should be used to guide planning for instruction and assessment.

Assessment tools and strategies should be used in a way that recognizes each student's unique talents and skills and do not need to be formalized tests or measures. Educators must engage students in self-assessment and reflection about their learning, differentiate how they collect evidence of each student's learning, and provide

descriptive and meaningful feedback. Students are best positioned to engage in self-reflection about their learning when they understand the learning goals. Co-construction of the criteria or co-constructing an understanding of the criteria together with students, as well as providing samples, examples, or models to illustrate the expectations are strategies educators should consider using.

Triangulation is a process for gathering information (or evidence) about student learning in different ways – using products ('write'), conversation ('say'), and observations ('do'). This can include information and formal observations, individual and/or group conversations, asking questions, independent and group tasks, reflections, presentations, dramatic performance, quizzes, or other methods.

Showing respect for all learners means celebrating the progress and success of each learner. Assessment tools should be designed to collect evidence of what students are able to do, areas of learning that require more attention or development, and ways that educators, parents, or students themselves can support learning. It is important to give students frequent opportunities to demonstrate their learning in the classroom, as well as during times of remote learning, and to keep students involved in setting their learning goals. This will help them feel invested in and responsible for their own learning.

It may be beneficial for schools to meet at the beginning of the year as a whole staff, or in staff divisions (such as K-3, 4-6, 7-9, high school) to discuss assessment and core curricular outcomes, as well as ways to continue assessment practices during remote instruction. The Department of Education has provided school leaders with an orientation package that includes an overview of assessment principles in Nunavut, as well as some ideas for educators to start thinking about strategies they can use to determine where students are in their learning. Consult your superintendent for additional information on assessment for recovery learning and during remote instruction.

Funding is also available through the Professional Development Council for schools that want to establish a professional learning community to further explore ideas around assessment, or for individual educators who want to take credit or non-credit courses or engage in action research.

Many schools have open houses or other opportunities to connect with parents early in the school year. Conversations with parents after extended school closures, summer breaks, or issues related to the pandemic will be crucial to understanding what students have learned while they were not in the classroom. This is a key part of assessment that aligns with the principle that assessment should emphasize the interdependence, growth, and success of the group.

Remote Instruction and Blended Learning

Schools may be required to transition to remote instruction, in accordance with public health restrictions, at the discretion of the CPHO.

Remote instruction is when students and teachers are not in the same place, so instruction is provided and assessed at a distance through telephone calls, emails, online learning platforms such as Edsby, or other methods. Differentiation of instruction and assessment should continue throughout remote instruction. Students will access remote instruction differently based on their age, grade, required accommodations, or other circumstances. Additional information about Edsby can be found in the [Educator Toolbox](#).

If students are out of school full time due to an outbreak management protocol, teachers will offer remote instruction and assessment to support the assignments or practical and land-based learning that students will be completing remotely. This is known as **blended learning**. If students are in class part time, such as in a cohort scenario, they should receive instruction on the days when they are in the classroom and focus on assignments or other learning on the days when they are learning remotely.

If schools move to remote instruction, teachers must continue with assessment and can continue to use triangulation to assess conversations, observations, and products completed by students. Teachers can work with school leaders or superintendents if they require more guidance on assessment during remote instruction.

It will be important to plan for remote instruction and blended learning scenarios at the beginning of the school year so that students and school staff are able to pivot if schools are required to move to an outbreak management protocol. Remember, this could happen quickly, even overnight, so it is vital to have these plans in place as soon as possible.

What follows is guidance, based on lessons learned from the previous school year, on how to plan and implement recovery learning, remote instruction, and blended learning at the beginning of and throughout the school year. This guidance builds on the concept of learning to be together again as we consider new routines, differentiated support, risk mitigation, and the individual and lived experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recovery Learning and Remote Instruction in 2021-22

In-class instruction

All schools will be open for 100% in-class learning for all students at the beginning of the 2021-22 school year, unless otherwise advised by the CPHO based on risk mitigation and outbreak management protocols for each community. Schools should be focused on risk mitigation and recovery learning.

To prepare for this new school year, school leaders should consult the Department of Health website for current information regarding COVID-19.

As well, the Department of Education has created the *2021-22 Health and Safety Guidelines for Nunavut Schools*. These guidelines address cohorts, physical distancing, classroom set-up, land-based instruction, phys-ed classes, gatherings and assemblies, and accommodations for students at risk. For additional information about health and safety that may not be included in the *2021-22 Health and Safety Guidelines for Nunavut Schools*, school leaders may contact EDUOHS@gov.nu.ca or their superintendent.

As they do every year, school leaders should plan to have regularly scheduled meetings with their school team, school literacy team, and divisional teams as needed, with a focus this year on recovery learning and remote instruction.

With the school team, school leaders will facilitate the transition back to in-class learning for all students, with an emphasis on learning to be together again. This will include reassuring children about their safety, establishing and maintaining routines, planning for and implementing recovery learning and remote instruction, and supporting the ongoing development of regulation in children and youth.

As well, school leaders will set up a crisis/incident response team and ensure that all staff are familiar and comfortable with the routines and protocols described in the *Crisis Response Guidelines for Nunavut Schools*, which can be found in the [Educator Toolbox](#).

As classroom teachers do at the beginning of every school year, they should conduct formative assessments using triangulation (observation, conversations, products) to develop instructional plans. Classroom teachers should be reminded to use the *Nunavut Core Curriculum Documents* to guide assessment and plan for instruction. This can include land-based learning, which should be supported by the *Life Skills and Land-based Learning Template* in the [Educator Toolbox](#).

As members of the school team, student support teachers should work closely with classroom teachers and student support assistants to monitor ISSPs and address specific adjustments and supports for students identified as having been impacted more greatly by previous school closures and ongoing risk mitigation in schools.

However, as we learned in 2020-21, schools may be required to respond quickly to COVID-19 outbreak management protocols. It will be crucial to spend time at the beginning of the school year planning for remote instruction and blended learning so it can be implemented seamlessly in an outbreak. Schools developed plans for the 2020-21 that should be adapted or updated for the 2021-22 school year. School leaders should also consult with their superintendent to learn more about best practices and lessons learned from the previous year.

Remote instruction and blended learning

Planning for remote instruction and blended learning must consider:

- Organizing cohorts, including a schedule for outbreak management protocols where students are in school part time and learning remotely part time, recognizing that in-class days should focus on instruction that will support remote learning days.
- Planning classroom set-up based on cohorts and density.
- Physical distancing, masks, and/or other personal protective equipment (PPE) required during the school day, including at breaks, pick-up and drop-off (including busing), recess, phys-ed classes, music classes, assemblies, and land-based instruction.
- Accommodations for individual student needs.
- Developing learning packages based on differentiated instruction and assessment to support students when they are learning remotely.
- Distribution and collection of any learning support materials, including learning packages or other assignments that will be used for assessment.
- A communication plan for schools to stay connected to students and families during school closures and to continue remote instruction.
- Determining what technology devices students have available to them for communication and remote instruction and, if available, developing a plan to distribute devices to students who require them.

Schools should also be prepared for a complete closure of schools, which will mean that school staff will not report to the school unless an arrangement has been made with the principal and superintendent and vetted by the CPHO. Principals may do building checks during these school closures. If there is a complete school closure in a community, schools will implement a remote instruction plan which will include how to maintain regular contact with students while they are learning remotely, and a distribution and collection plan for any learning support materials, including packages, assignments, and/or devices.

Schools can contact their superintendent or EDUOHS@gov.nu.ca for additional support in the case of a school closure related to COVID-19.

Shared Responsibilities

When schools reopen in 2021-22 and throughout the school year, it will be important to remember our shared priorities and responsibilities. All school staff have a responsibility to provide leadership and support in their schools. Together, and in all circumstances, school leaders, teachers, SSAs, learning coaches, and ilinniarvimmi inuusiliriji will:

- Discuss and acknowledge the diverse experiences of all learners and educators in the COVID-19 pandemic, and intentionally address their well-being when school resumes.
- Plan for a period of restoring school, including a reorientation to school and classroom routines, restoring community and relationships, and planning for recovery learning and remote instruction.
- Understand that students will have gaps in their knowledge after a year of disrupted classroom learning and a break from learning over the summer months.
- Demonstrate a positive and accommodating approach to recovery learning that promotes future success.
- Recognize the holistic needs of students, especially those who are identified as most affected by school closures and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Communicate with each other, students, and their families to gain insights about student experiences with remote learning or time outside the classroom setting. This insight will inform planning for recovery learning, assessment, and remote instruction. These plans should be communicated with students and their families.
- Spend time becoming familiar with online tools and platforms such as Edsby to be able to efficiently pivot to remote instruction and provide to support to students.

- Ensure records pertaining to attendance, registration, and Education Program Plans are routinely maintained on Nunavut SIS unless informed otherwise.
- Ensure that education support services, such as school-based occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech language therapy, continue in-person and/or remotely through the school year. School staff can contact EDUSS@gov.nu.ca for more information and support.

The aim of planning upon school opening is to ensure schools can successfully pivot to different risk mitigation or outbreak management protocols, where necessary, while continuing supportive recovery learning and effective remote instruction.

If we continue to work together, support each other, and follow public health measures, we can look forward to building a safe, healthy, and positive learning environment for our students this year and beyond.



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