

FAQ

Answering Your Questions

Frequently-Asked Questions- September 11

As you are aware, Alberta Health Services is currently examining cases of Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (E. coli) among some school children enrolled at Fueling Brains Academy campuses in Calgary, Alberta. While the precise origin of this issue has not yet been determined, a number of parents and families have reported instances of E. coli diagnosis.

We understand that this is a challenging situation for our families and staff, and we want to convey our genuine concern. We are working hard to support you and will keep you informed to the best of our abilities. As we navigate through this together, please refer to the FAQ resource below to stay well-informed.

**This document will be updated continuously as we receive new information. A link to the most recent version of the FAQ will be included in daily communications to families of Fueling Brains Academy.*

Closures and Fees

Will we get credit for days missed due to closure?

Yes, given the extraordinary and unique circumstances, we will be providing credit for the days impacted by the closure. Furthermore, we want to assure you that we will be extending credit for any time a student needs to be absent from our campuses due to health challenges resulting from the E. coli or delays in receiving testing results from AHS. Absences beyond the campus closures will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Please note that our standard policy in regard to closures and credit otherwise remains in effect.

Tuition

As you are aware, September's tuition has been processed. We understand that the closure and steps required to return to the program has meant that your child was out of care for a period of time. We are working on a parent-friendly solution that could involve extending credits, providing refunds, and/or waiving terminations for those impacted families.

When will my campus reopen?

All campuses have been cleared by AHS and the MoH, and are currently open.

What are you doing to reopen safely?

We are working closely with AHS in following the steps required to reopen safely which include testing and cleaning measures. In addition to the steps required by AHS, we are working with a third-party company that specializes in deep cleaning who has performed a “wand sterilization” (UV wands are handheld products intended to give off UV-C radiation to disinfect surfaces) of our campuses. AHS will conduct a health inspection prior to reopening.

Food Service

Upon reopening, what food will be provided?

Immediately after we were contacted by the Ministry of Health, we made the decision to suspend our services with the central kitchen. The central kitchen remains closed and we have terminated our services with them. We are still trying our best to secure an alternate food solution.

Please prepare your child’s lunch in a labeled bag/container. Any food items should be cut into bite-sized pieces. **Please ensure your lunch does not need to be refrigerated and is nut-free. We will not be re-heating any lunches, please ensure your child's lunch does not require re-heating.**

Breakfast and morning and afternoon snacks will now be provided by Fueling Brains campus staff. Our breakfast and snack options are designed to be convenient and do not require any cooking or heating. These include items like cereal, crackers, fruit, and prepackaged options that adhere to childcare licensing guidelines.

If you prefer to send all meals (breakfast, AM snack, lunch and PM snack, you are welcome to do so. Please ensure that you inform the campus director of this, and we will mark your child’s bin and meal placemat to indicate that NO FBA-provided meals are served to your child.

Will I get a credit for having to provide my own lunch?

We will provide a credit for lunches this month to all our families. We will provide the details in a subsequent update.

Testing

Do I need a testing kit?

Testing is only available for Fueling Brains Academy children and staff enrolled at the West 85, Braeside, New Brighton, Centennial and McKnight locations due to limited availability of kits being provided by AHS.

If you are a parent from our Bridgeland location and have a child exhibiting symptoms, please email your campus director.

AHS has requested that if children are not symptomatic that they do not go to the hospital for testing. If your child or any members of your household are symptomatic, please seek immediate medical attention at your closest hospital. Some more information about symptoms is below.

My child was absent or on holidays prior to the campus closures. Do I still have to get my child tested?

Alberta Health Services requires mandatory testing for E. coli for children who attended the following campuses between August 1 and August 31, 2023:

- Braeside
- Centennial
- McKnight
- New Brighton
- West 85th

My child wears diapers. How many tests do they need to return?

If a child in diapers tests positive, they will need two negative tests to return. If they test negative first, they only need the one test.

Do I have to pre-register to come pick up a testing kit at my campus?

Parents do not have to pre-register to pick up testing kits from their campus. Please visit your campus within the designated hours for pickup and a member of our team will assist you as needed.

Our family has been out of town but my child was in attendance during the month of August. How do we go about receiving a kit before returning to school?

Each campus requires that students are tested prior to returning to school. Please remember that your child will not be able to attend without a rescind letter.

Our family is currently out of province. How do we go about receiving a test kit before returning to school?

You should be able to receive a test kit locally (wherever you are) by contacting local health authorities*. Children or staff who are currently out of province will still need a rescind letter to return.

Will there be laboratory requisitions provided for the students of the mandatory stool testing? Do I have to call HealthLink to get a requisition form?

Requisition forms will be provided to you at the campus inside with your testing kit. Please ensure that the form is filled out completely and properly to avoid delays in getting your results. There is a document inside your testing kit that will assist you in completing the information required for your requisition.

How do we get the test results by email before reopening? Will AHS commit to rushing results for FBA students?

AHS has provided assurances that families will receive test results in a timely manner. We have been informed that AHS will be calling all families to provide them with the status of their tests and instructions on how to receive their rescind letter.

Will results be available on a parent's MyAHS website page?

Yes, test results should be available on the MyAHS portal. We understand results can also be obtained once processed through your family doctor or a walk-in physician. AHS requires all families to provide FBA a rescind letter which will be provided directly to families by AHS. They will be calling all families to provide them with the status of their tests and instructions to receive their rescind letter.

If AHS does not process my child's test results in a timely manner and I do not receive them to show proof in order to attend for the reopening date, will I receive a credit for the days missed due to waiting on test results?

AHS has informed us that they are prioritizing processing the test results for all FBA families. The estimated time for turnaround on these tests is 48-72 hours. In the event that they have not provided you the test results before our reopening date, we will indeed credit you the days missed due to waiting on the test results.

Status

When did FBA find out about the outbreak?

Fueling Brains Academy was first informed by AHS of a potential issue on Sunday, September 3. We are also grateful to some of our families who called to alert us around the same time. Once information was verified, we contacted parents/families as quickly as possible. Our communication procedures during the initial response to the outbreak were as directed by healthcare officials. Maintaining strong communication with our parents/families and providing as much information as possible to ensure the health and safety of our community remains our priority.

What steps are you taking to minimize spread in the future at your campus?

Fueling Brains Academy is working directly with AHS to implement all the required steps to ensure our campuses can reopen safely.

Campus Sanitization:

Over the last week, we had a third-party company conduct a deep cleaning "wand sterilization" (UV wands are handheld products intended to give off UV-C radiation to disinfect surfaces) at our affected campuses. AHS will conduct a health inspection prior to reopening.

Campus Cleanliness

We understand the importance of health and hygiene at our campuses. As campuses return from the outbreak, we have implemented more stricter measures for our cleaning providers. If you have any specific concerns, please let your director know so it can be addressed.

Handwashing:

FBA reminds you of our handwashing procedures. Handwashing regularly takes place throughout the day and in particular at the following times:

- Upon entering classrooms
- Before and after meal times
- Before and after diapering or assisting a child in the washroom
- Assisting a child in cleaning their nose or face
- After coming in contact with bodily fluids
- Before and after administration of medication or creams
- After coming in from playing outside
- Before and after sensory experiences (sensory bins, play doh)

All staff will wear gloves when changing/toileting and will wash their hands before and after wearing gloves.

Classroom Materials:

- Classroom materials or items that are mouthed by children will be placed in a bin to be sanitized.
- Tables and chairs will be sanitized throughout the day.
- All high touch surfaces such as door knobs, walls, and doors will be sanitized throughout the day.

Nap Time:

We will continue to follow licensing regulations to space children's cots per licensing and health requirements. Students will be spaced 2 feet apart and where possible, alternating head to toe or toe to toe.

Campus Tours:

FBA has temporarily suspended all campus tours.

The exact source of the outbreak has not been identified, and is currently under investigation by Alberta Health Services. We are working closely with AHS during this investigation.

Information about E. coli

What are the symptoms of E. coli?

Symptoms of E. coli usually appear 3-4 days after exposure and can vary, but often include severe stomach cramps, diarrhea (often bloody), and vomiting. Most people get better within 5-7 days, but some infections are more severe. Very young children and the elderly are more likely to develop severe illness, but even healthy, older children and young adults can become seriously ill. Please seek immediate health attention if you experience any stomach/gastrointestinal issues and request testing.

What protective measures can I take?

Practicing good hand hygiene is one of the best ways to reduce the chance of getting and spreading E. coli infection.

Always wash your hands:

- Before and after preparing or eating food
- After using the bathroom or changing diapers
- After touching or being around animals or places where animal feces may be present.

I have a question that isn't addressed here. Who can I talk to?

For questions about E. coli:

Please check the Government of Canada's Health website at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/e-coli.html> or contact them directly, at: 613-957-2991, or for immediate medical advice, contact Health Link at 8-1-1.

For questions about Fueling Brains Academy:

We have established a monitored email account to capture any inquiries, questions or confirmed cases shared by our Fueling Brains Academy parents/families at health@fuelingbrains.com. A member of our team will reply to you as soon as possible, including via phone.

AHS has set up a dedicated website:

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page13582.aspx>

All our updates can be found on our dedicated site as well:

<https://www.fuelingbrains.ca/statement/>

If your matter is an emergency, please call 9-1-1.

Other

How are the staff and teachers doing?

As you know, we have an incredible team at Fueling Brains. We are proud and inspired of the way our teams have risen to this challenge - with grit, flexibility, resilience and caring hearts. To support them during this period, we are connecting with them daily through various communications to provide them with up-to-date information and to check in. All full- and part-time staff will continue to be paid during campus closures.

Are classrooms still being rotated?

No. Students will be cohorted until licensing allows for us to resume rotations.