



HWCDSB School Reopening 2020-2021

Parent/Guardian Q & A

On July 30, the Ministry of Education announced plans for the reopening of Ontario's schools for the 2020-2021 school year. In preparation for the return to in-class learning, schools in the HWCDSB are taking all steps possible to create a safe learning environment for our students and staff based on Ministry of Education guidance and the advice of Public Health professionals.

Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) regarding the return to school.

Q: Why am I being asked to pre-register my child(ren) this year?

A: The Ministry of Education has indicated that returning to school will be voluntary. Parents/guardians will be required to respond to an HWCDSB survey to indicate if their child(ren) will attend school (elementary – regular return; secondary – adapted model) or learn at home (remote learning). This information will be important as limits on class sizes and the hiring of staff will be directly influenced by parent/guardian responses.

Note: Since staffing requirements need to be in place prior to the school's opening, once a mode of learning has been chosen there will be restrictions on changing between in-school and home learning. Students will only be able to rejoin conventional, in-class learning at three identified points in the year: Thanksgiving, after Christmas or after the March Break

Q: What are my school registration options for 2020-2021?

A: Parents/guardians with children in elementary schools have two options for September 2020:

- Regular in-person learning at school: All students return to school with social distancing and enhanced health and safety protocols;
- At-home learning: Students stay at home every day using a computer/laptop/tablet /smartphone and the internet to access the HWCDSB myClass learning management system.

Q: What will the school day look like for my child(ren)?

A: Elementary Schools (Kindergarten to Grade 8):

Elementary schools will reopen with students receiving regular in-person learning of teaching and instruction with enhanced health and safety protocols. Note: Actual bell times are specific to each school.

All elementary students, including those with Special Education needs, will:

- attend school 5 days per week, with one cohort for the full day;
- experience staggered school entry, recesses, lunches, and bathroom breaks;
- be able to leave their classrooms to receive additional supports; and,
- adhere to enhanced health and safety protocols.

Secondary (Grades 9 to 12):

After further discussion with the Ministry of Education and school principals, the secondary schools will reopen with an adapted model in which students will study one course at a time with enhanced health and safety protocols:

- The school year calendar will contain 187 days;
- Each student can be scheduled for up to 8 courses throughout the year;
- Teaching blocks will consist of 23 days;
- Students will be divided into cohorts of 15 students for each class (e.g., Cohort A/Cohort B) and attend school on alternate days; and,
- Students who stay for study hall will receive teacher support.

Sample Weekly Schedule (*Actual bell times are specific to each school*):

Monday (sample)

	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort C
8:30 – 10:00	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
10:00 - 10:05	Break		
10:05 – 11:35	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
11:35 – 12:15	Lunch		
12:15 – 1:30	Periods 1: Study Hall or At-Home Learning – Asynchronous Instruction Online (Teacher Planning Time)		
1:30 – 2:15	Periods 1: 45 minutes of online synchronous instruction Students in Study Hall or At-Home Learning		

Tuesday (sample)

	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort C
8:30 – 10:00	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
10:00 - 10:05	Break		
10:05 – 11:35	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
11:35 – 12:15	Lunch		
12:15 – 1:30	Periods 1: Study Hall or At-Home Learning – Asynchronous Instruction Online (Teacher Planning Time)		
1:30 – 2:15	Periods 1: 45 minutes of online synchronous instruction Students in Study Hall or At-Home Learning		

Wednesday (sample)

	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort C
8:30 – 10:00	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
10:00 - 10:05	Break		
10:05 – 11:35	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
11:35 – 12:15	Lunch		
12:15 – 1:30	Periods 1: Study Hall or At-Home Learning – Asynchronous Instruction Online (Teacher Planning Time)		
1:30 – 2:15	Periods 1: 45 minutes of online synchronous instruction Students in Study Hall or At-Home Learning		

Thursday (sample)

	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort C
8:30 – 10:00	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
10:00 - 10:05	Break		
10:05 – 11:35	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
11:35 – 12:15	Lunch		
12:15 – 1:30	Periods 1: Study Hall or At-Home Learning – Asynchronous Instruction Online (Teacher Planning Time)		
1:30 – 2:15	Periods 1: 45 minutes of online synchronous instruction Students in Study Hall or At-Home Learning		

Friday (sample) – would alternate: Week 1: Cohort A, Period 1 (F2F); Week 2: Cohort B, Period 1 (F2F), Week 3: Cohort A, Period 1(F2F) etc.

	Cohort A	Cohort B	Cohort C
8:30 – 10:00	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
10:00 - 10:05	Break		
10:05 – 11:35	Period 1: 90 minutes of instruction at School	Asynchronous Instruction at Home	Asynchronous Instruction at Home
11:35 – 12:15	Lunch		
12:15 – 1:30	Periods 1: Study Hall or At-Home Learning – Asynchronous Instruction Online (Teacher Planning Time)		
1:30 – 2:15	Periods 1: 45 minutes of online synchronous instruction Students in Study Hall or At-Home Learning		

School Pre-registration

Q: What will the first day of school look like for my child?

A: Elementary:

Principals will direct their school communities on the process for the first day of school. Information will include:

- the student's teacher and classroom;
- the designated entrance doors to use;
- protocols for drop-off/pick-up;
- physical distancing procedures for entering and exiting the school;
- procedures for parents/guardians (e.g., remaining in their vehicles, not entering the school); and,
- encouragement for students to use active transportation (e.g., walking, cycling) to reduce vehicle congestion at schools.

Secondary:

Students will be able to access their timetable through myPathtoSuccess. The procedure for logging in to myPath is as follows:

- Go to myPath.pathtosuccess.ca or to the app on your cell phone;
- Log in with student email and password. (Note: If students are registering for the first time, information will be available soon on the school website); and,
- The dashboard (or home screen) will appear and the timetable will appear on the left under the student name and information.

Entrance and safety protocols will be communicated to students and parents by the school principal prior to the start of the school year.

Q: How will you keep my child safe?

A: Physical distancing and enhanced health and safety protocols will be implemented, including daily screening, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), hand hygiene, signage and floor decals (e.g., proper hand washing techniques, physical distancing reminders, traffic flow), enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of classrooms and buses, and contact tracing. More detailed information on health and safety protocols will be included in the parent guide.

Q: Will my child be required to wear a mask? Are students required to provide their own?

A: Students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors while at school, including in hallways and during classes. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be strongly encouraged to wear masks in indoor spaces.

Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students. Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply.

Q: Will there be screening at the school before students and teachers enter the building?

A: Parents will need to assess their child(ren) daily and inform their school if they are experiencing any signs of illness. Parents must keep their child(ren) home if sick and report any absences to the school.

Parents will be provided with a checklist to perform daily screening of their children before arriving at school. These checklists are available in many different languages including Arabic, Punjabi, Chinese and Spanish.

All staff will be required to complete a self-assessment on a daily basis. Any staff member failing the self-assessment must stay at home, self-isolate and contact the HWCDSB for further direction.

Q: Will visitors be allowed to enter the school?

A: In this upcoming school year, schools are asked to significantly limit or prohibit visitors, including parents. Parents will not be allowed to enter school, except in case of emergency. Communication between parents and teaching staff or administration will be through phone calls or email.

Q: Will cafeteria services be available? Will lunch/nutrition programs be offered?

A: To the greatest extent possible, students will eat their snacks and lunch in the classroom with their cohort to ensure minimize the risk of contact and COVID-19 transmission. Further, with respect to eating and drinking at the school it is expected that:

- Staff and students will perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating;
- Students will have their own individual meal or snack with no common food items and no sharing of food/snacks;
- Students will be required to bring their own drink bottle that is labeled, kept with them during the day and not shared;
- Use of water fountains is not permitted. Hydration stations will allowed to be used to fill personal water bottles;
- Schools will remove all self-serving food items and microwave use will not be permitted;
- Multi-use utensils will be cleaned after each use;
- Schools will not plan non-instructional activities that involve students in preparing or serving of food. Third party food services, including nutrition programs, will be delivered in a way that any student who wishes to participate can do so in a "Grab and Go format;" and,
- All surfaces, bins and containers for food will be disinfected prior to and after each use.

Additionally, the use of common spaces such as cafeterias, learning commons, and auditoriums will be scheduled by the principal when/if required.

Established Snack or Breakfast Programs will be modified to offer students prepackaged or individualized snacks.

Q: What if my child needs to use the washroom while at school?

A: Students will be allowed to use the washrooms with proper physical distancing measures. Signage will be placed inside the washrooms, reminding students of both physical distancing and hand washing. Washrooms will be cleaned throughout the day and at the end of the school day.

Q: Will after-school sports and activities continue?

A: Schools may offer clubs and organized sports if physical distancing is possible and equipment and spaces are cleaned and disinfected between each use. Further planning will be required with consultation with public health. Additional information regarding the range of co-curricular activities being offered by schools will be provided as soon as possible.

Q: Will my child have access to a locker?

A: Personal belongings brought to the school should be minimized, e.g. for elementary students, a backpack, clothing, sunscreen, water bottle, and food. Personal items brought to school should be labelled and stored separately in cubbies/designated areas.

In secondary, the use of lockers will not be permitted. Students will carry their backpack to their class with only what is required to engage in their learning (e.g. Pencil, notepads, textbook as well as food, water bottle).

Q: How will safety be maintained on the school bus?

A: A transportation survey is being developed for parents whose child(ren) are eligible for transportation services to indicate whether their child(ren) will be taking the bus to school or will be using another means of getting to and from school. The results of the survey will help to inform the transportation plan. Bus schedules will be available in the last week of August.

Students will be required to wear face coverings/masks while riding the bus. School bus drivers will be provided with face coverings/masks and eye protection (face shields). School buses will have increased disinfecting protocols for frequently touched surfaces.

Siblings will be expected to share single seats. Seating plans will be developed and will be shared with families in advance of school start up.

Q: Will my child still go outside for recess?

A: Elementary students will have opportunities to enjoy recess. Recess times will be staggered to support cohorting. Hand hygiene will take place prior to and following outdoor activity times.

Q: If I opt for at-home learning, can my child(ren) return to school for in-class learning?

A: In the event you decide that your child(ren) will not return to in-class learning but will participate in online learning, please know that your child(ren) will be committed to online learning and will only be able to rejoin conventional, in-class learning at three identified points in the year: Thanksgiving, after Christmas or after the March Break. The process to request a return to school will be provided in advance of these dates.