

#SeptemberReady

Return to School Plan



St. Clair Catholic District School Board
Resource Document

ST. CLAIR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Catholic Education + Future Ready

Learning together today, transforming tomorrow

Introduction

Our St. Clair Catholic District School Board Team is ready to welcome our staff and families back to school!

We understand that the return to school in September will be different than any other year. We are living in the midst of a global pandemic. Our first priority is the health and safety of our students and staff. Our plan has been informed and advised by the Ministry of Education, Public Health Ontario and our local Medical Officers of Health.

The St. Clair Catholic *Return to School* plan is a **living** document. That means that some parts of the plan may evolve and change, as we continue to follow direction from the Ontario Ministry of Education, Public Health Ontario and the local Medical Officers of Health. Parents/guardians should visit the Board's [SeptemberReady](#) website for updates regularly.

Our commitment to health and safety however does not mean that all risk can be eliminated. In the midst of this global pandemic, each of us faces risk every time we leave our homes – when we go to the grocery store, or the park, or the beach. But we manage those risks by taking new precautions that we wouldn't have considered just a year ago – we wear masks, we make sure we are physically distanced from others around us, and we wash our hands or use hand sanitizers often. By taking these actions, we help to keep ourselves and those around us safer.

For further information and guidance, please refer to an important letter to parents/guardians from the Medical Officers of Health for Chatham-Kent and Lambton [here](#).

Our Catholic schools are places of learning and faith formation where students grow intellectually, spiritually and socially through their connections with our school communities. These relationships are essential to the ongoing development and well-being of our students. Pope Francis said, “We can only build the future by standing together, including everyone.” These words frame our work at SCCDSB, as we are called to work together to support our return to school.

If you have any questions please reach out to us [here](#).

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Ministry of Education Direction on Learning Models

Ontario school boards were directed by the Ministry to prepare three different models for returning to school this September:

1. **Conventional:** regular school day routine, face to face, at school, 300 minutes per day, with enhanced health and safety protocols
2. **Adaptive:** Modified school day routine based on smaller class sizes, cohorting and alternate day or week delivery
3. **Remote Learning:** Schools closed, students learning at home with opportunities for students to engage with teachers in both synchronous (e.g. live interactions with teacher online) and asynchronous (e.g. recorded lessons, shared activities/tasks) using a digital learning platform.

In addition, on July 30, the Ministry directed Boards to provide a Voluntary Learn at Home model for families who choose to have their children remain at home to learn.

4. **Voluntary Learn at Home:** Remote learning options available for all students on a full time/remote learning basis

On July 30 the Ministry announced that non-designated school boards will reopen in a Conventional In-Person Learning Model. At SCCDSB our elementary students will return to school full time, face to face in September, following a Staggered Reopening Schedule. More information regarding elementary and secondary student start dates will be shared next week.

Secondary school students will follow a Quadmester alternating two-week schedule, which is explained later in this document.

We are prepared to respond and move to a different learning model as directed by the Ministry based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health or the local Medical Officers of Health.

The plans in this document have been created collaboratively with our regional public health units.

Ready to Learn

Elementary Schools: Face to Face Learning Conventional Model

The Ministry has directed **all** elementary schools in Ontario to reopen in the conventional, in-person delivery of teaching model, with enhanced health and safety protocols. **All schools are open on September 8, 2020. Please note we will be following a [staggered opening approach](#), explained later in this document.**

What will elementary school scheduling look like?

- Elementary students will be grouped together in a cohort for the full day in the same classroom
- School schedules may be different to support cohorting
- 300 minutes of face to face instructional time with students
- Timetables will limit the number of specialty teachers working within a cohort/class
- Schools will begin and end at regular times

It is our expectation all students will be using a digital learning platform in this model (e.g. Edsby, Google Classroom, D2L) and will learn how to use these platforms effectively, which will support a change in models if this becomes necessary.

Secondary Schools: Face to Face Secondary Conventional Model

Quadmester

St. Clair Catholic has been directed by the Ministry of Education to reopen in a Conventional Learning model, which means all students attend school in-person for a full day (300 instructional minutes) Monday to Friday. Students will take two courses at a time for a 10 week period, in an alternating week schedule. Students will take the first subject for a full day, each day, for one week. Students will take the second subject for a full day, each day, the following week. Students will alternate courses week by week for the remainder of the quadmester.

Due to the large enrolments at our two secondary schools, and our commitment to the health and safety of students and staff, the Quadmester model was developed to reduce student contact by limiting students to a single cohort per week. The timetable was designed to limit direct and indirect student contacts to approximately 100 students per week. This plan was approved by the Ministry of Education as it achieves the instructional and contact requirements, as outlined in Ministry documents and advised by Public Health Ontario.

Secondary Quadmester Model

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Week 1 Period A Class • All Day • All Week	A	A	A	A	A
Week 2 Period B Class • All Day • All Week	B	B	B	B	B

- Timetables and scheduling information will be communicated to parents/guardians and students by the school.
- Quadmester 1 runs from **September 8 - November 11, 2020**
- School will begin and end at regular times

Voluntary Learn at Home

Families also have the option to choose the Voluntary Learn at Home Model. Families will indicate this choice by participating in the board survey by August 28. If families require additional technology support please contact the school.

Elementary Voluntary Learn at Home

- Students will participate in full days of learning, with a combination of synchronous (live teacher led learning) and asynchronous (student learning using digital platform) activities, as prescribed by the Ministry
- Students will be using a digital learning platform (e.g., Edsby, Google Classroom, D2L) and will learn how to use these platforms effectively
- **Synchronous learning** will include direct instruction, whole group and small group learning opportunities
- **Asynchronous learning** will include a variety of learning opportunities posted to a digital platform (e.g. videos, recorded lessons, learning tasks, independent practice)
- Classes will be taught by qualified teachers but may not be from the child's home school and will include students from across the system in grade groupings
- Attendance will be monitored; students expected to participate fully every day
- For students in French Immersion we will make every effort to provide instruction in French; students will be able to return to French Immersion program regardless of availability through distance learning
- Ontario curriculum will be taught, assessed and evaluated
- Student learning daily minimum learning time by grade level:
 - Kindergarten:**
 - 180 minutes of live (or synchronous) learning each day.
 - 120 minutes of on-demand (or asynchronous) learning each day.
 - Gr 1 - 8:**
 - 225 minutes of live (or synchronous) learning each day.
 - 75 minutes of on-demand (or asynchronous) learning each day.

Secondary Voluntary Learn at Home

- Enhanced distance/remote learning with access to learning materials posted online to support both synchronous and asynchronous learning
- Online courses will be available to students offered by SCCDSB teachers
- Students should expect to have different teachers deliver the online course rather than their scheduled teacher at the student's home school
- Students may also have access to e-learning courses offered via E-Learning Consortia
- Fully independent learning models are also available through the TVO Independent Learning Centre (ILC)
- All reasonable requests by students for independent study will be considered and students should be able to access guidance counsellors to confirm that credits support their academic pathway.

Requests to Change Learning Models

Families are required to decide upon the preferred model of instruction for their child. Surveys have been sent to all parents/guardians and students aged 18 and older. Pre Registration prior to the **August 28th** deadline allows the Board to organize classrooms and determine timetables, staffing and other arrangements necessary for the return to school on September 8th.

Once school begins, if families wish to CHANGE from Voluntary Learn at Home to Face to Face Learning at school model (or vice versa) they will be permitted to do so at set points during the school year with advanced notification:

Elementary:

Requests submitted to school principal by **October 22, 2020 or January 12, 2021 or March 30, 2021**

Student return to school **November 12, 2020 or February 3, 2021 or April 20, 2021**

Secondary:

Requests submitted to school principal by **January 12, 2021** (the student returning to school on **February 3, 2021**)

Note these timelines were determined to align with the Ontario Secondary School Reporting Periods.

If a family/student requests a change of learning models at a time that is different from those stated above, the change will be reviewed on a case by case basis. If the request is able to be accommodated, transition time will be required for planning purposes.

New Students Registration

We request families register their child as soon as possible to ensure appropriate placement and planning. Register at www.st-clair.net and select the quick link “Register for School”. The cutoff date for registration is August 28. Late registrations may be impacted in choice of school/class/course/program. If families know they will be changing addresses prior to October 1, 2020, notify the Board prior to August 28 to minimize any potential waiting period for student admission or transfer.

Attendance

Attendance is taken for all students attending school and documentation will identify student locations throughout the day. This will assist with contact tracing should a positive case of COVID-19 be determined. Daily attendance will be taken for students learning at home and will be monitored, as directed by the Ministry.

Staggered Entry Return to School Plan

With the health and safety of students and staff as its top priority, the St. Clair Catholic District School Board has released its plan for the safe reopening of schools to stagger the entry of students for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

The Ministry of Education has permitted school boards to allow for a staggered start to the school year. Staggered start means that students will begin a gradual return on different dates, which will allow more time to learn new school routines in smaller group settings, including health and safety procedures and risk mitigation strategies.

The staggered entry of students in elementary and secondary schools will provide staff with additional time to become more familiar with school health and safety routines and complete training to support a safe and healthy return to school. The staggered entry will also allow St. Clair Catholic to hire additional staff to lower class sizes in schools and support Learn at Home instruction.

Additional time is also required to reorganize staff and student schedules to support both in-class and Learn at Home instruction.

At the elementary level (Senior Kindergarten to Grade 8) the return to school will be phased in using a staggered approach beginning on Thursday, September 10. Junior Kindergarten students will return to school using a staggered approach beginning on Tuesday, September 15. All elementary school families will receive a communication from the school to indicate which dates the students will attend. Class lists are still being finalized. Parents/guardians are asked not to call the school. Information will be communicated as soon as possible.

At the secondary level, Grade 9 students will return to school on Monday, September 14. Students in Grades 10-12 will begin on Tuesday, September 15.

The first day of school for all students participating in Learn at Home instruction is Monday, September 14.

The chart below summarizes the staggered entry safe return to school plans:

Date	Elementary Schools	Secondary Schools
Tuesday, September 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff preparing for safe arrival of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff preparing for safe arrival of students.
Wednesday, September 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff preparing for safe arrival of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff preparing for safe arrival of students.
Thursday, September 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome back to half of the student population from SK to Grade 8. • Schools will communicate to parents/guardians which students will attend school today. • All others remain at home. • JK students remain at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff preparing for safe arrival of students.
Friday, September 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome back to the second half of the student population from SK to Grade 8. • Schools will communicate to parents/guardians which students attend school today. • Students who attended yesterday remain at home. • JK students remain at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff preparing for safe arrival of students.
Monday, September 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full attendance for students in SK to Grade 8. • JK students remain at home today. • Virtual Learn from Home begins today. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grade 9 students only attend today. • Grade 10 to 12 students remain at home. • Virtual Learn from Home begins today.
Tuesday, September 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full attendance for students in SK to Grade 8. • Half of the JK students attend today. • Schools will communicate with parents/guardians which JK students attend. • Other half of JK students remain at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full attendance Grades 9 to 12
Wednesday, September 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full attendance for students in SK to Grade 8. • Second half of the JK students attend today. • Schools will communicate with parents/guardians which JK students attend. • JK students who attended yesterday remain at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full attendance Grades 9 to 12
Thursday, September 17 and go forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full attendance JK-8 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full attendance Grades 9 to 12

School Arrival/Dismissal

First Day Arrival:

Each elementary class will have a designated area to line up following physical distancing expectations which will be shared with families prior to the first day of school.

Secondary students use physical distancing during open entry / access to the school utilizing multiple entrances. Protocols will be in place to support physical distancing at arrival/dismissal times/bus loading and exiting.

Upon **entering the classroom daily**, students must wash hands at the classroom sink (if available) or use hand sanitizer.

Drop Off protocols include parents/students opening their own car doors. Physical distancing must be maintained during arrival and dismissal. Additional information may be communicated with site specific directions by the school principal. We appreciate parent support and adherence to our new routines and processes. Parents may not gather on school property.

Access to School Sites

Our Health and Safety protocols, in addition to recommendations from the Ministry, limit parents/guardians and visitors to our schools at the present time. Parents/guardians who require essential access can make arrangements in advance with school administration. Signage indicates limited access to our buildings and provides contact information to arrange approved essential access. Unscheduled visitors/families will not be permitted to enter the building. Any approved entry will require self-screening, masks and sign in at the office.

Personal Belongings

Personal belongings brought to school by students should be minimized. All personal belongings must be clearly labelled. Students are asked to bring their own labelled water bottle to school **each day** as all drinking fountains with mouth pieces will be shut off. There are water filling stations at every school and appropriate protocols will be shared with students. Secondary students will not have access to lockers at the present time. Students can bring masks to school each day, along with additional masks in case required throughout the day.

Sharing Resources/Materials

Staff will limit the sharing of supplies, equipment and learning materials that cannot be easily cleaned. Adequate supplies for instruction will be provided to each student.

Where students may need to share indoor equipment it will be cleaned or disinfected appropriately. Parents can help our schools by reminding their children the sharing of personal belongings and materials is not recommended.

Families often wish to purchase individual student learning materials as they get ready for school. This is not required. If parents wish to purchase learning items, the following could be used at school: an individual labelled water bottle, pencils, erasers, pens for older students, scissors, glue sticks, pencil crayons/crayons, labelled pencil case.

Technology

Technology will continue to be used in our face to face classrooms. All classrooms will be working with a digital learning platform (e.g. Google Classroom, D2L, Edsby). Students are encouraged to bring devices from home to use at school; if your family has been allocated a school Chromebook, consider sending this with your child each day. Please ensure these devices are labelled. Schools also have devices in classrooms for student use. Appropriate protocols will support cleaning of these shared devices.

Student Nutrition Programs

Student nutrition programs will continue where prepackaged items are able to be provided to students. (e.g., milk) Hot Lunch Programs will not be offered at this time.

Field Trips

Field trips will not be offered at this time.

Intramural and Extracurricular Sports

At this time, all extracurricular activities are on pause; this will be reviewed as we move forward.

School Cash Online

To reduce the handling of cash families are encouraged to use [School Cash Online](#).

Washrooms

Classrooms will have a designated washroom and will document washroom use through a sign out log. Physical distancing protocols will be supported through the use of every other stall/sink and signage. All school washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the school day and after school hours. Good hand hygiene will be supported through signage. Students must wash hands upon entry and exit from washrooms.

Outdoor Space

Staff will be encouraged to maximize outdoor space for learning opportunities for students. Physical distancing practices will be in place during such activities.

Recess/Lunch

Students will be grouped together in cohorts for outdoor recesses to limit exposure to other students. Recesses/Lunch may be staggered based on physical spaces at schools and supervisor availability. Schedules and routines will be established to allow for physical distancing while providing students opportunities for outside time and physical activity. Classrooms will be provided their own bins of recess equipment. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after each recess/outdoor time.

To minimize the mixing of classroom cohorts and support student health and safety, **elementary and secondary** students will be required to **remain at school for lunch and will eat in assigned classrooms/desks.**

Students who leave the school building unsupervised by a parent/guardian will not be permitted to return until they have completed the self-screen process the next day.

Secondary cafeterias will not be open at this time, however arrangements may be made later in the school year. Microwaves will not be available for student use.

Playground Structures

At this time, playground equipment will not be open. However, schools are working to develop schedules to support access to playground structures within the student cohort.

Movement in Schools

Consideration will be given to hallway access for transitions at different times to minimize hallway traffic throughout the day and support physical distancing.

Common Spaces

Common spaces will be closed at this point in the reopening. Large gatherings/assemblies will not take place in person. Virtual options will be explored.

Child Care Centres/Before and After School Programs

All of our child care centres and before/after school programs are operated by third party operators. Please check with your child care provider for more information about their reopening details. Schools will be working in partnership with child care providers to support health and safety protocols, following Ministry guidelines. More information can be found at the following link: [here](#).

Community Use

Indoor permits through Community Use of Schools will be on hold until further notice.

Student Transportation

SCCDSB works with Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS) to provide student transportation. CLASS is planning service for all eligible students. Go [here](#) to confirm your eligibility for transportation. Safety continues to be a priority on our buses:

- Students will be required to wear masks grades 4-12
- Younger students are encouraged to wear masks on busses
- Students will be assigned a bus seat

The First Time Rider Program is available for parents/guardians to view anytime, exclusively online [here](#).

CLASS will provide additional information pertaining to riding the school bus at <https://cklass.ca/covid19/>. Information will be updated throughout the month of August as details are finalized. Topics will include: cohorting and physical distancing; bus cleaning; and hygiene and masks on the bus; among others.

Programming Considerations

FSL, Physical Education, Music, Visual Arts

Elementary specialist subject teachers offer expertise to enhance student learning in French, Music, Physical Education and French Immersion science. Working with Public Health, specialist teachers are able to transition into classrooms to provide specialized programming. We will continue to refer to public health recommendations for safer instruction in these areas and also refer to the advisement of organizations such as the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) and the Ontario Music Educators Association (OMEA). The health and safety of our staff and students is our top priority as we return to school, and this will require some changes:

- Reduction of the number of different teachers working within a classroom cohort
- Reduction of the number of schools a specialist teacher shares
- Teachers will report to the classroom cohort; students will not move to a shared classroom (e.g., music room, French Immersion English classroom)
- Physical education will be taught outside as much as possible
- Gymnasiums can be used with appropriate physical distancing in place
- Individual classroom cohorts will use assigned equipment as much as possible; any shared physical education equipment will be disinfected regularly
- Proper hand hygiene will be practised before and after physical activity
- Elementary students will not use musical instruments or sing at the present time; focus will be on other areas of the musical curriculum (e.g. Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing/Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts)

- Secondary students will not share musical instruments and wind instruments will not be used at the present time. Low risk musical instruments will be used instead. There will be no secondary vocal classes at the present time.
- Students will use individual materials as much as possible in visual arts and more individual tasks will be emphasized rather than collaborative projects

Co-operative Education

- Co-op placements will be offered virtually where feasible
- In person placements can be arranged, following direction from Public Health and the school Board

Technological Education

- A variety of delivery options will be considered to meet the curriculum expectations and will vary depending on the course, with health and safety driving decisions aligned with Public Health and the Ontario Council for Technology Education

Dual Credit Courses and Specialist High Skills Major:

Lambton College and St. Clair College have determined they will be offering virtual dual credit learning opportunities for our senior students.

Certifications for Specialist High Skills Major can proceed but some certifications may be held virtually.

School Within A College (SWAC)

The SWAC classes typically hosted at Lambton College (Sarnia) and St. Clair College (Chatham) are not permitted in September 2020. This program will be run both virtually and face to face (location TBD).

Secondary School Graduation Requirements

Graduating students must meet the 40 hour community involvement requirement to earn their OSSD. Students may do so using virtual and face to face volunteer opportunities.

Students who expect to graduate prior to February 2021 and who have not yet met the literacy requirement, will be enrolled in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course during the first semester.

Emergency Procedures

Practice drills will continue in our schools, mindful of physical distancing.

Supporting Students with Special Needs

Supporting students with special needs continues to be a priority, and these students will be supported in all learning models, through a multidisciplinary team approach, collaborating with the classroom/remote learning teachers to ensure our students receive the support necessary for success in any learning model. Plans are developed to support these students as they transition back to school. Students' Individual Education Plans will continue to guide the implementation of required accommodations and/or modifications, with parent/guardian consultation.

- Individual Education Plan (IEP): IEPs are the foundational documents for communication of program goals, expectations of focus, strategies to support learning, assessment and transition planning. Schools will follow the requirements to provide students with their IEPs in collaboration with the IEP team and parents/guardians. Changes in the school environments and/or remote learning needs will be considered when creating and updating the IEPs
- Teachers are essential in the planning and programming for students with special education needs
- All students with special education needs who will engage in remote learning will have live contact with a teacher and expectations for learning based on curricular expectations and IEP
- Secondary school students in congregated programs will attend daily even if in an adaptive model and programming will be supported
- School Based Team, Student Success and IPRC Meetings will continue either face to face and/or remotely using a secure platform. Professional Support Services and other members of the team will be included as usual (e.g., Social Worker, Consultants etc.) to be in attendance
- Itinerant Staff: Itinerant staff (e.g., Speech Language Pathologists, Board Certified Behaviour Analysts, Teacher for Deaf & Hard of Hearing) will continue to support both remotely and in person following physical distancing guidelines and a Tiered Approach based on a student's IEP
- Special Equipment Amount (SEA): Students will continue to access SEA equipment/assistive technology and staff will continue to be supported with SEA equipment training enhancing student access to learning

Supporting Student Health and Well-being

We know that COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our students, families and staff. Building a caring school community is a priority as we return to school. We are working to establish a sense of psychological safety, belonging, and connection in our classrooms and across our schools, with a trauma-sensitive approach. We will continue to provide service to our families through in-person, phone or virtual connections through our *Student Support and Well-Being Team* consisting of Child and Youth Workers and Social Workers. School staff will also be supported with additional information through School Mental Health Ontario. For additional resources to support your child please visit the Board website at [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#).

Enhanced Health and Safety Measures

Safety Measures

Our schools will endeavour to provide a safer start to the school year and work to reduce the risk of the spread of COVID-19, using a multi-layered approach with various safety measures to mitigate risks: Enhanced Cleaning, Physical Distancing, Hand Hygiene, Respiratory Etiquette, Masks/Personal Protective Equipment, Self-Screening, and monitoring symptoms, managing and communicating confirmed cases and outbreaks. We will continue to respond to changes as necessary based on directions from the Ministry and the Medical Officers of Health. Time will be spent in class during the first days of school reviewing the proper use of masks, good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. All SCCDSB staff will participate in health and safety training prior to the start of school. Signage in and outside the school will support these health and safety measures.

The measures we are putting in place to manage risk in our schools have been developed with the consultation, guidance and support of the Medical Officers of Health for Chatham-Kent and Lambton.

Ventilation in Schools: NEW

St. Clair Catholic has received \$227,000 funding from the Ontario government to improve air quality and ventilation in schools. These funds will be expended in the following ways:

1. Upgrades to current air filters – The Board has retained Chorley & Bisset, a third party consultant, which has recommended upgrades to our current filters. The filters will be monitored monthly and replaced as necessary, or every three months at a minimum.
2. Purchase portable air conditioning and HEPA air filtration units – There are currently 49 classrooms in schools which are not air conditioned. To improve occupant comfort and assist with lowering humidity, the Board will install portable air conditioning with HEPA air purifiers. This includes classrooms at St. Elizabeth, Wallaceburg; St. Ursula, Chatham; Monsignor Uyen, Chatham; and Ursuline College, Chatham. The upgrades will also be extended to teacher workrooms and administration offices that are currently not air conditioned. It is expected the air conditioning units will be installed by the end of September.
3. Chorley & Bisset will also conduct site assessments at all locations. The Board will ensure all HVAC equipment is working efficiently to optimize air circulation and meet system targets. Additional servicing and cleaning of rooftop units, unit ventilators and terminal devices will also be undertaken.

All mechanical systems at St. Clair Catholic have been designed to meet Ontario Building Code requirements and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standards, applicable at the time of their construction. Throughout the duration of the closure, the Board continued to perform maintenance and regularly change filters in all Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems. Mechanical HVAC systems have been checked during the summer months to ensure they are operating as designed.

Enhanced Cleaning

Many enhanced cleaning protocols in our schools will be added to the regular cleaning routines following guidance from Public Health and current research. Many controls have been put in place to help make schools safer for everyone (e.g., additional cleaning for high touch points/washrooms, enhanced cleaning protocols each night, additional custodial staffing, ongoing informal cleaning in classroom spaces, doors remaining open to reduce contacts).

Physical Distancing

Our staff will help students understand physical distancing as a part of school. Signage inside and outside the school and floor markings throughout the school will be visual reminders to support these new school routines. In addition, where possible, other physical distancing measures will be used including:

- Removing non-essential furniture/carpets
- Incorporating more individual student activities
- Limiting sharing of resources
- Maximizing physical distancing in classroom/space arrangements
- Moving activities outside when possible
- Creating routes for movement within the school
- Staggering periods of transitions/movement of students throughout the day
- Organizing appropriate drop off/pick up routine

Every school will undergo a review by Corporate Service departments and the School Principal to make every effort to maximize physical distancing at each site.

Hand Hygiene

Proper hand hygiene is one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. Staff and students will wash/sanitize their hands regularly. Students will be trained on appropriate hand washing including the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and soap/water. Scheduled breaks will allow students to wash their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Hand sanitizer will be provided at every school and placed in every classroom. Students will wash their hands upon arrival at school and before/after recess and lunch breaks. Signage throughout the school will also support good hand hygiene.

Respiratory Etiquette

Staff and students will be encouraged to practice proper respiratory etiquette (e.g., sneezing/coughing into elbow, avoid touching face, eyes, nose, mouth).

Masks: **NEW**

The Ministry, in consultation with Public Health, has directed the use of non-medical or cloth masks for all students grades 4 to 12, when indoors and on school buses. Parents are encouraged to send students to school with masks each day. In addition, there will be masks at school. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are **strongly encouraged** to also wear masks. Wearing masks at these ages helps to build important skills in the safe use of masks and will increase the comfort level for our youngest students both at school and in the community. For more information, please read [an important resource about masks in our schools](#). Please note:

- Masks must provide a tight seal at the chin and nose and cover the mouth (e.g. a gaiter is appropriate; a bandana is not acceptable)
- Students should be sent to school with at least one additional mask in case their masks become soiled, damaged or lost
- Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply. For some students with special education needs, or significant medical conditions, families should work with the school to determine if your child may be exempt from wearing a mask
- Parents are encouraged to have their children practice how to wear a mask prior to starting school

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

All school board staff are required to wear masks and other personal protective equipment when appropriate. Medical grade masks and eye protection (face shields) will be provided for all teachers and other staff based on roles and level of contact with students. Parents/guardians can help their children understand that the staff will be wearing PPE to help keep everyone safer.

Screening

Daily self-assessments are required for all students and staff before coming to school or work. The link to the Ontario Self Assessment document is [here](#).

For more information about COVID-19 symptoms, please refer to the Government of Ontario reference document found [here](#).

Monitoring Symptoms, Confirmed Cases and Outbreaks

Please note medical information about students continues to be private information and will only be shared as required by documentation protocols.

Any student who experiences symptoms of illness while at school will be immediately placed in a separate designated location. Isolated students will be supervised with appropriate safety measures in place (e.g., physical distancing, personal protective equipment for staff). Parents/guardians will be notified and told to pick up their child from school as soon as possible following appropriate pick-up procedures as these students will not be able to take the bus home. Parents/guardians will be directed to consult their health care provider, including getting tested at a COVID-19 testing centre and will immediately inform the school if their child tested positive for COVID-19 and will not be attending school.

If a staff member develops symptoms of illness while at school, they will be directed to return home and seek medical attention. If unable to leave immediately, the staff member will be isolated until able to do so.

Timelines for return to school or work will be under the direction and guidance of Public Health.

Schools will report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school to the local Public Health Unit.

Schools will support successful case and contact management by maintaining records which can be provided to the Public Health authority for contact tracing purposes (e.g., class lists, bus cohort lists).

We will continue to work with our Public Health partners to review and revise procedures and protocols based on data and evidence to monitor and respond to reports of COVID-19 symptoms.

Our Commitment to Health, Safety and Well-being

We are confident in our *Return to School* plan. It is the work of many, many professionals with expertise in emergency management, school programming and school administration. When we began our work back in June, we committed to you that we would put the health, safety and wellness of our students and staff first. We believe our *Return to School* plan meets that commitment.

Now, we must all work together to put our plan into action. But working together is what we have always done in our Catholic schools. With faith in ourselves and each other, and by placing our trust in God, together we can make 2020-2021 the best year that it can be.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
– Jeremiah 29:11

We look forward to seeing our students and staff back at school in September!

August 21, 2020