

Back to School Plan

A Resource for Parents



Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>1- Communicate with Stakeholders</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>2- Prepare the School Site</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Background information</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>School signage and markings</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and non-medical masks</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Hand cleaning</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Plexiglass separation</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Student privacy dividers</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Ventilation</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Thermal thermometer</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Work/prep rooms</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Outdoor space for recess</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Isolation room/area</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Playgrounds and play structures</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Community Use of Schools</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>3- Prepare the Staff</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Team approach</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Illness</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Screening procedures</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Staff health and safety guidelines</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Staff hygiene and routines</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Hygiene instruction</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Sharing of resources</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Attendance</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Doors</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Outdoor and non-classroom space</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Technology</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Experiential courses</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Social-Emotional Learning</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Equity considerations</u>	<u>14</u>

<u>Racism and discrimination</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Privacy</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>School and Board level support</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Outbreaks and return to distance learning</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Staff gatherings</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Staff accommodations</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Mentally Healthy Return to School Toolkit (links to be added by mid to late August)</u>	<u>16</u>
4- Prepare for Students	17
<u>Initial return</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Communication</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Letter to parents</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Student reminders</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Student illness and management of students with possible COVID-19</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Students with health conditions</u>	<u>18</u>
<u>Curriculum instruction</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Water bottles</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Lockers and cubbies</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Student transitions</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Students with special needs and/or self-regulation needs</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Developmental Education (DE) classrooms and students with significant health needs</u>	<u>19</u>
<u>Specialized Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>System classes</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Gifted program</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>International students</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Sharing of resources</u>	<u>20</u>
5- School Operations	21
<u>Many alternate models considered</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Additional support for high school students with special needs</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Cohorts</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Full attendance five days per week (Kindergarten to grade 8)</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>Sample elementary homeroom</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>K-8 full-time distance learning model</u>	<u>22</u>
<u>Adapted model for high school (grade 9 to 12)</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Example of adapted model for high school (grade 9 to 12)</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>A quadmester model for 9-12 students</u>	<u>24</u>
<u>Why not use a traditional Semester approach?</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Avoiding large gatherings in high school</u>	<u>25</u>
<u>Other adapted models for high school that were not selected</u>	<u>25</u>

<u>Sample high school (9-12) daily timetables for September to January</u>	<u>26</u>
<u>High school distance learning through our Virtual Academy</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Opting in or out of the Virtual Academy</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Traditional high school vs adapted quadmester vs Virtual Academy?</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>High school teacher support in the Virtual Academy</u>	<u>28</u>
<u>Virtual Academy high school course selection</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Form for parents choosing distance learning</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Confirmed cases of COVID-19</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Physical distancing breaches</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>School bus options and public transportation</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Entry requirements</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Visitors, volunteers and parent access</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Attendance during the initial phase of return to school</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Dismissal requirements</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Washrooms</u>	<u>30</u>
<u>Lunch and cafeterias</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Large group gatherings and assemblies</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>School hallways and stairways</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Classroom setup</u>	<u>31</u>
<u>Kindergarten classrooms</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>Classroom carpets</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>Class rotation</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>Technology</u>	<u>32</u>
<u>School supplies and equipment</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Fire drills</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Lockdown drills</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Sharing of learning materials with each cohort</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Curriculum and assessment</u>	<u>33</u>
<u>Submitting assignments</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Opportunity for impactful reform</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Distance learning and global competencies</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Physical Education, Science, The Arts, and Technology-based courses</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Music</u>	<u>34</u>
<u>Learning commons (library)</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Sports – intramurals and interscholastic games</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Fitness Rooms and Equipment</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Field trips</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Contactless payments</u>	<u>35</u>
<u>Breakfast programs</u>	<u>35</u>

<u>After school activities</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>What systems are being used for instruction when the student is not at school and is not able to take in-person instruction since only half the class can be at school each day?</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>How will my child with an individualized education plan (IEP) be supported when they are not taking part in face to face instruction?</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>How will the Board meet the teacher collective agreement since teachers are entitled to preparation and planning time and can't be expected to be face to face and supporting students online for 5 hours per day in a high school environment?</u>	<u>36</u>
<u>6- Hygiene and Cleaning</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Hand washing</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Touchpoint cleaning</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Special attention</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Cleaning products</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Student desks, chairs, and tables</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>Atomizer machine</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>Water fountains</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>Garbage and recycling</u>	<u>38</u>
<u>Resources referenced</u>	<u>39</u>

Executive Summary

We want our schools to reopen to serve our students and our communities. While we must address academics in the reality of the current environment, we also want to ensure we support our students' and staff's mental health and well-being. Schools serve an essential role in allowing students to connect with peers and educators. We know that relationships with other students and with staff are important for each student to meet with success. Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health and the experts at CHEO and at Sick Kids Hospital have pointed out that we need to balance the possible risk of exposure to COVID-19 with the effects of continued isolation and the lack of social interaction. The provincial Medical Officer of Health will determine if it is safe to return to schools with restrictions put in place.

Parents need to have some predictability and routine in their family life to arrange childcare, home life, and work commitments while knowing that their child is receiving academic instruction in a safe environment. Given the pandemic situation, flexibility, patience, and understanding will be needed as we work out solutions to the various challenges with a return to school. Our preference is for students to attend school five days a week in the fall.

This document provides a framework for how the Ottawa Catholic School Board plans to reopen schools to students and staff. The document outlines six components that we are addressing to reopen schools. These components include preparing the school sites, preparing the staff, preparing for individual student needs, creating a physical distance plan, preparing for access and cleaning needs, and communication platforms.

The Guiding Principles for our Return to School include:

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- 1 Keep students and staff safe and healthy.
 - 2 Provide continuity of learning: in-person, distance learning, or hybrid combination.
 - 3 Be flexible to address access & equity needs of each student.

The operations outlined in this document are based on the most recent advice from Public Health officials. Our plans for a Return to School are flexible, recognizing that given the unprecedented times, we do not have a clear path to follow. Decisions will require us to be innovative, while at the same time knowing that this is most likely a slow return to what used to be considered as normal, not a full reset back to where we were before the last day of in-person classes on March 13. The recommendations in this plan may change over time, based on the community feedback that we receive, the guidelines that may change from the Ministry of Education, and based on current and updated information from Ottawa Public Health on COVID-19 in our community.

It is important that we balance the risk of COVID-19 with the harms of school closure on students' overall health. On July 29, the Ministry of Education announced that elementary students would be returning to school five days a week. The Ministry of Education also announced that 24 school boards, including the Ottawa area school boards, would have high school students return using an adapted model of classes of approximately 15 students attending school in-person part-time, along with part-time distance e-learning as components of the adapted model. The [Ministry of Education Return to School guidelines can be found here.](#)

The information contained in this plan is subject to change at any time based on the guidance provided by the Ministry of Education and/or from the guidance provided by local or provincial Public Health department staff. We accept that we don't have all of the answers and that disruption is a reality as we try to support our students' needs during this pandemic.

1- Communicate with Stakeholders

School Principals and the Board's Communications Department will communicate regularly with students and their parents or guardians as we return to school in the fall.

Our many education partners have been part of the process of creating viable operational solutions. Flexibility and innovation are required to come up with unique solutions as we work together through the pandemic.

Parents considering registering their child can be reassured that we will be flexible in terms of options for the fall, including in-person, distance learning, and hybrid models of instruction.

Provincial discussions between the Ministry of Education and education unions continue to take place throughout August, and their decisions may result in further changes to this plan. We will not return to the status quo system, so we will need to work together to find solutions that will serve our students while addressing the existing collective agreements that were not created for pandemic conditions.

Our parent community will have many unique family situations and work commitments that they need to resolve. This plan will not be able to meet every individual situation. We will find creative solutions designed to help as many families as possible so that they can manage their competing demands of work, school and family needs. We recognize that returning to school five days a week for all students will address the greatest number of family needs in our community.

We also know that some of our students with special needs will continue to face challenges and obstacles to learning during a pandemic, given the realities of physical distance requirements. We will work with each family to try and find a solution that meets their child's needs while keeping them, and others at the school, safe. Our staff and students' health and safety must be at the centre from which all decisions emanate. At high school, we have been directed to limit attendance to half of the school at a time. Principals will try and ensure that family members are scheduled to attend school on the same days in an adapted learning model. The Ministry will decide on the H.S. transition to a conventional model when it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Stakeholders who have provided input into this plan have included, but is not limited to, CPC-Ottawa (Principal and Vice-Principal Association); Ontario English Catholic Teacher Association (Ottawa local) (OECTA); Canadian Union of Public Employees (Ottawa local) (CUPE); Unite Here; Parent Involvement Committee (PIC); Catholic School Parents' Association (CSPA); Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC); OCSB Trustees, including Student Trustees; Non-Affiliate Association; Executive Council (department input); Joint Health and Safety Committees; and Ottawa Public Health. Feedback from student, staff, administrator, and parent surveys also informed the next steps in our return to school plans.

2- Prepare the School Site

Our Planning and Facilities Department regularly maintained and inspected our schools despite being closed since March 13. Before students return to school, a Joint Health and Safety committee inspection must be completed.

Background information

COVID-19 is spread through direct contact with droplets spread by coughing and sneezing. Infected droplets on surfaces can be spread by someone touching the droplets and then touching their mouth, nose, or eyes. Scientists believe that the droplets on surfaces may live for 3 to 72 hours, depending on the surface. Cleaning with soap and water or with disinfectants will typically eliminate the risk of spread.

School signage and markings

Where practical, separation markers will be placed to signal one-way direction within the school. This will assist in maintaining 2 metre (6 feet) distances for everyone in the school as they travel from one location to another, including entering and exiting the school and/or washrooms.

Signage on walls and floors will help students maintain a 2 metre distance from one another. The signage will be posted at entrances to classrooms, school entrances and exits, large spaces such as the learning commons, and meeting spaces such as the main office, principal or vice-principal offices, elevators, and in the resource room. Where a 2 metre distance cannot be kept, the goal of 1 metre distancing along with cohorting, hygiene practices, masks, and structural changes will be used to mitigate risks.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and non-medical masks

On July 29, the Ministry of Education indicated that disposable medical masks and optional eye protection (reusable face shield) will be provided to all Board staff. The province will guide PPE requirements for school-based staff who have regular close contact with students and they will be provided with additional PPE based on their role. Ottawa Public Health has mandated the wearing of masks in public locations so we anticipate that many students will be accustomed to wearing a mask in public locations. Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear non-medical cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Opportunities for breaks from wearing a mask will be provided where appropriate. For students who do not have their own cloth mask, a cloth mask will be provided by the school staff. As per the direction from the Ministry, students in kindergarten to grade 3 are encouraged but not required to wear masks in schools. Educators will teach and reinforce the proper use of masks.

Hand cleaning

Hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes will be provided to each school. Hand sanitizer will be placed in all classrooms that do not have available water/soap for hygiene purposes. In an effort to promote

proper hand cleaning, students/staff will be permitted to replenish personal hand sanitizer using school provided supplies. While the sharing of equipment is discouraged, where equipment must be used by more than one student, disinfectant wipes will be used. Parents are encouraged to send their child to school with their own personalized sized hand sanitizer that students can refill at school as needed (where age-appropriate).

Plexiglass separation

Portable plexiglass will be placed in high traffic areas where distancing may be problematic, such as at the front reception area of the main office, the learning commons circulation desk, and guidance reception areas. Where a distance of 2 metres can be maintained, plexiglass is not needed. An additional 3,000 portable plexiglass screens have been ordered to provide a space in each classroom with a physical barrier. Classroom educators will determine the best use of this in each classroom. Given the quantity of the order, these will be arriving in staggered shipments and provided to each school as they arrive.

Student privacy dividers

In order to assist students in maintaining distance from one another within the classroom setting, we have ordered 20,000 corrugated privacy dividers that can be used as a natural separation at tables and other areas as needed within classrooms. These are not meant to be physical barriers such as a sneeze guard, but a reminder to students of the importance of avoiding physical contact with one another and the need to use proper hygiene if any interaction with another student is required.

Ventilation

Cleaning and disinfecting will take place away from students. Bringing fresh outdoor air into the school will be completed by caretaking staff. Mechanical ventilation and HVAC systems are designed to provide sufficient air exchanges in all schools. A preventative maintenance program is in place to perform annual and routine maintenance to all air handling systems to ensure that they are performing as designed. Over the summer, all systems are being inspected to ensure they are functioning properly for the start of school with the goal of maximizing fresh air exchange. Windows in classrooms may be opened as a source of additional fresh air. Classrooms with pedestal fans should direct the fans to blow air out of the classroom and not towards students.

Thermal thermometer

One thermal thermometer has been ordered for each school. This is only to be used with the permission of a parent/guardian when there is concern that a student may be ill and is being sent home. School staff will not typically be involved in the direct screening of students for fever. The guidance provided to childcare staff for the taking of temperature checks shall be followed by school staff, including the wearing of required PPE during this task. Public Health has indicated that temperature checks on their own are not reliable indicators of possible COVID-19 infection.

Work/prep rooms

Educator workrooms will be reconfigured to allow for physical distancing. Students will not be permitted in any staff common areas other than classrooms.

Outdoor space for recess

Recess may be staggered based on the size of the outdoor space and the availability of supervisors. Areas will be designated outdoors for each cohort to minimize contact with other students from outside the instructional cohort. Principals will develop a schedule and routine that allows for students to maintain appropriate physical distancing while still having an opportunity for fresh air and physical activity. Cohorting allows for close interactions while still minimizing risks. Playing and socializing is an important part of child development and, according to the medical experts, should not be discouraged. A one-metre distance also provides protection in our school setting where those in attendance have already been screened prior to coming to school and are asymptomatic.

Isolation room/area

Each school will designate an isolation room/area. This room/area will be used for the temporary placement of any student who becomes ill during the day. An isolation kit containing staff/student PPE for illnesses will be provided to each school containing: nitrile, vinyl, or synthetic gloves; face mask for staff member, face shield or safety goggles; box of tissues; hand sanitizer; disposable gowns/lab coat; board approved disinfectant wipes; and an IR thermometer.

Playgrounds and play structures

Outdoor playgrounds and play structures were permitted to reopen in Stage 3 as of July 17. Physical distancing of at least 2 metres must still be enforced, except between individuals from the same household or social circles. Staff may choose to use pylons or other means to help students maintain 2 metre (6 feet) distances from one another in the yard. Students who use the playground equipment will be required to clean their hands before outdoor play and playground use. School play structures should be used by one cohort at a time and cleaned between use, where possible. There will be a low threshold to close play structures if there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a school.

Community Use of Schools

Indoor permits will continue to be on hold. As an added measure for safety, we will limit nonessential visitors to the school. Where the use of non-classroom space is allowed, the use should be staggered to properly provide time between bookings to clean and disinfect.

Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)

A safety checklist has been provided to each school-based JHSC to ensure the site is prepared for occupancy.

3- Prepare the Staff

Team approach

School-based solutions will be needed to support the many staff and student family and health challenges. Students will each be assigned to their “regular” classroom teacher. If we are required to move to an adapted or distance learning environment, students will be supported by a team of staff and the classroom teacher who will assign them weekly learning activities.

Illness

Staff who have any signs of illness will stay home. Staff who have been in contact with someone who has tested positive with COVID-19 must follow the Ottawa Public Health directions. Our staff have been provided with Board-based guidelines and these will be replaced by Provincial Guidelines as soon as they are released.

Screening procedures

It is not the staff’s responsibility to screen students for illness; however, if a staff member is concerned that a student is exhibiting signs of illness, this will be reported to the school administration. If a student voluntarily shares that they or a member of their family has COVID-19 symptoms or a positive test, this will also be shared with the school administrator.

Parents must screen their child daily for any [symptoms](#) of cold, flu, or other symptoms associated with COVID-19. Health care professionals are not located within our schools, so staff will not be screening students; however, if staff observe a child who is ill, parents will be called to pick up their child from the school promptly.

If a child has known seasonal allergies or a cough related to asthma or other known conditions; it is important that the school receive a medical note indicating these symptoms can be expected for the child during attendance at school. Without prior documentation, staff will be asking for students who are sneezing or coughing on a regular basis to remain home.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Some staff, such as educational assistants, or others that work with students with unique needs, may require additional protective equipment such as gloves and face shields. Goggles or face shields may be appropriate for staff who work with students who have difficulty with fluids and drool, spit, or have excessive saliva. Staff will follow the Board’s Personal Protective Equipment COVID-19 staff guidelines.

Staff health and safety guidelines

During the PD days before the start of the school year, staff will review advice from Public Health and from the Ministry of Education on the proper use and care of PPE and hygiene that staff should follow when working in schools during the pandemic. Additional guidance will be provided to staff who work in multiple facilities, such as staff from the planning and facilities department. Occasional teachers and support workers will also be provided with Health and Safety training.

Staff hygiene and routines

Each Principal will provide staff with a Staff Hygiene and Routine Protocol prior to their return to in-person instruction. A centrally created template will be provided to the Principal for use to ensure appropriate hygiene practices by all of the adults in the school.

Hygiene instruction

Upon return to in-person classes, hygiene routines will be reinforced regularly. Each class will have information to reinforce the importance of handwashing, avoiding touching one's face/eyes/nose/mouth, and the importance of coughing and sneezing into one's sleeve if a tissue is not available. Hand hygiene has been determined as one of the most important protective strategies to mitigate risks. For this reason, scheduled times throughout the day will be provided for students to wash their hands, in addition to natural transition times such as entry to a class or before eating or participating in recess or physical activity.

Sharing of resources

Staff will limit student sharing of materials and resources in class. Adequate supplies for instructional units should be provided to each student, and where it is not practical to give each student their own resources, then the shared equipment should be cleaned or disinfected between use. Each classroom will be supplied with disinfectant spray and paper towels. Where it is age-appropriate, students should be instructed on how to properly dispense the spray and wipe resources that are shared. In some classrooms, disinfectant wipes will be used instead of the spray and paper towels.

Attendance

Student attendance will be taken for all students who arrive in school, and a record will be maintained when students are in areas other than their classroom. This will assist Ottawa Public Health for contact tracing should a positive case of COVID-19 be determined. Online attendance will be recorded separately from in-class attendance. Students will not be penalized academically should they choose not to attend in-person sessions.

Doors

Where possible, and safe to do so, classroom and office doors should be left open during the day to minimize the number of students or staff who need to open the door physically. A balance must be

struck between the fire code to keep certain doors closed and open doors to minimize contact in high traffic areas.

Outdoor and non-classroom space

Staff will be encouraged to take advantage of outdoor space for instruction where feasible. It will be important to coordinate the use of outdoor space to minimize interactions with other classes during travel times and to ensure that students maintain the 2 metre distance when outdoors. Scheduled time to work outdoors will provide an opportunity to have a break from wearing a face mask if a 2- metre distance can be observed.

Technology

The Board will continue to offer professional learning opportunities for staff to ensure that they are positioned to use digital tools effectively. Based on parent feedback, one area of growth for the Board is to move to a more centralized communication platform so that students/parents do not need to access multiple platforms for each educator's class. The Board has implemented a parent portal to assist as the interface between parents and the school. Two key tools that are recommended for sharing of learning activities are the use of Hapara as the Board's learning management system, and the use of G Suite tools such as Google Docs and Google Meet to allow for collaboration and communication. Before the start of the school year, the three PD days will be used to prepare for movement between in-person instruction and possible distance learning if needed in 2020-2021.

Experiential courses

Some courses will require greater modifications than others given the goal of maintaining 2 metres distance from one another and the need to clean and disinfect any shared equipment. Our Health and Safety teams are developing guidelines to assist staff in modifying activities such as science labs, computer and technology courses, music, physical education, hospitality courses, etc. Where safety cannot be addressed with in-person activities, alternative online activities will be recommended.

Social-Emotional Learning

Each staff member will receive learning activities that foster social-emotional learning and that will assist all students with coping skills. These activities will be provided to students in both in-person and distance learning settings early in the fall when students return to school.

Equity considerations

Staff will spend time preparing for differentiated support for students with special needs and those English language learners who require additional support. Where known, the Principal will inform staff of challenges for distance learning for students where home support is not always possible, for a variety of reasons. There is a need for a school-wide approach to understanding and supporting solutions to address the disproportionate impact of distance learning on some groups in the school.

Challenges exist, and collectively we will provide the necessary resources to each student to assist them in reaching their potential.

Racism and discrimination

Staff have a responsibility to prevent discrimination against all students and families. Staff will actively monitor any student derogatory comments based on race at all times. Learning activities to address racism will be provided to all staff for implementation at each grade. Implementation will take place both for students attending in-person or through distance learning. Racism related to COVID-19 myths and misinformation will be specifically addressed early in the fall.

Privacy

Staff will follow the directions from Ottawa Public Health in terms of what medical/health information related to colleagues, students or their families can be shared. School Principals will provide direction to staff when dealing with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Special attention will be given to the return of any student that was absent due to either their own illness or the illness of family members, to ensure that they are treated with respect and that privacy is maintained.

School and Board level support

Each Principal will arrange for additional support for students who require behavioural and/or mental health supports. Board clinical staff and professional staff will continue to support students and families who would benefit from their support. Parents will be informed of the process for requesting support for their children.

Outbreaks and return to distance learning

There is always the possibility of a change to the adapted model or to distance learning if an outbreak forces a cohort or a school to be closed for a lengthy period of time. In preparation for continuity of learning, all staff will be advised on available District level tools that may be used for distance learning. Three professional development days have been arranged before the start of the school year to provide staff time to prepare for consistent use of Board platforms, including the new Parent Portal for communication, the Hapara Learning Management System, and Google Meet for video conferencing. The provincial Ministry of Health will be releasing a guidance document for use in all schools that outlines the procedures to follow in the case of a confirmed case of COVID-19. This document will be shared with parents, once it becomes available.

Staff gatherings

Staff will promote physical distancing amongst one another as role models for students. Staff will not gather in large groups unless distancing can be maintained.

Staff accommodations

If possible and appropriate, staff with medical conditions preventing them from regular class instruction may be assigned to daily online instruction. Staff who work outside of the classroom setting who require accommodations will have their personal situations reviewed with the Board Human Resources Department. Many staff who require medical accommodations will still be able to work at school with the provision of PPE and other environmental changes to mitigate risks. Please note that the school Principal is not able to share any staff medical or personal information with parents.

Mentally Healthy Return to School Toolkit (links to be added by mid to late August)

School Mental Health Ontario will provide the following resources to schools:

- System Leader Resource Package - messages and slides to support leading a mentally healthy system through COVID-19.
- School Leader Resource Package - messages, reflection tools, tip sheets to support leading a mentally healthy school through COVID-19.
- Educator Resource Package - professional learning resources for educators to assist in supporting student mental health. Resources will be shared and unpacked on a PD day prior to the start of the school year.
- Support Staff Resource Package - learning modules and slides to support student mental health for other caring adults in schools.
- Student Resource Package - materials to support older students with self-care and wellness including anxiety management. These resources will be posted on the [COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub](#), in partnership with jack.org and Kids Help Phone.
- Parent and Family Resource Package - Tip sheets to support parents and families with their child's mental health and well-being during the transition to school. These resources will be shared when they become available.

4- Prepare for Students

Understandably, staff, parents and students will be excited and anxious about returning to school. To assist in the transition from distance learning to a return to in-person school, each Principal will send a letter home or send a video explaining what school will look like for September 3 when students return to school. The message will be sent home approximately two weeks before they return to school. The letter will include suggested strategies for parents to reassure their child that the school building is safe.

Initial return

During the initial return to school, staff will provide activities prepared by our mental health clinicians that acknowledge and recognize the fear and trauma that have potentially impacted students and their families during the initial stage of isolation. A focus on the whole student will be the priority for the return to school. Student Services staff will provide age-appropriate Social-Emotional Learning resources for each staff to focus on during the first week back to school through both in-person and distance learning activities. Targeted support will continue for those that require additional assistance throughout the year. Counselling support will be available to assist with the mental health needs of students.

All staff will be made aware of the potential impact of trauma on student learning, behaviour and relationships. A school-based trauma-informed approach will help students feel safe to learn. Resources for a school-based approach to trauma will be shared at the August PD day for staff to implement during the return to school.

Communication

Feedback during the first phase of distance learning provided input on areas of possible improved communication. One such area was the desire to have a minimal number of locations for parents/students to check for work assigned during distance education. Each Principal will review the available Board digital tools that can be streamlined to address this parent feedback. A limited number of Board platforms, including the parent portal, Hapara learning management system, and Google Meet will be used to ensure consistency between classes and schools. Additional information for parents on the use of the new parent portal will be shared in August.

Letter to parents

Parents will receive a letter that will include a checklist of what to send to school each day. We anticipate that students will be asked to come to school with personal hand sanitizer, a cloth mask, a water bottle, and learning materials. Parents will be informed of new school protocols including instructions for screening their child before sending them to school. Drop-off and Pick-up procedures will be outlined along with the description of physical distancing and hand hygiene practices that will be implemented each day.

Student reminders

Regular reminders will be provided to students on proper hygiene. Students will be asked to wash their hands before and after eating, when returning from outside, and before and after using the washroom. Students in grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear masks at school. Families who cannot provide a cloth mask to their child will be provided with a cloth mask from school staff. Students receiving a mask will be taught the proper use of a mask. Any logo or design on a mask will be subject to normal school dress code policies. Student belongings should be taken home each day to be cleaned as needed.

Student illness and management of students with possible COVID-19

If a student becomes ill during the day and/or if they exhibit signs of illness, they will be required to enter into an isolation area as designated by the school until the parent can pick them up. The student will be provided with a disposable mask to wear until picked up, and staff assisting the student will be asked to wear a face shield in addition to a mask. The area will be flagged as closed until it can be cleaned, and sanitized after the student leaves the school.

The student must be isolated for 14 days, or 48 hours after symptoms subside, or until a negative test and 72 hours after symptoms subside. If the student is not tested, then they must self isolate for 14 days from the first day of symptoms, or, until 24 hours after respiratory symptoms subside, or 48 hours after gastro symptoms subside, whichever is longer.

Areas used by the student who is ill should be closed off and the area should not be used before cleaning and disinfecting can take place.

Ottawa Public Health will provide directions to the school Principal about what information to share with parents of other students in the class or school when there is confirmation of a positive COVID-19 result.

Students with health conditions

Some students will not be able to take part in the in-person component of returning to school due to their chronic health conditions. For this group of students, either distance learning solutions will continue, or the parents can apply for home instruction support. A teacher may go into the home, one hour per day to provide academic support along with classroom distance learning resources. PPE will be provided along with distancing rules for anyone going into homes for home instruction. An example of a student who qualifies for home instruction would be a student undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

Parents are asked to keep their child home if they exhibit any signs of illness. Parents who have access to a thermometer will be asked to check their children for fever each morning and keep them home if they display any signs of illness. If a student is diagnosed with COVID-19, the Principal will follow Ottawa Public Health directions and notify all of those that may have been in contact with the

student. For any confirmed case of COVID-19 where a student attended school, it is anticipated that the school, or a section of the school, would be closed for 48 hours while the school is cleaned and disinfected. Contact tracing will take place in consultation with Ottawa Public Health, and some students and staff may need to self-isolate for 14 days if directed by Ottawa Public Health. This information will be shared with parents, at the direction of Ottawa Public Health.

Curriculum instruction

We know that class composition is never homogeneous, and we always have students with different levels of pre-existing knowledge in each class/grade. Educators will spend time determining areas of academic need for each student, and they will differentiate the instruction to support each student both for in-person and for distance learning.

Water bottles

Students will be encouraged to bring their own labelled water bottle to school each day. Water fountains can be used to refill water bottles. Drinking directly from water fountains during COVID-19 will not be permitted.

Lockers and cubbies

Students will not have access to lockers or cubbies during COVID-19 so that all materials will stay with them in the classroom. All bags, shoes, boots, coats, etc. will remain at the student's personal space in each classroom. This will be revisited as the winter months approach.

Student transitions

The Student Services and Special Education Department staff are providing summer transition opportunities for students. These plans are intended to assist students with the changes in routine that a potential hybrid learning model will require next September.

Students with special needs and/or self-regulation needs

Individual plans and solutions will be needed for students who have a challenge with self-regulation. Behavioural professional staff may be consulted to assist in developing strategies for such plans when there is a concern for safety. The Student Services Department will be responsible for assessing the needs of personal protective equipment for staff who work with students who will find it challenging to maintain physical distancing. Strategies for the desensitization of masks or face shields will be reviewed.

Developmental Education (DE) classrooms and students with significant health needs

OCSB Special Education staff will consult with Ottawa Public Health for any required protocols for the opening of "Developmental Education" classes, given the significant health challenges of the students in this program.

Specialized Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Students who require visual cues for communication will be identified by the Student Services and Special Education Department, and specialized PPE will be provided for staff who support these students. This will include see-through masks that will assist during communication.

System classes

A review of any required specialized PPE or classroom modifications will be conducted for each system class. Daily access to in-person instruction will be prioritized for students attending system classes, as long as distancing can be maintained within the guidelines of class size limitations during the pandemic.

Gifted program

Opportunities for enriched online experiences, for students identified as Gifted, will be provided while in-person learning is restricted. Students that normally participate in the program for gifted learners will be contacted at the beginning of the school year regarding online learning opportunities.

International students

All international students returning to Canada from another country must self-isolate for 14 days before being allowed to attend OCSB schools. The Board has established an outbreak management protocol for International students, should the Canadian government permit school attendance.

Sharing of resources

Principals will consult with the Board central staff and their department heads to review specific safety precautions required for classes that traditionally involve the sharing of resources between students (e.g. construction, auto shops, hospitality, science, arts, physical education etc.). Plans are being established for specialized protective equipment that cannot be sanitized between use (e.g. Welding gloves, chaps, coat, coveralls, aprons, oven mitts, lab coats etc.). The Board has provided staff with a guide for disinfecting shared equipment, hand tools, construction, and an auto shop guide.

5- School Operations

Many alternate models considered

We know most parents would like to have their children return to school five days a week. We, too, believe the five-day attendance option is the best. **Elementary students (K-8) will return to school five days a week. High school students (9-12) will return to school using the adapted model.**

It is important to note that, depending on COVID-19 spread in the Ottawa area, we need to be prepared to move between conventional five days a week instruction and the adapted model or full distance learning if needed.

Please note that siblings will be prioritized to attend school on the same in-person days if school attendance is limited to half the regular school population.

Focus groups have been held with Principals/Teachers/Unions/Associations to consider possible models for the Board. Input has also been received from our parent associations and from parent comments provided during the feedback to the initial distance learning experience.

Additional support for high school students with special needs

Where class sizes can be maintained at numbers of 15 or below, students with special needs in grades 9 to 12 who require additional support can be scheduled for in-person support on any day where the class size is below 15.

Cohorts

Elementary students will remain in one cohort for the day where possible; including during recess and lunch. Teachers will rotate into the class where needed. Principals will work to limit elementary contacts within the school hours to approximately 50 students or less. High school students will be limited to cohorts of approximately 100 students or less.

Full attendance five days per week (Kindergarten to grade 8)

As noted, full attendance five days per week is the desired model of the Board. This model will closely resemble a typical school day; however, there may be some restrictions to limit student movement from class to class where possible. There may also be some changes to the teacher rotation in the class to minimize cohort contact. For grades 7-8, students will be permitted to eat in assigned areas with their cohort as long as they adhere to physical distancing requirements.

Sample elementary homeroom

Group A	Group B	Group C
10 students who attend class in person Monday to Friday.	10 students who attend class in person Monday to Friday.	3 students who choose to participate in distance learning Monday to Friday.

- All students will receive the same learning activities at the beginning of the week. The learning activities will be accessible through the parent portal and in the learning management system, Hapara.
- Students in group A will be partnered with students in group B. The students may be working on work together while some are at home and some are in class.
- Students at home can correspond with their classmates when they need clarification for the day's activities.
- Students working at home will receive instruction and support during the day from an available educator.
- Students in group C are still part of the class and will interact with their classmates during group activities.

K-8 full-time distance learning model

In order to allow a seamless transition between in-person, adapted, or virtual learning, elementary students selecting virtual learning will remain part of their school and their assigned class. Students participating in-person and virtually will be part of the overall class numbers for class size and compliance purposes.

Students participating virtually (group C students) will still interact with their classmates during group activities as they would had they been present in class. Parents may still choose to send students in group C to school on a partial basis when they need more assistance, or they may choose to remain at home for the duration of instruction. Due to physical distancing and classroom setup, two school days advance notice will be required if a student who signed up for virtual learning plans to come to school for temporary in-person instruction. Students assigned to group C will access their weekly learning activities from their classroom teacher using the Board's Learning Management System, Hapara.

During the day while their classroom teacher is instructing students in the in-person delivery model, students will have access to qualified educators from across the Board for assistance with the work they have been assigned. This will include the availability of synchronous instruction on concepts they need help with, or assistance with assignments. The Board selected video conferencing tool is Google Meet. Unlike during the initial school closures, students taking part in virtual learning will be responsible for all curriculum areas and will have formal assessments throughout the school year.

Adapted model for high school (grade 9 to 12)

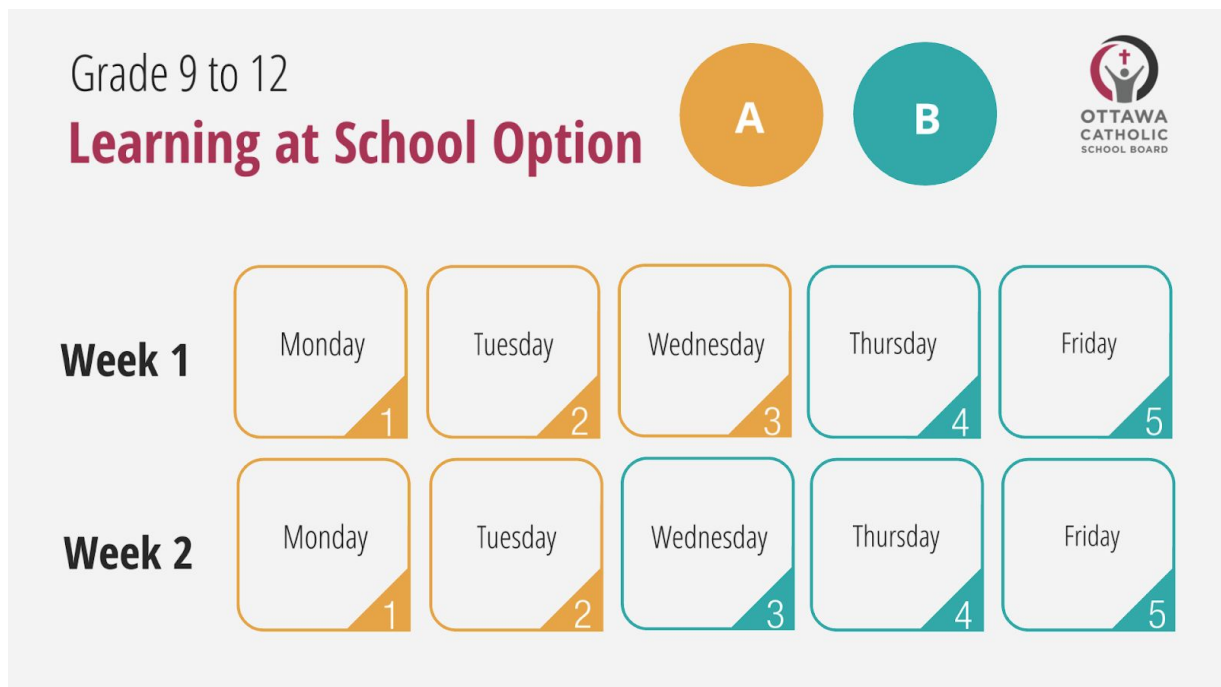
The Ministry has directed our Board to implement an adapted model for high school students (9-12), with approximately half of the students attending school on any day. This reduces class sizes to about half (12-17 students) in most cases. To achieve this, we will divide each class into two cohorts, mainly by alpha list to try and keep siblings at school on the same day where possible. The first half of the class will be called Cohort A, and the second half of the class will be called Cohort B.

Students in grade 9 to 12 will take two classes every day. They will attend school either Monday, Tuesday and alternating Wednesdays, or they will attend school Thursday, Friday and alternating Wednesdays. Your school principal will inform you whether your child has been assigned to Cohort A or Cohort B. We cannot complete the schedule until we know how many students will be participating only in online learning this school year.

When COVID-19 transmission has reduced in a region, the Ministry will consider directing Boards in the adapted model to return to conventional class sizes, and all students will attend school five days a week. This decision will be made by Public Health and the Ministry of Education.

Example of adapted model for high school (grade 9 to 12)

Cohort A	Cohort B
Students in Cohort A will attend school every Monday and Tuesday for in-person classes, and alternating Wednesdays (one week they attend Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and the next week they attend Monday and Tuesday).	Students in Cohort B will attend school every Thursday and Friday for in-person classes, and alternating Wednesdays (one week they attend Thursday and Friday, and the next week they attend Wednesday, Thursday and Friday).



A quadmester model for 9-12 students

A traditional high school semester includes students taking four courses each day in 75-minute periods from the beginning of September to the end of January. A school day consists of 5 hours of instruction/classwork each day for students.

To address the issue of student cohort mixing during the day, **we are changing the first semester from a traditional semester system to a quadmester system.** This means that students will have two courses a day (period one and period two) instead of the traditional four courses each day. These periods will occur in double blocks so students still have 5 hours of instruction/classwork each day. Since courses are in double blocks, the students will complete these two courses between September

to mid-November. From mid-November to the end of January, the students will complete their period three and period four courses.

September to Mid-November	Mid-November to End of January
Students take period one and period two courses.	Students take period three and period four courses.

Why not use a traditional Semester approach?

Our high schools have between 1000 and 2000 students gathered in one location. Public Health officials do not recommend: rotating four classroom groups (cohorts) each day, gathering as a large group in the cafeteria at lunch, or having 1000-2000 teenagers walking through halls between classes. Our quadmester adapted model addresses these challenges.

Avoiding large gatherings in high school

To avoid large gatherings, our adapted high school model will consist of half the students attending school in person for one of their two courses and then transitioning to their second course online.

The next day students will have their second course in person and then transition to their other course online. Attendance is taken both in-person and online. Parents will be contacted if a student misses either instruction.

Other adapted models for high school that were not selected

During the initial feedback stages, different models were reviewed. While some models allowed more time at school, they did not meet the requirements of the collective agreement, such as a maximum of 225 minutes of daily instruction, a 40-minute uninterrupted lunch and prep and planning time, or they would not work for transportation logistics. Here is a [sampling of models](#) of additional models considered for an adapted/hybrid model return to school for high school students.

Sample high school (9-12) daily timetables for September to January

Note: This sample is for a 9:00 am start. Each school maintains their normal start time.
For semester two, a decision will be made at a later date if we are required to continue with the quadmester system or if we can return to a traditional semester system.

Sample for high school students (9-12) in the first half of the alpha list designated as **Cohort A**

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45 9:00	Half of the high school population will be at school every day. Students arrive at school (walk, bike, or bus) and enter using designated entrances. They will go straight to their first block classroom.				
9:00 11:30	Cohort A Period 1 course In-person instruction (150 minutes)	Cohort A Period 2 course In-person instruction (150 minutes)	Cohort A Alternates each week between P1 and P2 courses Attends in person on alternate weeks (150 minutes)	Cohort A Period 1 course Work at home with online academic support (150 minutes)	Cohort A Period 2 course Work at home with online academic support (150 minutes)
11:30 12:30	Students transition to lunch at home and continued learning online				
12:30 1:45	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)	Alternates each week between P1 and P2 courses Work at home with online academic support (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)
1:45 3:00	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Alternates each week between P1 and P2 courses Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)
Students who are not able to be online during the designated daily class will complete their work at a time that works for them.					

Sample for high school students (9-12) in the second half of the alpha list designated as **Cohort B**

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:45 9:00	Half of the high school population will be at school every day. Students arrive at school (walk, bike, or bus) and enter using designated entrances. They will go straight to their first block classroom.				
9:00 11:30	Cohort B Period 1 course Work at home with online academic support (150 minutes)	Cohort B Period 2 course Work at home with online academic support (150 minutes)	Cohort B Alternates each week between P1 and P2 courses Attends in person on alternate weeks (150 minutes)	Cohort B Period 1 course In-person instruction (150 minutes)	Cohort B Period 2 course In-person instruction (150 minutes)
11:30 12:30	Students transition to lunch at home and continued learning online				
12:30 1:45	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)	Alternates each week between P1 and P2 courses Work at home with online academic support (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Work at home online academic support (75 minutes)
1:45 3:00	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Alternates each week between P1 and P2 courses Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 2 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)	Cohorts A & B Period 1 course Real-time learning online with classroom teacher (75 minutes)
Students who are not able to be online during the designated daily class will complete their work at a time that works for them.					

High school distance learning through our Virtual Academy

We now offer high school online through our Virtual Academy, which provides students full online learning without attending school in-person. Students who do not wish to attend high school in person may participate in distance learning through our Virtual Academy. This involves a commitment to remain in the Virtual Academy for at least semester one.

The Virtual Academy uses the Ministry of Education's provincial learning management system to deliver courses. This is called D2L Brightspace. This system was used this summer for our online summer school program. Students complete one course from start to finish before moving on to their next course.

Opting in or out of the Virtual Academy

At the end of January, students may choose to return to learning at their neighbourhood school for the second half of the school year, or they may decide to remain in the Virtual Academy.

Traditional high school vs adapted quadmester vs Virtual Academy?

The traditional school offers four seventy-five minute periods each day, for a total of 5 hours of learning per day. The courses are completed between September and the end of January.

This year, high schools will operate on an adapted quadmester system. Students will take two 150-minute courses each day, for a total of 5 hours per day. The courses are completed between September and mid-November. From mid-November to the end of January, an additional two courses are completed. By the end of January, the student will complete four courses.

Students in the Virtual Academy will focus on one course at a time over a 5-6 week period. The five hours per day of learning will focus on the same course each day. Between September and the end of January, students will have completed four courses.

High school teacher support in the Virtual Academy

Qualified teachers from within the Board will staff the Virtual Academy. Some of these teachers may include teachers who cannot meet in-person with students for a variety of reasons. The educator will be available online every day throughout the day to assist with daily instruction and support. Daily online instruction and regular feedback will be provided. Flexibility is provided to students who need to work at different hours throughout the day; however, the expectation remains for approximately 5 hours of student work on their online course each day. Communication is streamlined as the student works on one course and only corresponds with one teacher until their course is completed. The student will likely have a different teacher for each course.

Virtual Academy high school course selection

High school students who choose to attend the Virtual Academy in the fall will be contacted by their guidance counsellor in late August to indicate the first course with which they will begin. Students will receive an introductory letter from the Virtual Academy Principal and/or from their first-course teacher, before classes start on September 3. Training on the use of D2L Brightspace will be provided to students at the beginning of the school year.

Form for parents choosing distance learning

On August 10th, parents will be asked to [complete a form](#) if they are choosing distance learning for their child in September. Regardless of attendance in person or through distance learning, students will be assigned to a specific class or teacher. The aim is to provide parents with access to education for their children within their comfort level, be that on-site or through distance learning.

Confirmed cases of COVID-19

When a student or staff member has been diagnosed as positive for the COVID-19 virus, the school will follow the directions of Public Health. This may require one or multiple classes to move to a distance learning model and/or may require the school to be closed to in-person instruction for a length of time necessary, based on the time recommended by Ottawa Public Health. Students who tested positive for COVID-19 must bring medical clearance before being allowed to return to in-person instruction. A Clorox 360 atomizer disinfectant machine will be used to disinfect any area accessed by someone reported as testing positive for COVID-19.

Physical distancing breaches

Maintaining 2 metres at all times will be challenging. Adults and students will sometimes forget this important safety measure or will unintentionally enter someone else's space. It is important to recognize that we are aiming for the best efforts and not perfection. A friendly reminder will be provided when someone is failing to keep the required distance apart, or when friends are seen in physical proximity to one another.

School bus options and public transportation

The OCSB is working with the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority (OSTA) and Ottawa Public Health (OPH) to develop a transportation plan for eligible students on buses and vans that protects the safety of both students and drivers.

Parents may be requested to drive their child to school; if possible, to limit the number of students on a bus. OSTA works with consortiums across the province to review transportation configurations to best meet student needs while addressing health and safety.

Students in grades 4 to 12 must wear a mask when using Board provided transportation. Students in Kindergarten to grade 3 are encouraged to wear a mask where possible, but it is not mandated for this age group.

The City of Ottawa will be creating their own guidelines for the use of Public Transportation during the pandemic. Students who use OC Transpo services will be required to follow the City's guidelines.

Each Principal will develop a bus schedule and routine that allows for the loading and unloading of students while maintaining appropriate physical distancing and entry into and out of the school. Seating priority will be for siblings to sit together and then for cohorts to sit close together where possible. Students will be required to sit in the same seat and with the same person throughout the school year.

Entry requirements

School entry times may be staggered, and multiple entry doors may be used to allow for physical distancing. This will be determined once the selected instruction model is confirmed. Students will be required to wash their hands as they enter school.

Visitors, volunteers and parent access

Visitors, volunteers, and parents will not be permitted on school property during the pandemic. Parents may not enter the school with the exception of a Principal approved appointment or to pick up their child. Visitors who are permitted into a school must self-screen prior to entry, and must wear a mask in the school.

Attendance during the initial phase of return to school

Teachers will continue to take attendance for the in-class component of instruction for the fall. Students participating in distance learning will be marked as present for each day that they are scheduled for distance learning from home.

Dismissal requirements

School dismissal times may be staggered, and multiple exit doors will be used to allow for physical distancing to occur. This will be determined once the selected instruction model is confirmed.

Washrooms

Washrooms will be marked off to ensure physical distancing of 2 metres when multiple students are in the washroom at the same time. Signage will be placed inside the washroom, reminding students of both physical distancing and proper hygiene. The maximum number of students allowed in each washroom at a time will be posted on the washroom door. Washrooms will be cleaned throughout the school day and again each evening. Principals will implement a shared tracking system for staff to

record the time and location of student access to washrooms. This will assist with contact tracing if needed.

Lunch and cafeterias

Students in Kindergarten to grade 8 will be allowed to eat their lunch in their classroom with their cohort to decrease the contact that would have occurred in a cafeteria setting. Students will be asked to wash their hands before eating. Where the timetable can be compressed to allow for students to return home for lunch, this will be considered. No food sharing policy will be enforced.

During COVID-19 microwaves will not be available for student use. Outside food from restaurants or chains may not be delivered into schools since visitors are not permitted in the school during this time.

In order to prevent large groups of high school students from gathering together, students in grade 9 to 12 will transition to lunch at home. Transportation will be adjusted to provide for high school students at the beginning of lunch and for 7 & 8 students in a high school environment to leave at the traditional end of the day.

Large group gatherings and assemblies

In the early phases of return, there should not be any assemblies or large group gatherings, and where students do gather, they will be required to maintain a 2 metre distance from one another where possible. Where 2 metres is not possible, 1 metre should be maintained along with other mitigation strategies.

School hallways and stairways

Depending on school design, the option of designating traffic flow one way, or allowing for spacing should be considered a separation technique.

Classroom setup

Classroom educators will rearrange their classroom so that 2 metres can be maintained between students where possible. Students will not be permitted to share resources.

Students will remain in the same consistent seat in the class as much as possible. This area becomes their personal space and should be as far away from the nearest student as practical. Where possible, the same students should remain with the same teacher with minimized rotation. Classroom design will vary from teacher to teacher, but the same goal remains to keep everyone 2 metres apart. It is recognized that 1 metre separation also provides protection in a classroom, especially when combined with other practices such as proper hygiene, avoiding large gatherings, and other environmental practices.

Physical barriers such as unused desks, or visual markings, can be used to assist with the separation. All student belongings are kept in their personal area, ie. no use of shared spaces such as coat racks or cubbies. Desks and tables should not be removed from the classroom; however, the same

desk/table should be used by the student each day. Where possible, Desks, tables should face forward, rather than in circles or groupings. Classroom educators may wish to create a mask free zone where students can take turns not wearing a mask, where distance from all others can be guaranteed. Educators should open windows when appropriate to bring outdoor air into the classroom. Where pedestal fans exist in a classroom, the fan should be directed outwards towards an open window, not inward towards students.

The teacher should maintain a table of items to be cleaned, and these should be wiped off the following morning when returning to class (using provided disinfectant wipes or spray).

Kindergarten classrooms

While 2 metre distancing may not be as practical for four and five-year-olds, the rule of no physical touching should be reinforced. Activities will be designed for small groups, and furniture and playing areas should be used to help maintain physical separation. Plush toys will be temporarily stored during the pandemic. Toys and manipulatives will be reduced where possible while still providing for students a wide variety of play-based learning. Additional guidelines based on the success of childcare operations will be reviewed for Kindergarten classes. Parents who register their child for Kindergarten may choose to register their child for partial days or partial hours that best meet their personal circumstances. In order to reserve their space in the classroom, it is important that parents register their child for Kindergarten even if they are not yet prepared to have their child attend five days per week.

Classroom carpets

Full groups should not be gathering on shared carpet areas. Carpets can remain where they are used for regular foot traffic; however, students should not be sitting on carpets unless they are able to maintain the same location on the carpet and can do so while being 2 metres away from the next student. Where possible, carpets that had been used for students to sit on during full group instruction will be rolled up and temporarily set aside during the pandemic.

Class rotation

Consideration will be given to having grade levels access to hallways at different times to minimize hallway traffic throughout the day. Schools are encouraged to eliminate bells that signal all students into the hallways at once. Rotations will be based on schedules developed by school staff.

Technology

Students who do not have access to a device at home will be prioritized for the loan of a School Chromebook. Students are encouraged to bring a fully charged device to school each day that they are taking part in in-person instruction at school. As part of our commitment to equity, the Board will prioritize assisting families who need assistance with Internet connectivity.

School supplies and equipment

Students should have their own school supplies, and the sharing of school supplies should not be permitted.

If a device such as a Chromebook is being scheduled for alternative use, it must be wiped down with sanitizer wipe before changing users. Disinfecting wipes and/or an isopropyl alcohol solution will work on electronic devices. There is little evidence to suggest that the virus is transmitted from paper-based products. Waiting 24 - 72 hours as a precaution is still advised.

Fire drills

Practice drills will continue. Classes will move throughout the building while maintaining 2 metres between students in the classroom, hallway and at all exits. Each Principal will review with staff where to go in case there is a real emergency, and the school needs to be evacuated. Locations on the school playground or field should be identified that would allow for a 2 metre distance between students to be maintained.

Lockdown drills

Physical lockdown drills will not take place during COVID-19. A drill will take place that reviews the procedures in the case of a real life-threatening situation. The modified practice drill must adhere to physical distance requirements.

Sharing of learning materials with each cohort

Learning activities for all grades will be placed in the Hapara workspace. Parents/students will access this information from the parent portal and the Board Learning Management system, Hapara. When students are not in school for face to face instruction, they can still access an educator throughout the day for support. Students in class and students out of class will be working on the same or similar learning activities, and there may be opportunities for mixed cohort group work through distance learning platforms.

Curriculum and assessment

Educators have the authority to use their professional judgment to focus on key areas of the curriculum rather than try to teach all items in the curriculum guidelines. The wide variety of educational resources, including those rich digital resources created or accessed during the first phase of distance learning will be critically assessed. Educators will use this transition phase to determine the most impactful resources available that will allow them to move from a low-level-fact based curriculum to rich resources that require critical thinking and problem-solving. Assessment practices will take into account the pandemic conditions and allow both flexibility and multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding and application of key concepts.

Submitting assignments

Where possible, assignments will be submitted electronically using the Hapara workspace for which all teachers and students have access. For physical assignments that must be submitted, it is recommended that a location be established in the class to leave assignments rather than directly approaching the educator. While there is no evidence that COVID-19 virus is transmitted via paper, for added precaution, it is recommended that all assignments that are returned are placed in an area for a minimum of 24 hours before being assessed by the teacher. Where this is not possible, educators are reminded to wash their hands after handling materials submitted by students.

Opportunity for impactful reform

Our Board's Deep Learning model will be used to design learning activities in-person, in distance learning, or in a hybrid learning model. The pandemic provides a unique opportunity to focus on classes that are more engaging, centred around our students' lives and interest while using professional judgment as to areas of the curriculum that do not need to be taught as they have been in a traditional school year. Project-based learning should be encouraged to provide opportunities for students working from home to work together virtually with students in-class. To be proactive, in case of a requirement to move into adapted models of delivery or full distance learning, staff are encouraged to create groups from possible members of Cohort A, Cohort B, and those that may be involved in full distance learning.

Distance learning and global competencies

Educators will consider how time spent in distance learning could be used to develop the six global competencies: creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking, character and citizenship. As we look at student passion and student agency, there are many opportunities to expand learning beyond the walls of the classroom. Distance learning provides an opportunity to focus on the learning environment and learning partnerships that do not require an in-person connection with classroom educators.

Physical Education, Science, The Arts, and Technology-based courses

These courses may continue with the educator putting in place curriculum modifications to ensure that physical distancing is maintained. The sharing of equipment is not normally permitted. Where equipment is needed for different classes, the equipment must be sanitized before use. Grade level physical education activities that can be introduced while maintaining 2 metre distancing will continue. Student safety and guidelines will be reviewed and adapted as needed during COVID-19. Staff will follow the Board guidelines including: Return to School Physical Education and Health Guidelines, Student Safety guidelines for Creative Arts, Technological Education, and Science Laboratories.

Music

The safety of students and staff will require additional procedures for music classes and bands, including the disinfection of instruments and classroom layout considerations. In most cases, students

should be assigned their own instruments. Full precautions will be followed based on the Ontario Educators' Association - Framework for the Return to Music Classes. Staff will also refer to the OCSB Creative Arts Safety Guidelines. According to Public Health, there is no clear evidence that wind instruments increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Instruments should be assigned to only one person and appropriate cleaning practices must be in place. A 2 metre radius should be maintained with appropriate physical distancing.

Learning commons (library)

The learning commons may still be open to students; however, a procedure must be put in place for the handling and return of books. There is no evidence that COVID-19 virus is transmitted via paper-based items such as books. For an added precaution, it is recommended that all books that are returned are placed in an area for 24 hours before being returned to display areas. Students may access the learning commons to borrow books. Schedules must be created that will allow for 2 metre distancing by all students in the learning commons at the same time. Clubs such as makerspaces and robotics will only be able to function without crossing cohorts or sharing resources or equipment. School Principals may also decide to move a larger class into the learning commons to allow for more distancing opportunities.

Sports – intramurals and interscholastic games

Individual sports may continue with proper hygiene and physical distance in place, as long as this does not impact cohorts that have been put in place as a health and safety measure. Team sports continue to be “on hold” until it is safe for team sports to resume.

Fitness Rooms and Equipment

Physical fitness has been shown to have a positive impact on well-being, both physical and mental. Schools that wish to allow the use of their facilities must ensure that proper cleaning procedures are in place for all equipment that is used. Staff/students must agree to clean all equipment before and after use and maintain 2 metre distances from others who may be in the room simultaneously.

Field trips

School staff will only plan virtual field trip experiences until the province has indicated that larger gatherings can take place.

Contactless payments

To reduce the handling of cash, schools will be required to promote the use of Cash online. Point of sale terminals will be investigated for each high school and then some high volume elementary schools.

Breakfast programs

Breakfast programs can continue with the provision of 2 metre distancing and additional cleaning of the area on a daily basis. Grab and Go format will be implemented, and students will eat in their classroom cohort. Surfaces, bins, and containers used in all food preparation areas will be disinfected before and after each use.

After school activities

There will be no large gatherings until we receive direction from the province that these activities can resume. Students can collaborate online for clubs and after school activities.

What systems are being used for instruction when the student is not at school and is not able to take in-person instruction since only half the class can be at school each day?

All staff will be using three designated tools to streamline communication with students and parents. The learning activities will be placed in the Hapara Learning Management System. Hapara is similar to Google Classroom but includes enhanced tools not included in the free version of Google Classroom. Online instruction and academic support will take place using Google Meet video conferencing tools. Students may choose to participate using audio-only, or audio and video conferencing. The new Parent portal will be used for school to home communication.

How will my child with an individualized education plan (IEP) be supported when they are not taking part in face to face instruction?

Your child's accommodations will be respected, just like they would if your child was in class. Your child will continue to receive help from a resource teacher and/or educational assistance if that is what would have occurred in a school setting.

How will the Board meet the teacher collective agreement since teachers are entitled to preparation and planning time and can't be expected to be face to face and supporting students online for 5 hours per day in a high school environment?

Your child's assigned classroom teacher will spend 150 minutes in face to face instruction (two and a half hours) each day with one of the cohorts, and will spend 75 minutes in online instruction each day with both cohort A, and cohort B online at the same time. This will allow your child to interact with the entire class and not just their assigned cohort. When the classroom teacher is working on preparation and planning without students, or teaching in-person with the other cohort, your child may be working on assigned activities and will have access to academic support online from another teacher from your child's school.

6- Hygiene and Cleaning

The Planning and Facilities department is responsible for the training of staff and instruction of cleaning requirements.

Hand washing

Soap and paper towels will be refilled as needed on a regular basis. Ottawa Public Health has advised that hand dryers can be used in school settings. For those who do not wish to use washroom hand dryers, a supply of paper towels will also be available. Classrooms that have a water supply will be provided with hand soap and paper towels.

Hand sanitizer will be placed at the front entrance of every school and in every class and refilled when supplies are available.

Touchpoint cleaning

Cleaning will take place in all high contact areas including desks, tables, railings, door handles and other surfaces throughout the school. Where a school is open to the students all day, the cleaning will take place at the end of each day with high touchpoint surfaces cleaned throughout the day. Where a school is open based on shifts such as alternating days, touchpoint cleaning will take place throughout the day and between the rotation of student cohorts. In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands should be cleaned and disinfected at minimum twice per day when visibly dirty.

As students and staff return to school, cleaning routines will be based on the advice from Ottawa Public Health and directions from the Ministry of Education in consultation with the Medical Officer of Ontario. An additional 1.1 million dollars has been allocated for additional caretaker staff/hours to support our school environments in 2020-2021.

Special attention

The caretaker team at each school will focus on high touch surfaces, including door handles, railings, water fountains, faucets, and areas such as bathrooms, cafeterias and kitchen areas. Special attention will also be focused on classrooms and the isolation room when anyone is sent home for exhibiting any signs of illness.

Cleaning products

The Board will continue to use asthma-safe, hospital-grade green-based cleaning products where available. Scent-free products continue to be recommended for cleaning.

The Board caretakers are responsible for: cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting. Cleaning involves removing dirt, while sanitizing reduces germs from surfaces up to 99.9%; and disinfectants destroy bacteria and prevent them from spreading.

Student desks, chairs, and tables

Classroom cleaning should focus on frequently touched surfaces such as door handles and light switches. Student desks, chairs, and tables should be cleaned between cohort changes where possible.

Atomizer machine

The Planning and Facilities department has ordered multiple atomizer machines that will be brought into any school where there is a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19. These machines will provide another level of surface disinfection where needed. These electrostatic sprayers when combined with Clorox, kill bacteria and viruses while sanitizing surfaces.

Water fountains

Water fountains can be used for refilling personal water bottles but should be marked that they should only be used for this purpose and not for taking a drink at this time.

Garbage and recycling

Classroom garbage will be collected and disposed of daily. All garbage pails/bins should be lined with plastic bags.

The mixing of cohorts is discouraged during the pandemic. For this reason, students will be asked to bring home all containers and recycle in their own home rather than at school. Schools can continue to recycle items such as cardboard boxes from school-based deliveries.

Resources referenced

A complete list of resources referenced during the preparation of this Return to School document, can [be found here](#).