



August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020

A heartfelt Welcome back and Hello to our Cootes Families!

We hope that you have had a relaxing summer of adventures and memories. While this year our start up will look different, our school staff is committed to welcoming our families and students in a manner that ensures the safety and well-being of students and staff. We would like to take this opportunity to share important updates with you as we prepare for our September start.

#### **A Reminder: Deadline Extended for Elementary Pre-registration**

This year, families have the option to attend in-class or remote learning. Families are required to complete the Elementary Pre-Registration form located in the Parent Portal. The Board has extended the elementary pre-registration deadline to **Thursday, August 27, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.** If you are experiencing challenges with the pre-registration process using Parent Portal, please complete the Parent Portal Issue Reporting Form. If you are unable to access to Parent Portal by the extended deadline, please use this Alternate Method to Select Elementary In-Person or Remote Learning Form located at the following link: <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/blog/alternate-method-to-select-elementary-in-person-or-remote-learning/>. Please note that families who have not selected remote learning will *automatically continue to be enrolled for in-person* learning at their school. If you have any specific questions about this process, please do not hesitate to connect with us at the school.

#### **Lower Class Size**

In order to support safe and physical distancing, at a recent Board meeting trustees voted to reduce class sizes. This plan includes the hiring of up to 86.4 additional elementary teachers and 54 designated early childhood educators. This plan also includes the use of up to 77 additional classrooms. This will support reduced class sizes in kindergarten and grades 4 to 8. Current class size caps for grades 1 to 3 can accommodate physical distancing. *Please note that with this change there may be changes to the teacher your child was assigned in June.*

#### **Staggered Start**

Based on changes from the province, the Board continues to modify reopening plans. In order to continue to ensure a safe reopening and introduce students to new health and safety routines, HWDSB is staggering the first two weeks of school reopening. This means that students will return according to the dates and cohorts set out in the model below. Students attending school on September 8 and September 9 will receive a scheduled time to come to school and will then attend according to their last name on the following days.

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 7	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11
<b>LABOUR DAY HOLIDAY</b>	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health	<b>GROUP A</b>  Last Name Alpha A to K (approximately ½ class)	<b>GROUP B</b>  Last Name Alpha L to Z (approximately ½ class)
MONDAY SEPTEMBER 14	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18
<b>GROUP A</b>  Last Name Alpha A to K (approximately ½ class)	<b>GROUP B</b>  Last Name Alpha L to Z (approximately ½ class)	<b>ALL STUDENTS RETURN TO SCHOOL (Full Classes)</b>	<b>ALL STUDENTS (Full Classes)</b>	<b>ALL STUDENTS (Full Classes)</b>

### School Day Details

School administration and custodial staff are currently in the building preparing information for a smooth transition into the new school year for all of our students. Specific details about what the school day will look like for your child will be shared before school starts. Details will include cohorts, safe staggered entry, timetable information, washroom use, nutrition breaks and outdoor learning, and other enhanced public health measures.

### Requirement for Masks for all students K-12

To further enhance safety measures for all students and staff, non-medical masks will be required for students in kindergarten to grade 3 in addition to grades 4 to 12, while they are indoors. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students. A process will be outlined for students to receive their masks. Recognizing that many students may experience difficulties wearing a mask, the Board is working with public health to develop exceptions, and guidelines related to when masks can be removed. Staff will be wearing medical masks and face shields.

### Transportation

Families who are eligible for busing will receive a message to declare their intention to use transportation. The deadline for submitting your intention to decline transportation is Tuesday, September 1, 2020. More information will be available on the HWSTS (Hamilton Wentworth Student Transportation System) website.

### Moving Forward

As plans for the safe return of our students continue, we encourage our families to remain informed through the HWDSB Covid website at <https://www.hwdsb.on.ca/about/covid19/>. If you have any specific school-based questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the school.

We continue to focus on ensuring the safety and well-being of our students and staff, as we prepare to welcome our Cootes families in September.

Sincerely,

Mr. Fede & Mrs. Gojsic