



Earl Kitchener Elementary School

Earl Kitchener Families!

October 2020

First and foremost, a HUGE thank you for the ongoing help, patience and support in what has been an incredible start up and return to school process.

We appreciate that the past weeks and months have presented numerous challenges including a constantly moving landscape of information. We trust that the regular updates provided through the Director and Board Chair are helpful in answering many 'big picture' questions and we are doing our best to keep up with the many school specific questions ... thank you again for your understanding.

There have been numerous changes to past practices in order to align with direction from Public Health and the School Board in our efforts to help keep everyone safe.

To that end, a number of items to please note:

Students are required to wear **masks** while in school (outside is optional for children and considered a 'mask break' for many). Please speak with your child around proper use and teaching staff have come up with strategies for safely storing masks during outdoor time.

There are **seating plans** for classrooms and for the school bus that we maintain for Public Health in the event that they require contact tracing. Students arriving by bus in the morning are accompanied and proceed to the back playground where they join their classmates in the appropriate designated 'class pod space'.

Wherever possible, no items should be dropped off during the day for students ... while we DO attempt to accommodate and understand that naturally things may be forgotten, with the current protocols in place, this has become even less convenient and generally requires having the student come down and meet a caregiver outside while staff supervises from within.

Students should **come dressed comfortably and suitable** for PE classes/DPA (Daily Physical Activity) each day.

Students must bring a labelled (first and last name preferably) **water bottle** from home as we are not using water fountains ... students fill bottles at Hydration Stations.

Please do your best to pack a '**litterless lunch**' for students (including cutlery) ... it's the green way to go and also allows students to remain in their seats during eating time while reducing the presence of possible contaminants.

Making up for lost time ... we have been spending a significant amount of time these past few weeks teaching children safety protocols related to our 'new normal'. That said, we are also extremely conscious of the fact that many students missed out on robust learning during the school closure period in the spring and teachers are working hard to bridge any gaps. We will always be mindful of safety and yet we are also focused on classroom assessments to determine any skill gaps in order to respond accordingly with curriculum content, programming and instructional strategies to support student learning.

Speaking of safety, we have applied a 'phased approach' to our entry/exit procedures as well as to our outdoor spaces for students throughout the course of the day. Initially we taught students/classes to only use their classroom 'pod spaces' however we have now been able to safely expand areas during Nutrition Breaks and for DPA which has allowed for more active play. We will be looking to reintroduce the use of equipment (provided to classes) in the coming days/weeks as appropriate. We are also reminding students daily about the need for physical distancing whether they are inside or out and continue to teach students alternatives to games that would involve 'touch'.

Parents/Guardians ... please remember that when on school property (even at the front of the building/main entrance), **adults are required to wear masks**. *As an ASK, it would also be helpful and model appropriate distancing measures for children if you would consider please wearing a mask and trying your best to distance from others before and after school at the various gates ...* VERY difficult we know but helpful and thank you in advance for what you are able to manage. **Please also be as quick as you can leaving when students are dropped off in the morning and after school with students at dismissal.**

As an additional safety measure, please also consider downloading the COVID app. The link to download is on the HWDSB website under Enhanced Public Health and also here;

https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-alert.html?&utm_campaign=gc-hc-sc-2021-0024-10653701173&utm_medium=search&utm_source=google-ads-104719809029&utm_content=text-en-451610636601&utm_term=covid%20app%20canada

Our next (virtual) **School Council meeting** is on Tuesday, October 6th @ 7:00 p.m. for any interested caregivers who would like to join us. Please consider coming out (so to speak) to learn more about what's happening here at EK and perhaps how to become involved. If you would like to be invited, please email School Council at earlkitchenerparentcouncil@gmail.com

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out and thank you for the continued help and support in making Earl Kitchener School a safe and great place to be!

Mr. Thorne, Mme Kucic and the staff of Earl Kitchener School.