

September 7, 2020

Dear MJ families,

This is the first day of school like no other. I want to thank you for your patience and understanding as we as a school, a school board, and a province take a few more days to ensure we can provide you with an environment and staff that are ready to go.

The past weeks and months have involved many numerous challenges including a constantly moving landscape of information. Ministry of Education and Director and Chair of the HWDSB board updates were hopefully helpful in answering many of the big picture questions. However, I expect you have many more school specific questions. To that end, the information below is provided.

There are a few important caveats to keep in mind prior to reading these specific items. First, the expectations below have been developed by HWDSB and Public Health with a priority of maintaining the health and safety of our students, their families, and our staff. At times, they may seem overly restrictive but have been carefully thought out to meet very specific requirements. Second, procedures and protocols may continue to evolve and change as new information from various sources (e.g. Ministry of Education, local and provincial Public Health, HWDSB Board of Trustees and Executive Council) is provided. When changes are made that affect board or school procedures, that will also be shared on the school website. I strongly encourage all of our families to subscribe for updates to the website to stay up to date.

We are taking many actions to prevent COVID-19 at our school. You will notice that safety is guiding our programming choices. Here are some of the important points to remember:

### **Attestation**

Before a student can enter a school, we require that their family completes an attestation that they have read, understood, and will abide by expectations. Find this on the [Parent Portal](#). ([Backup location](#) for forms and translations.)

### **Daily COVID-19 Screening**

HWDSB COVID-19 Student Screening Checklist is to be completed daily before arriving at school. The checklist is found on the Parent Portal as well as on the [HWDSB website](#). If you answered YES to any of the screening questions, or if you refuse to answer the questions, the student has failed the screening and must not attend school. The family should contact Public Health (905) 974-9848 or their family doctor for testing. Please contact the school using [SafeArrival](#) to report the absence. If the student is tested for COVID-19, your school would appreciate knowing the outcome of that test.

**Staggered start details** As you know, we will be opening our school with a staggered start timeline. This means that not all students will begin on the same day. Please see the chart below, note which group your child falls into, and reach out if you have more questions:

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 7	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 8	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 9	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 10	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 11
<b>LABOUR DAY HOLIDAY</b>	Staff Transition to New Assignments  Remote Learning Day School Training	Staff Transition to New Assignments  Remote Learning Day School Training	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health  JK Orientation  Remote Learning Day School Welcome	Students that Require Special Education Supports/Supports with Transitions and Mental Health  JK Orientation  Remote Learning Day School Welcome
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>

## Current Procedures and Processes

**General Procedures 1. All students Kindergarten to Grade 12 are required to wear non-medical grade masks throughout the school day** (exceptions are while eating at nutrition breaks and when outside in a cohorted area only in the company of their classmates). Please speak with your child on how to safely store their mask during outdoor time (e.g. Lanyard, paper bag kept in pocket, fanny pack) as they are required to wear them to exit and enter the school and must stay with each individual student.

**2. All students attending in person must have a completed attestation recorded.** Your child will not be allowed to attend school until this is on record. A staff member will be following up with individual families on September 8 and 9 to ensure all students have this completed.

**3. Parents/guardians are required to conduct a daily screening on all students before any school day attendance.** It is very important to keep your child home if there are any items on the screener that your child can't meet that day. To see the health screener, please see the Resource section of this post or go to the provincial site at: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/selfassessment/>

**4. Students will remain with their class cohort for as much of the instructional day as possible. Students will only be able to work and play with their classmates while at school.** Travel within the school and for entry/exit will be regulated to attempt to keep different cohorts of students physically distanced from one another.

### Bus Procedures

**5. There will be a seating plan on all school buses.** Families will be seated together and all students will not be able to deviate from their seating assignment. Students must be in masks even while waiting outside for the bus, and practice physical distancing. Students are expected to follow all bus rules at all times or could face temporary or permanent removal from the bus if rules are not followed. There is no courtesy busing available at this time. Any families unsure if your child is eligible for busing should contact the Transportation department directly at 905.523.2318. It is important to note that the Transportation department is reporting that they are anticipating extreme delays in transportation due to a significant bus driver shortage. I encourage families who are using Transportation to sign up for updates on their website: <https://www.hamiltonschoolbus.ca/parents/default.aspx>

## **Travel To and From School**

6. If your child is not taking school bus transportation and families are choosing to drive, please ensure our bus lane (front of the school) is left open for buses. We encourage you to safely park and be at the school no earlier than 8:40 am. The bell rings at 8:45 am.

We ask studentsto proceed to the playground walking along the side of the school using the walkway.

## **Entry/Exit of Students**

7. Your child's teacher(s) will be in touch with you this week to review certain policies, such as where your child's class zone will be on the playground. Once students arrive at the school by bus or parent drop off, they will need to go directly to their classroom playground zone and practice physical distancing on their way to those zones. Students need to wear their masks during entry and exit to the playground due to the large volume of students expected in the vicinity.

8. Parents/guardians, younger siblings and other visitors during entry/exit are asked to stay outside of the playground zones areas to allow as much physical distancing as possible. If next week is your child's first time attending MJ, one adult can walk your child to the appropriate playground zone (while masked and practicing physical distancing) on the staggered entry day. We ask all adults approaching the school for entry/exit or other reasons to please ensure you have also completed a successful self screening that morning, wear a mask and remain physically distanced from other adults and students.

## **Nutrition Breaks**

**9. Students will remain in their classrooms, in their assigned seats to eat their lunch.** While they are eating and remain seated, they may remove their mask, but must put it on again once they are finished eating and before they leave their seat. It is important to note that educators on duty will need to remain physically distant from the students, so students need to be able to independently open and close all containers and independently remove and put on their masks.

**10. Litterless lunches.** In order to keep students in their seats when unmasked, and to reduce contaminated items from our classrooms, we are asking all students to take home any uneaten items and garbage from their lunches.

**11. Students will spend half of each nutrition break outside in their class playground zone.** When our field conditions allow, some classes will be rotated onto field zones as well, to provide more physical play opportunities. We will be going outside in all kinds of weather, with the exception of dangerous conditions (e.g. thunderstorm, temperature below -15), so please ensure your child has appropriate outer clothing to face the conditions.

## **Additional Outdoor Time**

**12. Some of our classes, such as Phys Ed. and Music, will frequently be held outside.** Additionally, classroom teachers are encouraged to bring students outside whenever possible for both instructional times and additional physical activity. When students are kept in their cohort and supervised by their teacher, they will be allowed to remove their mask once outside. Early in the school year, students will be taught a number of new games and activities that can be played while cohorted that rely on minimal equipment and support physical distancing.

## **Parent/Guardian Access to the School**

**13. Visitor access to the school, including by parents, will be strictly minimized.** Students will need to come prepared for the day without parent drop offs of additional items through the day. Please make sure your child has all needed items before they leave the house, including: food for two nutrition breaks a reusable (labelled) water bottle that the student can open and close by themselves, enough non medical

masks to support your child through the day, and a means to store the mask on their person while outside, backpack, a change of clothes in a ziplock bag (for our younger students and for any students you feel may be prone to needing a clothing change) (optional) a personal use hand sanitizer – must be no bigger than 60 mL. (NOTE: all classes will have access to hand sanitizer, so this is personal preference only for families) Clothing suitable for wear outside to be physically active (running shoes, comfortable clothing, outerwear appropriate for the weather conditions)

**14. No volunteers will be allowed in the school at this time.**

**15. If you need to drop off your child late, please make sure that you have recorded the late in School Messenger, and then allow your child to come into the school on their own.** Once they are buzzed in the main doors, staff will advise the student to go directly to their classroom, to be met by their educators there. Families are strongly encouraged to plan appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. If there is a time when you need to pick up your child early, please record it in School Messenger in advance. When you get to the school, please ring the bell and advise the office of who you are here to pick up. The office will then send that student out the front door to you. (Please note, there may be delays in pick up if students are learning outside at the time). It is important that ALL families use the School messenger website, app or phone number to record all lates, early pick ups and absences this year. Messages about attendance cannot be taken via the school office phone.

**16. If your child is isolated due to a concern about observed or reported symptoms, it will be extremely important for families to pick up the student immediately.** Please make sure we have your direct and up-to-date contact information, plus information for additional emergency contacts, to support this important Public Health directive.

#### **Access to Hallway Hooks**

**17. At this time, students will not be able to use hallway hooks.** Teachers will work with students to determine where student personal items will be stored in the classroom. For the most part, all personal belongings will stay with the student in their desk/chair space unless the classroom can facilitate in class storage while still maintaining physical space between each child's belongings.

#### **Umbrella Before/After School Attendance**

18. If your child will be attending Umbrella programming, please be advised that they will also be facing a number of additional protocols that support public health requirements and align with HWDSB procedures. Please check with Umbrella to learn specific details of their plan. The school has taken efforts to align our school day class placements as best we can with Umbrella attendance (as of September 4, 2020) to reduce student cohorts wherever possible. As well, classroom spaces shared by Umbrella and MJ school classes will be disinfected between cohorts by caretaking staff.