

HWDSB

August 11, 2020

Dear families,

With schools reopening in less than a month, we want to allow families time to plan as students go back to class. Communication with you will resume weekly. These important updates will answer questions and support the safe transition to school. We will also attempt to ease the anxiety felt by parents, guardians and caregivers, as well as students and staff.

This week's update is based on the following report that we encourage all families to read: [School Reopening \(COVID-19 Pandemic\) Update #3](#). This information is posted at www.hwdsb.on.ca/covid19.

HWDSB's return to school plan aligns with the Ministry of Education's [Revised Guide for Reopening Ontario Schools](#) plan, released July 30, and their [Guidance Document to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#).

HWDSB Reopening of Schools Overview

Elementary School	Secondary School	Remote Learning School
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conventional return to school where students attend every day• Enhanced public health measures (outlined below), including mask wearing for students grades 4-8 and optional for students K-3• Bell times do not change• Students will stay with their class for the day, including nutrition breaks• Outdoor play and recess will continue• Devices used during the closure will be collected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adaptive return to school, alternate day rotational model (in-person and remote learning)• Students attend 145 minutes in-person based on their cohort (A or B) on either Monday, Wednesday and alternate Fridays or Tuesdays, Thursdays and alternate Fridays.• Following an 80-minute transitional time, students will engage in 3, 40-minute periods of remote learning (adjustments for 5 period day schools)• Enhanced public health measures (outlined below), including mask wearing• All students will have access to a 1:1 device	<p><i>Grades K-8</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full instructional day of learning from a dedicated teacher(s)• Standardized digital learning environments (The Hub and MS TEAMS)• Students enrolled can go in and/or out of the Remote Learning School – dates include October 13, January 4 and March 22 <p><i>Grades 9-12</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• eLearning courses available for those wanting to learn remote only• Students can contact their school between August 31 and September 4 to explore timetable changes

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Before school starts, parents, guardians, and caregivers will need to do the following:

- 1. Pre-registration:** The return to in-person school is based on parent choice.
 - **Elementary:** We will be asking elementary parents, guardians and caregivers, starting Monday, August 17, through a form linked from our enhanced Parent Portal if your child(ren) will be learning in-person or remotely. Within the Parent Portal, you will be directed to your child's profile and then the Forms tab listed on the left menu column. The pre-registration survey will start Monday, August 17 and will remain open until Friday, August 21. There will be three points in time where elementary students can move from remote to in-person learning (October 13, January 4 and March 22).
 - **Secondary:** Students in secondary schools who select eLearning courses for remote learning only should contact their school during the week of August 31. We encourage students to speak with their guidance counsellor to help them support their decision based on their learning needs.
- 2. Student Screening Declaration Form (Attestation):** In consultation with Hamilton Public Health, screening will have two components:
 1. An HWDSB document outlining the screening criteria and symptoms that would require a student to remain at home and/or be required to learn the school along with necessary steps needed prior to return. ***This declaration form must be completed before your child(ren) can attend school in-person and will be available on Monday, August 17, in the Forms section of the Parent Portal. While the pre-registration for elementary is open August 17-21, the Student Screening Declaration Form, which is for all elementary and secondary students, will stay open.***
 2. An individual's responsibility to perform the screening on a daily basis and to take the appropriate actions including a notification process.

The Pre-Registration Form (Elementary) and the Student Screening Declaration Form (Elementary and Secondary) will be available on the Parent Portal starting August 17-21. A secure email, like our report card process, will be sent to you through School Messenger on Monday to create your Parent Portal account. You do not need an Ontario Education Number to activate your Parent Portal account. Learn more about the [Parent Portal](#) and the many features that this digital platform can do to support parent engagement and strong home-school connections.

Transportation

Parents, guardians and caregivers of students eligible for transportation will be contacted by Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services (HWSTS) starting Monday, August 17 through a School Messenger email. You will need to indicate if you will not be sending your students on the bus. You will be directed to a link where you will be asked to opt-out of transportation. Please have your Ontario Education Number (OEN) ready when you receive the email. If you do not have your child's OEN, please

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contact 905-527-5092 or email info@hwdsb.on.ca. Important highlights related to transportation include:

- Routes are being planned based on existing school start and end time for all eligible riders
- Courtesy transportation is suspended until further notice
- Students enrolled in the elementary remote learning school and secondary students enrolled in full e-Learning course will be expected to opt-out of transportation
- Students that have chosen not to use transportation services can re-register for busing on October 13, January 4, and March 22

Enhanced Public Health Measures

Leading to the first day of school and beyond, you will notice that our communication will be focused on promoting enhanced public health measures. Everyone has a part to play in helping to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread. Visit our [website](#) for details including cleaning, masks, hand hygiene, cohort descriptions, ventilation, signage, outbreak protocol and more.

Class Sizes

Trustees recognize the need for a reduction in class sizes. Among the many reasons, smaller class sizes, fewer reorganizations and greater system stability would be created if physical homeroom classes included reserved seats for full remote learners who may return. Trustees directed staff to work with the Ministry of Education to provide full funding to achieve lower elementary class sizes that average 15 students for Kindergarten to grade 3 and 20 students for grades 4 to 8.

Students Requiring Special Education Supports and Services

In order to mitigate the effects of school closure and support the transition back to school, we are expanding summer learning program offerings for students who access Special Education programs and services. For more details, please visit our [Specialized Services section](#) on our return to school webpage.

Next Steps

With four weeks remaining prior to the first day of class for students, there is an urgency to act on several areas. Everyone is working towards a successful and safe return to school. As we prepare for our reopening, we want to hear from you. If you have questions or need help finding information, please email info@hwdsb.on.ca or call 905-527-5092. Follow us on [social media](#) for highlights of this update.

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education