

# HWDSB

September 30, 2020

Dear families,

Throughout this month, we have been involved in an unprecedented shift in how we conduct school operations. There have been challenges and many examples of success. We thank families, students and staff for their cooperation and participation in our new routines.

We want to update families in order that we continue to work together to keep our schools safe for students. A [School Re-opening \(COVID-19 Pandemic\) Update #5](#) is now available. Key elements from this report include our focus on enhanced public health measures, supports for students and learning.

## **Remote/In-Person Transition for Elementary Students**

The first transition date, originally communicated as October 13, is delayed and will begin November 3. Many factors contributed to this decision, including the staggered start, the significant demand for remote learning, the additional time needed to assess school level space in order to maintain physical distancing, and the anticipated number of changes to student and staff class assignments.

Parents and guardians will be able to submit their intention to choose between remote and in-person school programs starting Monday, October 5 in the Parent Portal. More information will be shared this week as we prepare for this next transition.

## **Student Absence and Health Procedures**

Each family can do their part by remaining informed on the process if their student fails the daily screening checklist or becomes symptomatic. We have provided a section called [Student Absence and Health Procedures](#) to help families make decisions about their child/ren staying at home and the next steps about how the exclusion process works. Please note that the [Student Screening Checklist](#) has been updated to be consistent across the province. As a reminder for secondary students, if you are absent from your in-person class, it is the expectation that you will be completing your work independently.

## **Remote Learning Elementary School Update**

We thank families in the Remote Learning Elementary School for their support as we create this new school. There are 8,266 students learning remotely in the English-language program and 490 students in French Immersion. We have 322 homeroom classes, each with a teacher assigned. Our newest hires are contacting families today and tomorrow. We are now distributing devices on an as needed basis.

Our educators have been working hard to get to know their students as learners and as people. Remote learning is about connection rather than being “live” and on-screen all day. Students should experience a mix of large group sessions and then time for individual or small group learning. If you have questions, please view our [Frequently Asked Questions](#), or email us at [remote@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:remote@hwdsb.on.ca).

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## 2020 Graduations

In the spring of 2020, staff were hopeful to have fall graduation ceremonies for the 2020 graduates. The public health measures restrict us from having both indoor and outdoor gatherings. We regret to inform families that we are cancelling these events for the 2020 graduating class.

## Transportation

Starting this week, HWSTS begins a [planned rotation of cancelled bus routes](#) to respond to the school bus driver shortage. The strategy will cancel routes on a prescheduled rotating basis, allowing families to make alternate transportation plans for their children during their route rotation. This is our regrettable reality this year, and we apologize to all our impacted families. We continue to seek additional options.

## School Council

Parents may engage or participate in this learning in a variety of ways, including School Council. Due to COVID-19, however, many procedures have changed. We are working through our Parent Information Committee and a team of administrators to provide guidance to School Council in virtual ways. Information about elections, our School Council handbook, and an invitation for the School Council Start-Up session will be shared once available.

Stay well and be safe,



Manny Figueiredo  
Director of Education