

HWDSB

September 9, 2020

Dear families,

With the new school year about to begin, we know that many families are anxious to hear more about their child's return to school. Today, we are sharing important information about requirements, preparation and planning for the return to school.

We have missed seeing students and we are excited to welcome them back remotely and in schools with new safety procedures. This week, we are starting to welcome some students back in our staggered schedule.

Elementary Timetables

Elementary staffing continued over the weekend and student timetables are being entered into our student information system. Elementary timetables are now available on the [Parent Portal](#).

Transportation

We expect serious transportation delays as school returns, due to the ongoing school bus driver shortage compounded by COVID-19 concerns. Families can now find bus route information on the [Hamilton Wentworth Student Transportation System \(HWSTS\) Parent Portal](#). Routes with the greatest impact will be highlighted. Check the HWSTS Parent Portal often, and before the first bus pick-up, to find the latest updates about possible delays.

Return to School Procedures

HWDSB worked closely with Hamilton Public Health Services on the [Return to School procedures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our school communities](#). To help you become familiar with the new routines, please review the procedures with your children. Please direct specific questions about your school to your child's teacher or principal.

Elementary – Remote Learning School

Staffing continues for the 200-plus classrooms in our Remote Learning School. Parents and guardians can expect to receive an email from the school's principal this week. Teachers will directly contact parents early next week.

Secondary – Remote Orientation (September 10 and 11)

Secondary schools are coordinating orientation sessions to welcome students remotely Thursday and Friday. Teachers will provide a 75-minute orientation for their period one classroom. Teachers are to connect with their Period 2-4 courses to introduce the course and technology to their students. Courses will start next week. Families should contact their school if they have not been contacted by Friday.

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Daily Screening

The Student Screening Declaration Form (Attestation) must be submitted **once** for **each** child before school begins. Once school starts, you are then to perform the Student Daily Screening for each child before the child comes to school each day. (Daily screening is only for those attending school in person.) The Student Daily Screening form is a checklist for at-home use only and **does not** need to be submitted. You can find both forms on the Parent Portal or at bit.ly/HWDSBCOVIDscreen

For a limited time, each morning starting September 14 we will remind families to get in the habit of doing a daily screening. We need families to keep their child/ren home if the child has any COVID-like symptoms. Staff will also be screening themselves daily for symptoms.

Outbreak Protocol

HWDSB will inform students, families, and staff about confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our schools, in alignment with Ministry of Education guidelines (Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools). We will post information on our website when we receive Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) confirmation of a confirmed COVID-19 case involving a student or staff member in a school setting. To protect their privacy, we will not identify the student or staff member that has tested positive for COVID-19.

More information will be shared this week as Hamilton Public Health Services is coordinating efforts related to the Outbreak Protocol with all four local school boards to discuss a common approach to responding to a potential outbreak of COVID-19.

Ventilation (HVAC)

We are ensuring that the air in schools is as fresh as possible in occupied spaces. Licensed mechanical contractors have gone through each school to verify that ventilation equipment is operating according to manufacturers' recommendations. Ventilation reports are available for each school.

In addition, we have also purchased 150 air purifiers with filters to aid with filtration and ventilation for rooms/areas where there is insufficient air flow. We will be performing "air flushes" of all spaces before occupants re-enter the buildings. Mechanical systems will run starting at 6 a.m., before students arrive.

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education