

# HWDSB

September 16, 2020

Dear families,

Welcome back to this very different school year. We want to start by thanking all HWDSB staff who have gone above and beyond to support students and families. We also wish to thank families for their patience as we adjust and learn new routines with enhanced public health measures in place and work to create a new sense of normal in this phase of the pandemic.

## **Daily Screening**

As agreed in the [attestation](#), families have a responsibility to screen their child daily to ensure that they stay home from school if they have COVID-like symptoms. The daily screening checklist, also found on the [Parent Portal](#), must be reviewed, but does not need to be submitted.

## **Public Health Nurses**

The province has provided funding for public health units to add [Public Health Nurses](#) specifically to support COVID-19 related matters in schools. Public Health Nurses work with schools to support the health and well-being of children and youth. Parents can contact the Public Health Nurse if you have any questions about screening and symptom. Email [healthyschools@hamilton.ca](mailto:healthyschools@hamilton.ca) to contact your Public Health Nurse or call the Hamilton Public Health Services phone line at 905-974-9848, ext. 5 for general questions about COVID-19.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) changes for staff**

Based on the information from the Ministry of Labour, there has been a modification to the PPE protocol to allow staff to wear face shields inside only when physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be assured. A mask will always be required be staff inside the school. When outside, a medical mask and eye protection must be worn when physical distancing of 2 metres cannot be maintained, otherwise it can be removed.

## **Student belongings/items in school**

Students are asked to bring their mask, a labelled water bottle, and hand sanitizer of 60 mL or less (optional). Masks must cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaping. Homemade furniture, barriers and the like in schools are not permitted. For safety purposes, we need to use standardized equipment that meets all legislative, safety and building code standards.

We encourage students to bring a lunch and to put all their garbage, utensils, and containers back in their lunch bag, which will go back in their backpack or school bag. There will be no sharing of food or containers. Public Health has been consulted on these measures to ensure we provide a safe environment for students and staff.

# HWDSB

## **Enhanced Health Protocols**

This year, many new protocols are affecting our schools. Families will be interested to learn that we have posted protocols related to four important topics: students and staff who fail the daily screen for COVID-19 symptoms, and students and staff who show symptoms of COVID-19 during the day. You can find these and all of the new, COVID-related protocols on our [website](#).

## **Remote Learning Day Update**

For parents of elementary students attending our Remote Day School, please visit the [school website](#) to read the latest information from our administrative team. If you have questions, please view our [Frequently Asked Questions](#). If you have further questions, please email [remote@hwdsb.on.ca](mailto:remote@hwdsb.on.ca).

## **Transportation**

Despite considerable additional funds provided by our Board and the Provincial Government, as well as a complete re-routing of our transportation system (routes), we continue to experience a significant bus driver shortage. Despite measures implemented to date, including the ongoing driver incentive programs and unprecedented recruitment, we do not see this matter improving in the near future.

Unlike other boards/consortia, we have not as of yet cancelled routes so as to mitigate against the bus driver shortage. Saying that, we may have no other alternative to do so if this situation does not improve. We say this to express our regret for any disruption this causes our schools, students, and families. Unfortunately, the level of disruption is not likely to go away soon and we will continue to keep you informed.

Taxi companies are also experiencing a shortage in taxis and drivers. HWSTS is reviewing possible solutions and will be communicating with the families that are affected.

## **HSR (Hamilton Street Railway) Passes**

All schools which have HSR eligible students receive a package from transportation towards the end of August. Eligible students will receive a letter from school staff outlining the steps required to receive their pass. The letter is self-explanatory and provides key information for students. Students take their letter to the HSR ticket office at the Hamilton Go Centre, where it is scanned into the portal, and a pass is issued. The passes are valid the first day of school till the end of the semester. In January we repeat the process for second semester.

## **Kids in Crisis Town Hall**

The Children's Health Coalition and McMaster Children's Hospital are hosting a Town Hall to encourage action in response to the impact of the pandemic on children, youth, and their families. McMaster Children's Hospital has partnered with other provincial children's hospitals and organizations to lead this effort.

# HWDSB

The Children's Healthcare Coalition has identified wait times and delays to care as urgent issues which will have lasting impacts on the mental health, development, and physical well-being of kids. The coalition is calling on the Ontario government to invest \$375 million in children's health care to alleviate the suffering of more than 160,000 children and families who are desperately waiting for mental health treatment, hospital surgeries and procedures, child development and rehabilitation services, and pediatric home care services.

The coalition is hosting the [Kids in Crisis Town Hall](#) on Thursday, September 17, 2020, at 7 p.m. for everyone – pediatric healthcare and service providers, parents, caregivers, teachers, government representatives and others – who is concerned about the health of our children and youth to discuss this issue.

[Register for the Town Hall here](#) and [learn more](#).

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone  
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo  
Director of Education