

# HWDSB

March 11, 2022

Dear families,

As we head into March Break next week, families may be wondering what schools look like when students return to class. This week's announcement by the Ontario Government has provided us with more details on how schools will operate from Monday, March 21, when students return to class after the break. We expect more information to be released in the coming days.

Here's what you need to know right now:

<b>Lifting of Health and Safety Measures in Schools:</b>	Measures including cohorting, distancing, immunization disclosure, confirmation of screening and more will be lifted as of Monday, March 21. Families are strongly encouraged to continue daily screening and to stay home when sick. Full details can be found on our blog. <a href="#">LEARN MORE.</a>
<b>Masks in Schools:</b>	The Board of Trustees approved to continue the Board's mask mandate for students and staff until April 15 to continue their commitment to a responsible, gradual response to lifting COVID measures. As this motion goes beyond the provincial guidelines, the Chair of the Board is in active contact with the Ministry of Education to gain clarity on next steps. We will provide families and staff further communication and clarity on mask requirements as soon as possible, and prior to March 21.
<b>For Families Travelling Abroad:</b>	Under current federal travel regulations, individuals returning from international travel (including the U.S.) who are exempt from quarantine must wear a mask at all times when in public spaces (including schools and childcare), maintain a list of all close contacts for the first 14 days in Canada, and monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Visit the <a href="#">Government of Canada</a> website to learn more about international travel restrictions and exemptions.
<b>Gradual Changes in Schools:</b>	Each school community will have different wants and needs. As measures are lifted, activities such as fundraising, volunteering, excursions, events such as open houses, art performances and spectator sports will be resumed in a thoughtful and gradual way. Adjustments to classroom setups or use of shared materials and spaces will be determined at the school level after the March Break. <a href="#">A full list of changes and unchanged measures can be found on our blog.</a>
<b>Visitors and Volunteers:</b>	Families are reminded that all visitors to schools are required to sign-in with the school office upon arrival. Schools will need time to implement processes for intake, documentation, screening and orientation of volunteers as outlined in our <a href="#">Volunteer Policy and Procedure.</a>

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We know reactions to COVID measures vary within our community. COVID-19 has challenged many of us when it comes to our mental health and well-being. These sudden changes may be difficult for some to adjust to. Families looking for additional support are encouraged to explore our [existing mental health and well-being resources](#).

We will continue to provide updates to our families as more information is received. Expect an additional communication to be shared with families next week before the return from March Break. As the March Break begins and spring draws nearer, we ask our families to be kind, stay vigilant, and respect the choices people make for their comfort and personal safety. Please use your best judgment when determining your own risks and protect your community by self-screening and staying home when sick.

Sincerely,

Dawn Danko, Chair of the Board  
John Bryant, Interim Director of Education