

HWDSB

September 1, 2020

Dear families,

With the new school year around the corner, we wish to share the following updates with you from our recent [Board report](#) and that have been shared on our [website](#).

Parent Portal

Most of the concerns related to the [Parent Portal](#) have been resolved. You will start to see HWDSB staff use its many features. Our IT department continues to respond to incoming requests for support. Parents and guardians will know their change is resolved when they receive an email from info@hwdsb.on.ca. Technical support is available through the [Parent Portal Issue Reporting Form](#). Please note, you should not use the PowerSchool parent app as it holds limited content and will not be available in the fall.

Parents and guardians are asked to visit the Parent Portal, if the following applies:

- **Student Screening Declaration Form (Attestation):** Screening for COVID-19 symptoms and remaining home is one of the strategies which support minimizing the risk and potential spread of COVID-19. Attestations, located in the Parent Portal, are mandatory for all students attending school in-person. This form must be completed and provided to the school by Tuesday, September 9, 2020 or your child will be denied access to attending school for safety reasons. Please contact your child's school if you have any questions.
- **Student Mask Attestation Exception Form:** This form in the Parent Portal, which will be available on Thursday, September 3, is for students who have underlying medical, developmental, sensory or mental health reasons which inhibits their ability to wear a non-medical mask. Exceptions are also for children unable to remove the mask without assistance or anyone who has trouble breathing in the manner.
- **Timetables and Cohort Information:** Parents can access "My Schedule" located in the Parent Portal to find your child's timetable and cohort information. Elementary families will not see current changes to timetabling information until the elementary staffing reorganization is complete. Final timetables for elementary students should be available by September 8, 2020. Please check back at that time and disregard the current timetable information in this section.
- **Study Hall Form:** This form is available in the Parent Portal. Secondary students staying in their school for the afternoons for remote learning on the days they attend in the morning will need parental consent to indicate their option. Students will remain at school for remote learning (Instruction is still delivered remotely) or they will come home for remote learning. Safe Schools policy requires us to have parent consent on whether students will be leaving school or remaining for their remote learning.

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Transportation:

Parents of students who are eligible for transportation were asked to declare their intentions not to use transportation by today, September 1, 2020. The Hamilton-Wentworth Student Transportation Services Portal will open once the bus routes are determined and families can expect information to be shared widely through HWSTS.

Students Requiring Special Education Supports or Services

- This week, Office Administrators from each school will contact parents or guardians of students who have pervasive need to schedule a transition visit aligned with our staggered entry schedule. Visits will be approximately 30 minutes followed by a 15-minute break to disinfect and follow hand hygiene protocols. Families will meet their child's principal or vice-principal. Classroom educators will facilitate the visit, model social distancing, share enhanced public health measures and review routines. Information about [HWDSB learning4success](#) resources, including social stories, found in the transition section of the site, will be shared.
- Students in self-contained classes in both elementary and secondary schools will be attending schools daily, following a staggered entry. Students in elementary school regular classes will attend daily and students in secondary will attend with their cohorts A or B. Learn more in our section related to [Specialized Services Supports](#).
- System staff from Specialized Services will reintroduce supports and services for students in school buildings as well as those participating in remote learning.
- School-based staff, such as Learning Resource Teachers, will resume direct and indirect supports to students such as delivering the Empower™ Reading Program. All educators in the school building, including Educational Assistants and Child and Youth Care Practitioners, are poised to support reintegration into school.

Return to School Safety Protocols

Return to School Protocols, including the provincial outbreak protocol, will be posted to the HWDSB website in the days ahead. Schools will also be sharing site-specific plans and routines for families by the end of this week. For example, Board-level protocols may cover guidelines for physical distancing, while local schools will relay specific details about bus loading, entry routines and other school-specific procedures.

Remote Learning Elementary School

The Remote Learning Day School will open with approximately 6,300 elementary students. Teaching staff are excited to connect with students and families on September 10 and 11. We are on track to welcome students in our staggered start to instruction starting the week of September 14.

The school will operate on a schedule or 'bell time' from 9:00 am to 3:20 pm. This will include 300 minutes of learning activities and two, 40-minute nutrition breaks. The school will offer both English-language and French Immersion streams, Mohawk Language and, where possible, other specialized programs. Regular attendance is expected and will be taken daily.

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Visitors to schools

This year, schools must significantly limit or even prohibit visitors to school, including parents, to maintain a safe and healthy learning environment. We ask families to call or email their school if they need to provide information or contact a staff member. Also, it is strongly recommended that parents do not drop off items during the school day. Additional details will soon be communicated through the Return to School Protocols.

Stay well and be safe,



Alex Johnstone
Chair of the Board



Manny Figueiredo
Director of Education