RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

September 2020
The WECDSB reopening plans incorporate a risk reduction strategy based on the best evidence provided by the Ministry of Education, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, the most recent Sick Kids Hospitals recommendations for school reopening, and research from other school jurisdictions throughout the world.

We recognize that some people may still have further questions after reading this report. Please stay tuned for further updates as we intend to communicate more specific operational details as they become available.
REOPENING OUR SCHOOLS

Screening
School Arrival
Physical Distancing
Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette
Suspected cases and positive test results
Personal Protective Equipment
Cleaning
Transportation
Recess and Playgrounds
Visitors
Lunch and Food Services
Child Care
Community Use of Schools

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Scheduling
Pre-Registration
Students with Special Needs
Remote Learners
Mental Health
Specialized Programs
Cooperative Education and OYAP
Music Programs
Physical Education
Extracurricular Activities

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OFFER FEEDBACK ON THIS PLAN, YOU CAN DO SO BY SENDING AN EMAIL TO returntoschool@wecdsb.on.ca
Ensuring that students and staff are symptom free before entering any of our schools will be of critical importance.

Prior to entering the school, all staff will be required to complete a self-assessment on a daily basis. Staff members will promptly notify their principal or supervisor if they fail the daily self-assessment. Staff must stay at home, self-isolate, and contact the Windsor Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) for further direction. Staff members who are ill will follow normal procedures for reporting absences.

Parents are required to assess their children daily and disclose whether they are experiencing any signs of illness, and are expected to keep them home if they are. Parents will be provided with a checklist to perform daily screening of their children before arriving at school.

Signs with all of the self-assessment screening questions will be posted on the exterior doors of our schools.

Staff members will be provided with information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in children so that appropriate action can be taken if children develop symptoms during the day.
**Elementary:**
Prior to the first day of school, all families will be notified of their child’s teacher and designated entrance door. Upon arrival at school, students will proceed directly to their designated entrance door and enter their classroom.

Protocols for Kiss and Ride programs and drop-off/pick-up will be reviewed by principals and communication will be provided to parents. Key parameters to be reinforced will include physical distancing, students walking two meters apart – no hand holding, hugging, and parents are to remain in their vehicles.

Students will be assigned designated entrances/exits.

**Secondary:**
Schedules will be emailed directly to secondary students.

Entrance and safety protocols will be communicated to students and parents through the respective principal prior to the start of the school year.
Maintaining proper physical distancing between students and staff whenever possible is extremely important.

At the elementary school level, classes will resume according to a conventional model. When students are not in their classrooms, all efforts will be made to ensure that students maintain appropriate physical distancing. Schools are encouraged to remove unnecessary furniture and place desks with as much distancing as possible, and to allow teachers as much teaching space as possible.

At the secondary level, class sizes will be limited to approximately 15 students, except in those instances where the physical classroom size allows for a greater number of students with proper physical distancing measures in place.

Principals will review the specific design of their buildings and ensure that controls are in place to maintain distancing in hallways, washrooms and any common areas. This will include: staggering start and/or end times for classes to avoid crowded hallways; posting signs and marking traffic flow directions on walls; having specific staff to monitor halls and washrooms; limiting the use of washrooms; and/or reducing the number of washrooms that will remain open.

Principals will review their school office area and formulate a plan that will ensure the safety of office staff if physical distancing is not possible. This may include protective barriers, face shields, etc.

Gymnasiums may be used for additional classroom space if necessary.
Proper hand hygiene is one of the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses including COVID 19.

Students and staff will be encouraged to wash their hands regularly, practise proper respiratory etiquette and to avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth. Regularly scheduled hand hygiene breaks will be incorporated into the school's routine.

Wall mounted and/or free-standing hand sanitizer dispensers will be placed at entrances and exits, and hallways.

Parents are encouraged to send their children to school with personal hand sanitizer if possible.
We are working with our partners at the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit to develop procedures and protocols that are based on the most recent data and evidence to monitor and respond to reports of COVID-19 symptoms.

Any student who experiences symptoms of illness while in school will be immediately separated from others, in a separate room where possible. Isolated students will be supervised, physical distancing maintained, and personal protective equipment provided.

Schools will notify parents/caregivers immediately and they will be told to pick up their child from school as soon as possible. Parents will be directed to consult their health care provider.

Parents or guardians should immediately inform the school if their child has tested positive for COVID-19 and will not be attending school.

If a staff member develops symptoms of illness, they will be directed to return home and seek medical attention. If they cannot leave immediately, the staff member will be isolated in a specific area until they are able to leave.
Schools will report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school to the local health unit.

To support successful case and contact management, schools will ensure records of classes, transported students, and visitors to the school are maintained and readily available to be provided to public health for contact tracing purposes.

In the event that a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit will manage all of the contact tracing, with support from the Board.
Students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Outdoor times like recess can be used as opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks within their cohorts.

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in indoor spaces. Students are encouraged to practice wearing masks and learn what type of mask is most comfortable for them. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students. Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply.

School-based staff who are regularly in close contact with students will be provided with appropriate personal protective equipment.

If masks are worn, students and staff will be instructed to perform hand hygiene before putting on and after touching or removing their mask.
Cleaning protocols will be enhanced as a method of reducing the likelihood of transmission.

Additional temporary cleaning staff will be hired for the duration of the pandemic and will be responsible solely for enhanced cleaning protocols which follow the guidelines of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. They will focus primarily on cleaning and disinfecting touch points throughout the day, with special emphasis on most often and commonly touched surfaces including fountains, door knobs, sinks and other horizontal surfaces.

A room by room analysis has been completed and any area rugs, soft furnishings or other items that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected will be removed and stored.

Students and staff will also be encouraged to promote constant and good cleaning practices.
Windsor-Essex Student Transportation Services (WESTS) is working with the four coterminous school boards to develop a return to school transportation plan that will align with each of the boards’ return to school programs. WESTS is also working closely with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit on the development of social distancing and cleaning protocols for the buses.

There will be significant changes to transportation provision and procedures to support the physical distancing guidelines that will affect your child’s transportation. We will communicate plans and decisions as they are finalized. Please check back on this site or [www.buskids.ca](http://www.buskids.ca) for the latest updates.
Elementary students will have opportunities to enjoy recess. Recess times will be staggered to support cohorting. Playground structures will be closed to students until further notice. Hand hygiene will take place prior to and following outdoor activity times.
At this time, only essential visitors will be allowed to enter the school and must do so by making pre-arranged appointments.

Parents will not be allowed to enter schools at this time, except in case of emergency.

Communication between parents and teaching staff or administration will be through phone calls or email.

Visits to ensure school safety, such as inspections by fire prevention officers or by public health, will continue to take place.

Any visitors to a school will be required to self-screen and to wear a medical mask while on school premises.
LUNCH AND FOOD SERVICES

Students will be required to bring their own food as cafeteria food sales will not be available.

The use of common spaces such as cafeterias, learning commons, and auditoriums will be scheduled by the principal.

At the elementary level, students will be encouraged to bring healthy snacks which they will be allowed to eat at their desks. Students will not be allowed to share any food.

Established Snack or Breakfast Programs will be modified to offer students prepackaged or individualized snacks. Parent volunteers who would typically oversee the programs will not be utilized at this time. Such programs will be maintained by school staff.
There are a variety of child care partners who provide Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board families with child care options.

We continue to work closely with our child care providers to ensure that child care and before and after school programming are available to support children and families. Families seeking child care services are encouraged to contact the child care providers directly to discuss availability of programming.

More information can be found on our Board's website at https://www.wecdsb.on.ca/programs/child_care
All community use of our schools will be cancelled, and will be reevaluated at a later date.
At the elementary level, we will follow a conventional school day with enhanced safety measures. All students will attend a full day of school, five days a week.
At the secondary level, we will use an adaptive “quadmester” approach where students will attend two periods a day rather than their usual four periods. Each period will be approximately 150 minutes in duration.

Students will be divided into Cohorts (A and B) and will attend school on a two week alternating schedule (three days in the first week and two days in the next week).

Students will take their first two periods from September 8 to November 11 (including two days for exams). Students will then take their next two periods from November 12 to February 1 (including two days for exams). On the days that students are not in school, they will be expected to access their classroom virtually. Students will be provided with details on how they can attend online.

The designation status of school boards will be reviewed regularly by the Ministry of Education to support a future transition into a conventional delivery model when it is safe and appropriate to do so.
Parents will be asked to declare whether their children will attend school in person beginning September 8, or opt for remote learning. This pre-registration is a requirement for both elementary and secondary students. More information on the pre-registration process will be provided soon.
At the elementary level, we will follow a conventional school day with enhanced safety measures. All students with special needs will attend a full day of school, five days a week.

At the secondary level, students with a high level of special education need, participating in alternative non-credit courses and/or who have a developmental diagnosis requiring intensive intervention and teaching support, will have the option to be assigned to Cohort C and attend every day that secondary schools are open. With parent/guardian consultation, these students will be assigned to one class and will remain in that class for the duration of the required safety measures.

Students with special education needs who are participating in regular credit programs and/or working toward fulfilling Ministry curriculum expectations will be assigned to Cohort A or B and attend as per the adaptive model described above in the secondary scheduling section.

For all students with special education needs, accommodations and/or modifications will be implemented as outlined on their Individual Education Plan (IEP). In developing and updating IEPs, changes to the learning environment and remote learning needs will be considered.
Teachers, educational assistants and other special education staff essential for daily academic programming in the classroom will use personal protective equipment when physical distancing is not possible. Other special education services such as Speech Language, Psychology, etc., will be scheduled and provided outside of the regular classroom area respecting all necessary safety requirements.

In addition, for students who are medically fragile, consultation with the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) and parents will take place to create, and implement, plans to support the health and safety needs of the student and the staff who work with them.

Consultation between parents and the school will take place to successfully plan for the transition of students with complex needs.
The Ministry of Education has indicated that returning to school will be voluntary.

We will provide remote distance learning to students whose parents choose not to send them to school. Parents will be asked to indicate their intentions at a future date and plans will be developed to provide those students with access to curriculum.
We understand that students may have been struggling with mental health issues such as anxiety and depression as a result of school closures and isolation.

In preparation for the return to school in the fall, all mental health related support staff will be available during the two weeks leading up to the return to school. This will permit a multidisciplinary approach to supporting students who have been identified as having difficulties with coping and adjustment, and for whom the return to school may cause anxious feelings.

Our mental health professionals and school administrators have been provided with additional training specifically for supporting students who are dealing with mental health issues related to COVID-19. Our teachers will be provided with additional training and resources to better identify students who are struggling in order to refer them to the appropriate services.

Parents who feel that their children require mental health support should call their school office after Aug. 24 or call one of the following services: https://www.wecdsb.on.ca/students/student_well_being/mental_health
Sports Academies at Central Park Athletics and Community Facilities

The WECDSB is committed to continuing to offer our sports academies program at Central Park Athletics in the safest way possible. We continue to take the recommendations and guidelines received from Central Park Athletics and provincial sport organizations under advisement to provide safe and engaging programming.

We will communicate directly with sports academy students about our specific plans for those programs, but in the meantime, we are considering a number of safety measures and alternatives if we need to go to an alternating day schedule, which include:

- Promoting physical distancing
- Limiting the number of students in each classroom
- Limiting the number of students in each class on to the ice, pitch, or court at any time
- Limiting gymnastics activities that have many touch points (bars, pommel horse, rings, etc) and working with our community partner to ensure proper sanitization of shared equipment
- Staggering change room times, providing additional change rooms or closing them altogether are being considered
- Should change rooms be closed, students would be required to wear loose fitting athletic wear to participate in activity days
• Academy students will follow a similar schedule as their peers on main campus.
• Activity days will be scheduled to complement in class instruction with their teacher and skills expert. The frequency of activity days will be determined by the schedule / timetable adopted in accordance with Ministry of Education direction.
• Reinforcing messaging to students and staff about proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
• Ensuring that students do not share water bottles, food items and equipment.
• In the event that equipment is shared between students (ex. baseball bat), proper sanitization will be used during transition from student to student and class to class.
• Working with CPA ownership to ensure proper safety measures are followed.
Depending on the community facilities’ policies and protocols, and the recommendations and guidelines we receive from provincial sport organizations, we may be able to run these programs in smaller groups during this time.

Cooperative Education and Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

All cooperative education and OYAP students will attend work placements, however coop instructors will be required to conduct a site visit and placement assessment to ensure that it is a safe environment, that students are following protocols specific to the site and are in accordance with the Ministry of Education curriculum (i.e. Virtual Monitoring if required). Students will also be required to complete a pre-placement preparation module that includes a unit on COVID-19 preparedness. Sector-specific training and certification will be provided prior to the work placement for OYAP students.
Music Programs

In elementary schools, music will continue to be delivered during the first phase of return to school. At this time, students will receive lessons that focus on theory and music appreciation. Instruments will not be distributed. There will be no singing or performances at this time. Health and safety protocols, including physical distancing, continue to be applied.

At the secondary level, semester one instrumental music classes will begin without the use of instruments. The Ontario Music Educators' Association and COVID-19: Recommendations for School Reopening from SickKids (July 29, 2020) have provided guidelines to support the continuation of music. At this time, the focus will be on theory. Once it is determined safe to return to performance based lessons, all equipment, including instruments, used by students must be properly sanitized. Once sanitized, students will be assigned one instrument for the entire semester, not to be shared or they may use their own. As per past practice, students may choose to rent their own instrument. There will be no singing or performances at this time. Health and safety protocols, including physical distancing, continue to be applied.
Physical Education

The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association is working on resources to support the continuation of the physical education curriculum adhering to public health safety protocols. These resources should be available in August. Where possible, consideration will be given to holding physical education classes outside. All equipment used by students must be properly sanitized. In the event that equipment is shared between students (ex. baseball bat), proper sanitization will be required prior to transition from student to student and class to class.
Initially, there will be no extracurricular activities or field trips. We will monitor the situation and make decisions about these activities on a case-by-case basis.

Any large gatherings such as assemblies will be cancelled for the foreseeable future.