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## **Halifax West School Back to School Plan**

### **ALL of Us Together Inclusive**

The lengthy at home learning followed by the summer break, will have created a variety of different responses, needs, and strengths for students. This period has underscored that schools are an important part of the fabric of the lives of individuals and provide more than traditional learning for our students. Schools also support the physical, social, and emotional well-being of students.

When teachers and school staff begin to welcome students back in September, they will also have regular check-in and informal assessment opportunities for students and their families. This will allow teachers/school staff to:

- Plan how best to address any unfinished learning from the previous year
- Build on the areas of student's strength as a way to address any gaps or unfinished learning
- Enhance the student's learning experience and create culturally safe spaces by incorporating the various cultures and history of students in the school into their lessons, known as culturally responsive pedagogy
- Identify additional supports that may be needed to support the student's well-being and learning
- Schools will place an emphasis on helping students successfully transition and catch up on any unfinished learning. This will be most effective if students have their check-ins with teachers or staff members that are familiar to them, and with whom they feel a connection. Teachers and staff will focus on gaining an understanding of where each student is with respect to the learning after the disruption in spring 2020.

### **Screening**

We will clearly communicate to families the need to monitor your child daily for symptoms before sending them to school. The COVID-19 Daily Checklist will be used for public schools. We will provide families with an updated copy of Nova Scotia's COVID-19 daily checklist at the beginning of the year. Our School staff will keep a copy with them at the office and designated drop off areas. We will remind students and families frequently to

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self-screen to ensure their child has no symptoms. Families with bussed children will be directed to self screen every day before putting their child on the bus. Staff will review this screening tool requirement with students and families prior to the year beginning.

An electronic copy of the COVID-19 Daily Checklist can be found at:

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Daily-COVID-checklist-en.pdf>

### **Visitors**

The school will limit outside visitors, including parents/guardians. Drop offs and pickups will be done outside, and people will not be allowed to congregate in groups outside the school, as per the COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Schools. Use of schools after hours by other organizations will be limited.

### **Student Transitions**

We will adjust the school's timetable to help cohort our students into fewer groupings per day and to reduce the number of transitions throughout the day. The start and end times of the day will remain the same, as will the amount of the instructional time the students receive. We will have only two classes per day instead of four / five. This will reduce the amount of class changes the students will have per day as well reduce the amount of students they will be in class with each day. The updated schedule will be communicated to students and families prior to the beginning of school.

### **Transportation**

Transportation for all eligible children from grade 10 to grade 12 will be provided. Because physical distancing will not always be possible, as per the Public Health order, children and students whose parents want them to ride the school bus will be required to wear non-medical masks. Drivers will also be required to wear masks. While riding school buses, children and students from the same household must sit together. Buses will be cleaned twice daily. High touch surfaces such as handrails will be cleaned before and after each run. See Appendix A for more detail. A small number of students with sensory or health issues may not be able to tolerate wearing a non-medical mask. Parents of these students are asked to consult with the school to develop a plan for their children.

### **Lockers**

Lockers will not be available to students this year to maximize physical distancing in the hallways. Students are encouraged to have a backpack to carry all necessary school and personal items.

### **Student Arrival**

Buses - Buses currently arrive in a staggered format. Staff will encourage students to maintain physical distancing while entering the school. Bus students will enter through the cafeteria doors. Students will go directly to their first period class.

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) Drop Off - Parents are asked to drop off students between 8:50 am ~ 9:05 am in the designated drop off loop. These students will enter through the main entrance. Students will go directly to their first period class.

Walkers - Walking students are encouraged to arrive between 8:50 am and 9:05 am. These students will enter through the rear doors(s) to the school. Students will go directly to their first period class.

Metro Transit - Arrival times vary. Students are encouraged to arrive at 8:50 am and 9:05 am. These students will enter using the door nearest their first period class. Students will go directly to their first period class.

### **Departure**

Buses - Classes end at 3:20 pm. Buses currently depart in a staggered format. Staff will encourage students to maintain physical distancing while exiting the school and encourage them to use the entrance closest to their classroom to exit the school.

Parent(s) / Guardian(s) Pick Up - Classes end at 3:20 pm. Parents are asked to pick up their students between 3:20 pm and 3:40 pm in the designated drop off loop. Staff will encourage students to maintain physical distancing while exiting the school as well as encourage them to use the entrance closest to their classroom to exit the school.

Walkers - Classes end at 3:20 pm. Staff will encourage students to maintain physical distancing while exiting the school and encourage them to use the entrance closest to their classroom to exit the school.

Metro Transit - Classes end at 3:20 pm. Students are encouraged to arrive at 8:50 am and 9:05 am. Staff will encourage students to maintain physical distancing while exiting the school and encourage them to use the entrance closest to their classroom to exit the school.

### **Lunch**

We will provide a number of designated classrooms where the students can eat their lunch. However, an emphasis will still be placed on keeping groups of students together and maintaining physical distancing. Students can also eat their lunch outside as well as leaving the school to go home for lunch or eat their lunch offsite. Students will not be permitted to eat in the hallways and corridors. We will encourage the students to eat their lunch with their fellow students in their current cohort of classes each semester. Children will continue to bring their lunches daily from home, and there will not be the ability to

heat up a child's lunch. We are currently working with our outside food service provider to be able to offer this service to students and staff. At the beginning of school our cafeteria will not be open and we will notify students and families when this changes.

### **Nutrition**

The schools will continue their breakfast program, with necessary adjustments to ensure health guidelines are in place to continue to provide food for students.

### **Cleaning**

The school will have enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Use of appropriate disinfectants and practices will be used. Schools will be cleaned daily with an enhanced emphasis on disinfecting surfaces and common areas, including classrooms. In addition, high-touch surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day.

### **Hygiene Practices**

Frequent hand washing is important for everyone entering the school. Hands should be washed with soap and water for 20 seconds or an alcohol based hand sanitizer (with a minimum alcohol concentration of 60%) should be used.

Our school will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer in areas throughout the school at entry points and at the entrance of classrooms.

It is important to practice hand hygiene (wash hands or use hand sanitizer) often; including but not limited to:

Before:

- Entering the school/classroom
- Eating/drinking/handling food
- Outdoor activities

After:

- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Blowing your nose
- Outdoor activities
- Eating/Drinking
- Cleaning

Practice cough etiquette by coughing and sneezing into your sleeve or a tissue and discard immediately. Avoid touching your mouth, nose or eyes. Avoid sharing personal items (i.e. backpacks, hats, lip chap, food/drinks, etc.)

Signage will be posted to encourage hygiene practices.

### **Ventilation**

Our school will work together with the HRCE Operations Department to ensure that ventilation system operates properly and is routinely maintained and that air exchange is increased by adjusting the HVAC system

We will open windows when it is safe to do so.

### **Physical Distancing / Cohorting / Grouping**

Our school will offer the same classes and same curriculum but the schools and daily school routine will look slightly different. For instance, students can expect to see lots of hand-cleaning stations in their schools, lots of signs about the importance of good hand hygiene, and more teachers and staff wearing masks. Desks will be physically separated in classrooms, and there may be staggered timetables to reduce children and students mixing in the hallways. Teachers will be encouraged to move classes outside where possible, and exercise will be promoted. A reminder to students to wear appropriate clothing (jackets, footwear, sunscreen). Masks will be mandatory in schools for students in grades 4 to 12 when in hallways, common areas, or classrooms when physical distancing cannot be maintained, and all students will wear masks when on buses.

### **Schedule**

We will be adjusting our schedule to 2 periods a day in order to reduce the number of student and staff transitions throughout the day. There is no structured break during the classes but teachers and students will be able to take a break within their classrooms during the block. We know this will be quite a change in practice and there will be some time with your departments to discuss these on Sept 3 and 4 and ongoing throughout the year.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:10 am ~ 11:50 am	A	C	B	D	A
11:50 am ~ 12:40 pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
12:40 pm ~ 3:20 pm	B	D	A	C	B

Note: Fridays will change weekly (Week 1 - A / B, Week 2 - C / D, Week 3 - B / A, Week 4 - D / C). These will be posted in advance on our school calendar.

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As students arrive we will be ushering them directly to class, so teaching staff will need to be in their classrooms at 8:50 am each morning if they are teaching that block.

### **Washrooms**

Each washroom has signage indicating the maximum capacity. Students will be encouraged to use the washroom on the same floor nearest their classroom. Students will be expected to sign in and out of their classrooms when they leave and return.

### **Monitoring Staff, Students and Essential Visitors for Symptoms**

**Staff:** We will instruct all staff to self-monitor daily for symptoms of COVID-19 at home, using the checklist. Staff must follow the directions as described on the tool. Staff will be notified if the checklist is updated.

**Students:** Before school begins and regularly throughout the year we will clearly communicate to families the need for their child to be monitored daily for symptoms before attending school. The checklist is on our website and will be provided to students at the beginning of the school year and reviewed regularly throughout the year. We will send home a copy via email to families prior to school opening and throughout the school year. Families and students will be notified if the checklist is updated.

**Essential Visitors:** Before entering a school, essential visitors will be directed to complete the checklist and confirm that they have no symptoms consistent with COVID-19 and are not required to self-isolate. We will keep a list of all essential visitors that entered the facility with confirmation that they have been screened.

### **Outbreak Management**

In the event that a case of COVID-19 is confirmed to be connected to our school, Public Health will provide additional guidance on the required actions. Public Health is responsible for case management and contact follow-up of all COVID-19 cases, and for determining the need for individual or public notifications. One (1) confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school would be considered an outbreak. We will maintain daily records of class/ cohort lists including location of staff and essential visitors. Public Health actions and directions may include, but are not limited to:

- Contact tracing, which involves identifying contacts of a positive case and contacting those individuals. This includes, but may not be limited to, members of that individual's cohort if applicable.
- Requesting records that identify cohorts/ groups and class attendance of staff, students and essential visitors in the school for a specified time frame

- Directing need for testing and isolation of individuals that may have been exposed to a positive case
- Assessing need for enhanced environmental cleaning
- Assessing need for school closure (full or partial)
- Our school will work with Public Health to ensure a prompt response to cases of COVID-19 that may have been exposed in or may have attended a school setting.

### **Students Who Develop Symptoms**

- **Plan when student becomes sick during the school day**
  - They will immediately put on a mask if they are not already wearing one
  - Students need to identify to a staff member that they are experiencing symptoms
  - Staff will inform the main office secretary and a member of the school administration will escort them to the the designated area with their belongings
  - Student will be immediately separated and moved to the designated area for isolation (Room B222) while awaiting pick-up
  - Student and supervising staff will wash / sanitize hands
  - Encourage cough and sneeze etiquette
  - Immediately discard used tissues and perform hand hygiene
  - Staff will maintain distance of at least 2 metres when possible
  - Staff perform frequent hand hygiene
  - The family will be immediately contacted to pick the child up promptly
  - Parents are to call 811 or their Health Care provider to arrange testing
  - The areas the student occupied (classroom, sick area, washroom) will be immediately cleaned
  - If the class needs to leave the room, they will be taken to an alternate location

- **Plan when staff becomes sick during the school day**
  - They will immediately put on a mask if they are not already wearing one
  - They will notify school administration that they need to leave immediately
  - A member of the staff will take over the supervision of their class(es)
  - They will leave the building immediately using nearest exit
  - If they are unable to leave immediately they will immediately separate and isolate themselves in the designated area for isolation (Room A244) until they are able to leave
  - All students and supervising staff will be wash / sanitize hands
  - Encourage cough and sneeze etiquette
  - Immediately discard used tissues and perform hand hygiene
  - Staff will maintain distance of at least 2 metres when possible

- Staff perform frequent hand hygiene
- Staff member is to call 811 or their Health Care provider to arrange testing
- The areas the staff occupied (classroom, sick area, washroom) will be immediately cleaned
- If the class needs to leave the room, they will be taken to an alternate location

### **Personal Protection Equipment / Masks**

All children, students, and staff will be provided with two reusable masks. It is recommended that children, students, and staff bring their own masks, whenever possible; however, we will ensure additional masks are available for students who may need one or who forget theirs. Non-medical masks provide an added level of protection when other health measures, such as proper handwashing, are in place. All students in grades 10 to 12 will be required to wear a mask if they cannot physically distance from others, even when they are in a classroom with their cohort. That is, students in grades 10 to 12 will wear a mask unless they are:

- Seated in the classroom at a distance of 2m / 6 ft from others facing in the same direction
- Eating or drinking
- Participating in indoor physical activity where a mask cannot be worn
- Masks are not required for any student during outdoor activities
- All children and students who travel by bus, regardless of age, will keep their mask on at all times while on the bus
- Students, staff and visitors will wear masks in common areas and whenever they are unable to maintain physical distance from others

A supply of medical masks and face shields will be available if needed to supervise students who develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at school. Individuals may choose to wear face shields for eye protection at other times however this does not replace the requirement to wear a mask.

### **Extra - Curricular Activities**

We will endeavor to offer in-school clubs and activities as deemed safe and feasible. Public health considerations will be followed. When the club or activity is led by an individual outside of the school, we will suggest offering the club or activity virtually, instead of cancelling it. The Nova Scotia School Athletics Federation has created guidelines for school sports consistent with Sports Nova Scotia guidelines approved by Public Health. For information on what sports are being offered this fall and throughout the year, along with the modifications please contact our Athletic Director (Mike Smeltzer - SmeltzerM@hrce.ca).

### **Gatherings**



Large gatherings of students will not be permitted, such as in assemblies or cafeterias. We will work with our students to ensure they are respectful of the advice from the Public Health Department. There will be no large in-person gatherings such as assemblies and holiday concerts.

Parent-teacher nights will be held virtually.

### **Distancing**

Physical distancing (2 metres/ 6 feet) significantly decreases the spread of illness. Students and staff will be encouraged to distance as much as possible where appropriate. Hallways will have markings to control flow and help students/staff remember to distance. In addition we will adjust the way we enter and exit the building in order to help students distance when travelling to their classes and throughout the building. In classrooms, desks will be separated to create as much space as possible and arranged in ways to reduce close interaction among students and the sharing of materials or items. Where possible, desks should also be arranged to ensure students are facing in the same direction.

### **Outdoor Activities**

We will strive to move activities/classes outdoors whenever possible, including learning activities and meal times.

We will do this with the weather conditions and the need for appropriate clothing to move activities/classes outside. We will maintain cohorts/groups of students and staff wherever possible in outdoor areas.

Will will reinforce the need for hand washing / sanitizing before and after outdoor activities.

We will not be having field trips until we are advised that these are appropriate following advice from the Department of Public Health (e.g. that requires transportation or requires entry into another facility/building).

### **Sharing**

A “no sharing” policy will be in place. Supplies will be provided to those students who do not have them. If sharing of learning equipment or technology is necessary, the equipment will be cleaned / sanitized between uses.

### **Libraries**

Students will still have access to library resources, but groups of students will not go to the library. Books and other materials will be brought to them in their classrooms. Our school's Library Support Specialist will assist students and staff with requests.

### **Technology**

All grade levels will continue to have technology outcomes. Students will be encouraged to use their own devices in school. Students without personal devices will be provided with devices to use while at school when required by their teacher to complete their school work. Devices will be cleaned between use. Technology will be used to support teaching and learning in all subject areas. This will help students be better prepared to continue to use technology should there be a need to transition to at-home learning. Appropriate schedules will be developed in schools to make use of shared technology, with appropriate cleaning protocols in place. We have deployment plans for all technology should stay-at-home learning be required.

### **Assessment**

To quickly ascertain the entry point to learning for each student, teachers will begin the year with a variety of strategies to get to know their learners. They will use various assessments to determine the programming needs of their students. Some assessments gauge where students are in their learning and skills. Others gauge other aspects they bring to their learning like hobbies, friends, and experiences.

Report cards will be issued for all subjects as in previous school years. Parents are encouraged to sign up for the parent portal in PowerSchool as it allows for families to receive e-report cards. Teachers will give marks and grades in all areas as per normal practice. Provincial examinations (English 10 and Mathematics 10) will take place.

### **100 % / Blended Learning (Reduced Class Size, Older Children Learn at Home) / Learn at Home**

Our plan is for students to return to the classroom. IWK has advised that a very small number of students may need to learn from home for health reasons, and we are taking steps to support those people with a quality education. For everyone else, it will be a nearly normal school experience.

But if Public Health requires a shift in approach, Nova Scotia's education system is ready to move to a different learning model. If there is an increase in COVID-19 cases, the province may require Grades 9 to 12 students to learn from home while younger children – Pre-primary to Grade 8 – learn in school in smaller classrooms. This blended learning model keeps younger children in school but reduces class size to enable everyone to be socially distanced by 2 metres. These restrictions may apply to a single school, family of schools or

entire school regions. These decisions will be made by public health in consultation with regional and provincial education leaders.

In the blended learning model, students who need additional supports of any age and grade and those without internet at home will attend school. Secondary classes with specialized settings, like skilled trades will continue with modified schedules. Additionally, classrooms with socially distanced desks will be made available for secondary students to make appointments for extra help from teachers or others.

If the province moves to a Learn at Home model, there will be enhanced expectations for teachers related to online teaching and learning. Students without internet will receive class assignments via telephone and USB sticks. All students who need a computer or technology device will be provided a device.