



# DSBN Return to School Plan

2020-2021

Elementary

# DSBN RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN

## ELEMENTARY

Although the 2020/2021 school year will be a little different for all of us, we are excited to be together to work and learn!

We want our students and staff to feel safe and comfortable with both the learning models that have been approved by the Ministry of Education and the enhanced safety measures we are implementing to keep our students, staff, and communities safe from COVID-19.

### The Elementary Learning Model: Two Options

#### Option 1: **FULL-DAY RETURN**

Students will attend school 5 days per week, with one cohort (which we will be referring to as one community) for the full day, including recess and lunch. Enhanced health and safety protocols will be in place and are outlined later in this guide.

#### Option 2: **VOLUNTARY LEARN AT HOME**


Parents who make the decision to opt their child out of in-class learning may choose the Voluntary Learn at Home model.

All voluntary learning at home students will be enrolled in a DSBN virtual school. The school will have a principal and staff who are solely dedicated to students who are learning at home. The teacher will be responsible for all curriculum delivery, assessment and evaluation. The content and commitment will be just like a physical school but will be completely online.

This will include specific timelines, a synchronous component, qualified teachers, and rigorous curriculum to keep your child engaged and learning until they are ready to go back to in-class learning.

#### For Children in Special Education

Our educational staff, including EAs will be supporting your child during the 2020/2021 school year. This includes meeting their needs as outlined in the accommodations and modifications outlined in their IEP.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
<b>In-class</b> >	Cohort A	Cohort A	Cohort A	Cohort A	Cohort A
<b>Online</b> >	Cohort B	Cohort B	Cohort B	Cohort B	Cohort B

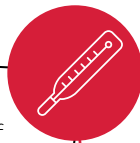
**Cohort A:** Full-day Return

**Cohort B:** Voluntary Learn At Home

# Keeping our Schools Safe Together

## Daily Health Assessment

- Parent completing daily self-assessment of their child
- Mandatory self-assessment of staff



## COVID-19 Symptoms Protocol

- Prevention and response in partnership with Niagara Public Health should a student or staff member have a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19



## Masks and PPE

- Using when mandatory and appropriate for the activity



## Minimizing Contact

- Not sharing instructional supplies
- Personal water bottles
- Restricting visitors into the school
- No assemblies
- Changing classroom layout



## Classroom Communities

- Students learning in same classroom with same teacher
- Option for Voluntary Learning at Home



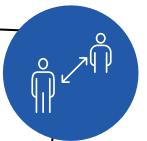
## Mental Health and Well-being Supports

- Together learning from research-based strategies to be strong and resilient.
- Mindfulness strategies to support students with their self-regulation and confidence



## Physical Distancing

- Putting as much space between people as possible
- Directional flow in hallways
- Revising entry and exits



## Hygiene Practices

- Training of and teaching proper skills
- Signage to teach and prompt proper handwashing, coughing and sneezing etiquette



## Signage

- For access, education, and reminders



## Enhanced Cleaning

- High touch surfaces disinfecting after use
- Removing upholstered and soft items



## Training, Teaching & Coaching

- Students learning new skills in class to stay safe
- All DSBN staff trained before school year on COVID-19 specific health and safety



# ENHANCED HEALTH AND SAFETY

Providing a clean and safe learning environment for students has always been important to the DSBN. As part of COVID-19 prevention, DSBN schools will have an enhanced health and safety program.

This program focuses on enhanced cleaning, training, masks and PPE, physical distancing, signage, minimizing contact, daily self-assessments, student communities and more.



## Daily Health Assessment:

We are asking parents to do a screening of their child's health every morning before they go to school. Self-screening is also mandatory for all DSBN staff.

All parents will be asked to sign *DSBN Parental Agreement to Daily Screening of Children* to support the daily screening.

Students and staff who are not feeling well are asked to stay home.



## Class Communities (Cohorts):

Students learning in-class will have most of their subjects taught by their homeroom teacher. They will also have recess and nutrition breaks in these assigned groups.

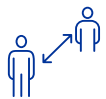


## Minimizing Contact:

Schools will significantly limit visitors, including parents/guardians. Any visitors to a school will be required to conduct a COVID-19 health screening before being allowed to enter.

Students will not be permitted to share school supplies like pencils or math manipulatives.

School assemblies will not be held and clubs and sports are on hold till further notice



## Physical Distancing:

As much distancing as possible between people in schools and worksites will be facilitated. This will be achieved through directional signage, education and encouragement, making changes to classroom set-ups, hallway flow, and much more.

Classroom sizes vary across the DSBN, but schools have already removed unnecessary furniture and will be setting up desks with as much distancing as possible, and to allow teachers as much teaching space as possible. Desks will be faced forward rather than in circles or groupings.



## Hygiene Practices:

All staff will be hand washing regularly and teaching proper handwashing techniques to students. Reminders to wash hands regularly will be posted throughout schools, and sanitizer will be available in every classroom and at entrances.



## Signage:

Signage is an important way to make students and staff aware of how to be safe. Posted signage includes:

1. Entry protocol
2. Physical Distancing Cues
3. Proper hygiene practices and reminders
4. Restrictions for use of equipment, rooms, and how to travel within the school or worksite.



## Enhanced Cleaning Program:

Custodians will clean high touch surfaces such as light switches, handrails, door handles, at least twice per day. Additionally, items that cannot be cleaned or disinfected regularly have been removed including area rugs, upholstered furniture, and soft toys.



## Training:

All DSNB staff will attend Health and Safety training before school begins in September. This includes COVID-19 specific awareness, Screening/Signs/Symptoms, and how to properly wear PPE. School staff will also be trained in how to teach proper hygiene like frequent handwashing and cough and sneezing etiquette to students.



## Masks and PPE:

Wearing masks has been mandated by the Ministry of Education.

It is mandatory for students in grade 4 to 8 and all staff to wear masks. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are encouraged to wear masks. Students who do not have their own mask will be given a cloth mask by the school.

Wearing a mask can be uncomfortable; however, it is an important strategy in keeping students and staff safe. To ease student discomfort with wearing masks, we will be scheduling breaks with students where they can go outside and will not have to wear masks provided they are maintaining a safe distance from one another.

The Ministry of Education will allow exemptions for students who have health conditions that preclude them from wearing a mask. To request an exemption for your child, please contact your school principal regarding the process and documentation required.



## COVID-19 Protocol:

All schools will follow *The Monitoring and Responding to Reports of COVID-19 Protocol*.

The Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and Niagara Region Public Health will work closely with the DSNB to monitor and respond to reports of COVID-19 symptoms. All school boards in Ontario will be required to file a daily report with the Ministry of Education to report new cases, suspected cases and confirmed cases.

Any student or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms while at home will be asked to be tested at a local assessment centre.

Any student or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school will be immediately separated from others in the Designated Health Room until they are able to go home and see their healthcare provider and/or visit an assessment centre.

Staff with symptoms and parents/guardians of children with symptoms will be directed to use the [online self-assessment tool](#) and follow instructions. Persons who test positive may not return to school until they are cleared according to public health guidance. Persons who retest negative (after an initial positive test) can return to school once they are symptom-free for 24 hours.

If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the school, we will notify Niagara Region Public Health immediately. We will support Niagara Region Public Health with their contact tracing efforts.

Niagara Region Public Health will determine any additional steps required.

Information provided to the school community will be provided by the DSBN in consultation with Niagara Region Public Health.

At the school, where an individual is suspected of having COVID-19 cleaning and disinfecting will also take place including:

1. Identifying areas that could have been exposed to the person with the suspected case and clean and disinfect those areas following proper safety protocols
2. Using disposable cleaning equipment where possible
3. Removal of any items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books, etc.) and store them in a sealed container for a minimum of 7 days.



## **Mental Health and Well-Being:**

An important part of transitioning back to school is to focus on students' social-emotional learning skills so they can build resilience, manage their stress, and build positive relationships. Our mental health and well-being staff oversee a tiered, school-based program across the DSBN, complemented by mental health and well-being resources and supports to help students be successful.

## **Timelines:**

**August 10-17** - Parent Return to School Intent Questionnaire: Parents are asked to indicate if they are choosing in-class or online learning for their child

**August 31** – Parent Return to School Guide will be emailed to parents to assist with preparations for the 2020/2021 school year

**August 31** – During this week, your child's school will contact you to let you know what class your child will be in

**September 8** – In-class and online learning students start their first day of school



If you have questions, be sure to visit [dsbn.org](https://www.dsbnschools.org) to read the **Return to School FAQ**, or contact your child's school principal.