



2021-2022 York Catholic District School Board School Re-entry Plan for Families



All York Catholic District School Board schools and transportation will operate with a focus on the health, safety and well-being of students, staff and other stakeholders. We always follow the guidance of York Region Public Health and the Ministry of Education. Classrooms and buses are inclusive and safe places for all students, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, ability, vaccination status or socio-economic standing.

School operations include provisions for in-person and remote learning, as well as synchronous and asynchronous teaching, as necessary. Changes in the methods of assessment and evaluation are addressed and, as always, we are sensitive to the human rights and equity issues that may arise in the learning and work environment. To the extent possible, collective agreements and working conditions are always respected.

To view recent update emails sent to families, please visit: <https://www.ycdsb.ca/reopening/> and select **Parent Communication** from the menu on the right-hand side.

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OVERVIEW

The YCDSB 2021-2022 re-entry plan is based on directives from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, as well as guidance from the Provincial Chief Medical Officer of Health and York Region Public Health. Measures are in place to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 in schools. The health and well-being of all of our students and staff is the underlying principle of all of our COVID-19 related procedures and practices.

A significant change in the COVID-19 status may require that our plans and protocols change as directed by public health and/or the Ministry of Education.

Elementary

Elementary school students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will attend school five days per week, following a regular school day. Remote students attend a separate virtual school with dedicated teachers.

Secondary

Secondary students will attend school five days a week following a regular semester model. Classroom teachers will be teaching their in person students and those opting for remote simultaneously in a hybrid learning mode.

In-person students may use common spaces (for example, libraries) and shared equipment. Cohorting is no longer required.

ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

- Students and staff are required to perform daily COVID-19 screening before arriving at school using the [Provincial Screening Tool](#).
- Staff and students experiencing ANY symptom consistent with COVID-19 must not attend school and should follow the guidance provided in the screening tool, which may include seeking appropriate medical attention as required, and/or getting tested for COVID-19.
- If a student develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school they will be removed from class and parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately to pick up the student.
- Anyone who is sick and has new or worsening symptoms of illness should stay home until their symptoms are improving for 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea) and should seek assessment from their health care provider if needed

Elementary

- Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately for the weather before sending them to school. Parents/guardians are permitted to drop off clothing and other personal items during the school day, however, students should come to school prepared for the weather forecast that day

Secondary

- Students may enter and exit the school building in a regular fashion with no additional restrictions on movement within the building



BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS

- Before and After School programs will operate at regular capacities
- Students from different school classes may interact to participate in the Before and After program
- Before and After programs are required to follow strict health and safety guidelines, equivalent to those in schools

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PROTOCOLS

- High-touch surfaces are cleaned a minimum of twice a day (e.g., door handles, bottle filling stations, water fountains, washroom faucets/handles, etc.)
- Paper towel and soap dispensers are refilled as needed
- Classrooms either have a sink with soap and water for hand washing and/or hand sanitizer for student use
- Regularly scheduled deep cleaning will take place off hours when students are not present in the building
- Special needs change areas are cleaned between uses
- Sanitizing spray bottles are provided for spot cleaning or cleaning of shared resources between users

CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Clubs, activities, sport teams, bands, choirs and co-curricular activities are permitted where possible and supervised by a teacher
- The use of gymnasiums, swimming pools, change rooms, weight rooms, indoor physical education equipment and shared outdoor equipment are permitted with hand hygiene
- Shared items such as sports equipment and musical instruments (excluding wind instruments which have additional cleaning protocols) will be cleaned twice a day and more frequently (i.e. between uses) if they become soiled or sweaty during use

CO-OP PROGRAMS

- In-person community Co-Operative education placements can be arranged in alignment with the local health unit, the direction of the school board, and with the safety and curriculum requirements of the Cooperative Education curriculum.
- If in-person placements are not possible, students will be offered virtual placements.
- During school closure periods or periods of time when the number of positive COVID-19 cases are high, Co-Operative education placements may be suspended.



FOOD AND NUTRITION

- **Elementary and secondary** students may go home for lunch
- **Elementary** students at school will eat lunch and snacks in their classrooms
- **Secondary** students at school may eat together:
 - Outdoors and indoors without distancing
- Cafeterias will be used for eating lunch as follows:
 - Secondary students will be permitted to eat off-campus or go home for lunch
 - Students must bring their own food or go home/out to eat during periods of time when cafeteria food services are suspended
 - Use of shared microwaves is permitted (students are to perform hand hygiene before and after use)
 - The use of delivery services such as UberEats is not permitted
- Parents/guardians are allowed to drop off lunches/snacks during the school day - however, students should bring their lunch with them or they can go home/out for lunch with parent permission/supervision
- Food programs, nutrition/third party food programs and non-instructional food events (such as pizza days) are permitted to operate; implementation plans will be reviewed with York Region Public Health on an ongoing basis.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- The **literacy graduation** requirement (successful completion of the OSSLT) is waived for students graduating in the 2021- 22 school year.
- This literacy graduation requirement will be restored for students graduating in the 2022-23 school year.
- The **community involvement graduation** requirement has been reduced from 40 hours to a minimum of 20 hours of community involvement activities for students graduating in the 2021-2022 school year.
- The community involvement graduation requirement of 40 hours will be restored in 2022-2023.

HAND HYGIENE

- Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are one of the most important protective strategies and remain in place.
- Parents are urged to review appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette with their children; child-friendly resources are available at www.york.ca/safeatschool
- Teachers will review appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette with students, including proper handwashing techniques and the use of hand sanitizer
- Hand hygiene must be conducted by anyone entering the school and will be incorporated into the daily student schedule at regular intervals during the day (i.e. before and after eating food, after using the washroom, etc.)
- Students are to use the sanitizer provided by the school or wash their hands upon arrival



in the classroom. Hand washing is one of the most recommended methods of virus prevention.

- Students wishing to bring in their own sanitizer for use on the bus or at school must ensure it is scent free and is **not** to be shared with other students

ISOLATION GUIDANCE FOR CLOSE CONTACTS

The Ministry of Health has revised the [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#), with updated guidance for close contacts in the community and in households:

- Asymptomatic individuals who are close contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual **in the community** are no longer required to isolate but must self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure.
- During the self-monitoring period, close contacts must wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings and avoid activities where they need to take off their mask (i.e. playing a wind instrument in music class or playing high-contact sports)
- Asymptomatic **household contacts** of a case or a symptomatic individual are not required to isolate if they are:
 - 17 or younger and [fully vaccinated](#)
 - 18 and older and have already received their COVID-19 booster
 - tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have completed their isolation period
- **If you do not meet the above criteria you must self-isolate for the same amount of time as the positive/symptomatic person in your household**
- Asymptomatic household contacts who are not required to isolate are required to self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure, as outlined above under community contacts.
- Children under 5 years of age who are asymptomatic household contacts are required to isolate for 5 days.

MASKS

- Students and staff are no longer required to wear masks while at school or on school transportation (i.e. bus)
- Students in Kindergarten through Grade 12 **may** wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors at school and on school vehicles (i.e. buses) and will be supported if they choose to do so
- If students choose to wear a mask at school/bus, they should bring their own; non-medical three-ply masks will be made available to students if requested.
- Students who choose to wear a mask will be responsible for safely storing their masks when not wearing them (i.e. eating)
- Staff will continue to be provided with medical or non-fit-tested N95 masks, upon request



MENTAL HEALTH

As part of our Mental Health and Addiction Strategy, we are committed to supporting our students. Together with our community partners, the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) provides access to services that meet the mental health needs of our students.

Parents and students are encouraged to connect with their school directly if you have any mental health concerns, either through the administrator or guidance counselor. Our school support staff, including guidance counselors, chaplains, behaviour resource staff, psychological services staff and mental health workers, are available to determine the best way to support individual students.

School Mental Health Ontario has created some resources to assist parents that you may find helpful:

- [How to Support a Mentally Healthy Back to School for Your Child](#)
- [How do you know if you should be concerned about your child/teen's mental health and well-being?](#)

Everyone has a role to play in supporting the social and emotional needs of our school communities. Staff learning sessions will continue throughout the school year. The professional learning will have a strong focus on evidence-based resources to promote and protect mental health at school. Ongoing staff training will also focus on creating mentally healthy classrooms, delivering mental health literacy lessons, trauma informed practices, creating a circle of support and suicide intervention (ASIST and SafeTALK).

Several resources were provided by our psychology staff and mental health workers to staff, students, and families such as:

- Virtual workshops for parents and students (Supporting Youth Wellness, How to Manage Anxious Feelings After A Year of Virtual Learning, Stress, Time Management and Maintaining Your Mental Health, All About Anxiety and [Preparing Your Child to Start School: Pandemic Edition](#))
- Virtual mental health groups (Mood Bump, Worriers to Warriors, Black Mental Health; Let's Talk About It, Mental Health Among the Asian Community and There Are Skills For This: A Way Forward with Difficult Thoughts and Feelings) are offered throughout the year and summer.
- Parents can learn more about how to support their child's mental health: [YCDSB Student and Family Mental Health Site](#), [SMHO- Parents and Families](#)
- The YCDSB Mental Health Resource page on the website: [Mental Health Resource List](#)
- For more information about mental health follow the YCDSB Mental Health Twitter account [@YCDSB_MH](#) students can follow the YCDSB Instagram account [@mh_ycdsb](#)



MUSIC

- Music programs are permitted and music rooms can be fully utilized without distancing.
- Shared wind instruments must be cleaned to manufacturer's specifications between uses
- Music classes can take place in the Music room and/or in the classroom - these decisions should be made at the school level in discussion with teachers/administrators
- Shared equipment such as mallets, drum sticks, etc. will be cleaned a minimum of twice a day

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Physical distancing between students, between students and staff, and between staff members is no longer required

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- In elementary and secondary physical education classes, the use of gymnasiums, swimming pools, change rooms, weight rooms, indoor physical education equipment and shared outdoor equipment are permitted without restrictions
- Students can bring their own personal play equipment to use during recess/lunch (i.e. balls, skipping ropes, etc.)

REMOTE LEARNING

Parents are encouraged to send their children to school in-person for the 2021-2022 school year. However, remote learning is available for both elementary and secondary students.

Elementary

Elementary remote and in-person students will be in separate classes instead of blended together in hybrid classes. Remote students will be assembled together Board-wide into fully remote classes by grade as follows:

Grade	Assigned School
JK/SK	Father Henri Nouwen
Grade 1	Corpus Christi
Grades 2 and 3	Blessed Scalabrini
Grades 4 and 5	St. Paul



Grade 6	Divine Mercy
Grades 7 and 8	St. Matthew
French Immersion	St. John XXIII

Student records will be transferred electronically to these schools, which means that for the entire period of remote learning, **remote students will be placed in their newly assigned school**. During this time, parents will receive School Messenger emails from this school, and not from their home school. If, after the first Term, parents decide to return their children to in-person learning, they will return to their home school.

Secondary

Remote and in-person students will be combined into hybrid classes in the same way they were last year. Teachers will simultaneously teach in-person and remote students, following regular school schedules.

In-Person vs Remote

Families are reminded that due to staffing implications, switching students between remote and in-person learning may not be possible and will be addressed on a case by case basis by the school.

Please note, students whose parents chose remote learning for them may permanently return to face to face learning pending availability based on classroom size. Students whose parents chose in-person learning for them, will stay in-person for the duration of the Semester/Term.

Over the course of the school year, the school Board may provide further direction regarding learning modality options.

SCREENING

All staff, students and visitors must self-screen for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 every day before entering a school.

- Students and staff are required to perform daily COVID-19 screening before arriving at school using the [Provincial Screening Tool](#).
- Staff and students experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must not attend school and should follow the guidance provided in the screening tool, which may include seeking appropriate medical attention as required, and/or getting tested for COVID-19.
- Visitors to a school are required to perform a COVID-19 self-screening before arriving at school using the [Provincial Screening Tool](#) and must sign in upon arrival at the school
- If a student develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at school they will be removed from class and parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately to pick up the student.
- Rapid Antigen Test kits will be provided to elementary and secondary students and education staff experiencing symptoms most commonly associated with COVID-19.



SCHOOL-RELATED COVID-19 CASES

The Provincial Government has announced that schools are no longer considered a highest risk setting and have directed public health efforts to be focused on protecting vulnerable residents in congregate care settings. As a result, York Region Public Health is no longer conducting contact tracing in schools and cohort dismissals will not occur. Daily screening for students and staff is more important than ever.

SHARED MATERIALS, SPACES AND GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Use of shared materials is permitted (for example, toys for imaginative play in kindergarten, manipulatives for math, computers and other tech materials, books, art supplies, indoor physical education equipment and shared outdoor equipment)
- Shared homerooms and use of libraries (for group and individual use), computer and technology labs, etc. is permitted
- Use of lockers/cubbies/coat hooks is permitted
- Clubs, activities, sport teams, bands (following Music protocols), and co-curricular activities are permitted, where possible and supervised by a teacher
- School transportation vehicles can operate at full capacity

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

YCDSB recognizes students with special education or mental health needs may require additional considerations for their return to school such as:

- Transition planning and additional time to support a smooth transition for students back to school;
- Continuation of program delivery as per Individual Education Plans (IEP);
- Ensuring the consistent provision of timely and appropriate accommodations for students system-wide;
- Equitable and systemic availability of program resources in support of IEP programming goals; and
- IEPs adjusted to reflect changes in the school environment and/or remote learning needs to ensure continued access to assistive technology.

Students with high special education needs are defined as students:

- requiring a specialized self-contained class, with the exception of the gifted; or
- with complex physical, developmental, cognitive, medical, self-regulation, or mental health needs who are pursuing the achievement of alternative curriculum; or
- with differentiated supports; or
- for whom Special Incidence Portion (SIP) claims are submitted.



The safe return of students with high special education needs and medically fragile students will be supported by school staff in consultation with parents/guardians, health care providers, and local public health authorities regarding options for PPE, staff training, and an accommodation plan if necessary.

- The Board's multidisciplinary team of psychology, speech and language, occupational/physiotherapist, behaviour, and special education program consultants will continue to provide face to face and remote service/support to staff and students.
- Third party regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals and paraprofessionals will work with school staff in delivering face to face and remote school-based supports as per the Board's Third Party Protocol.
- Students with special education needs will have access to assistive technology and individual special equipment to access learning, as required.

Elementary Special Education Program Delivery Model

Students with high special education needs who are working towards the achievement of alternative curriculum and **attending school in-person** have the option of attending five days a week in the elementary panel with their classroom cohort.

- Special education teacher support offered face to face. Education Workers will continue to deliver service to assigned students with high special education needs as required.
- Students from different cohorts can be grouped to provide face-to-face direct instruction of special education programs while adhering to health and safety protocols. Wherever possible, students will be grouped to minimize contact with other cohorts.
- Special education students attending specialized programs such as ISA, ASD, FLS, Language and Transitional Diagnostic Centres will attend their Centre classroom supported by a special education teacher and also attend their integrated grade classroom, while adhering to health and safety protocols.
- Remote special education students in ISA, TD, FLS, ASD and Language Centres will be assigned a grade classroom in the remote school and attend a remote session provided by the Centre special education teacher from the home school for the ISA, TD, FLS, Language Centre lessons.
- Elementary PACE students learning remotely will be assigned a remote grade classroom and can access the PACE extensions on their home school virtual learning environment as the PACE teacher from the face-to-face home school will provide the extensions and assess the work.

Students who do not attend school in person will **access remote learning** as outlined in their IEPs and in accordance with [PPM 164](#).

- Students will engage in synchronous/asynchronous learning, directed by the classroom/special education teachers, as per their IEP.
- Students will be assigned a special education teacher who will write the student's IEP and provide ongoing, remote, Special Education support.

Secondary Special Education Program Delivery Model

Secondary students with high special education needs in the FLS and SCP programs who are **attending school in person** have the option to attend full days, five days a week, assigned to one period in a fixed self-contained special education cohort/grouping where the special education teacher is the primary instructor supported by Special Education Workers, with an



adapted school day schedule. Students will also have the opportunity to attend, in-person, a second integrated class each day.

- Secondary students with special education needs who can access grade level programming and who are pursuing course credits will access classroom accommodations and face-to-face special education teacher support where necessary, as outlined in the student's IEP.
- Students in the secondary Transitional Diagnostic (TD) Centre will be part of a self-contained TD class and will have the opportunity to attend an integrated subject class.

Secondary students who do not attend school in person will **access remote learning** as outlined in their IEPs and in accordance with [PPM 164](#).

- Students will engage in synchronous/asynchronous learning, directed by classroom/special education teachers, as per their IEP.
- Students will be assigned a special education teacher who will write the student's IEP and provide ongoing, remote, Special Education support.

STAFF PPE (PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT)

- Staff are no longer required to wear PPE while at school/work
- Staff may choose to wear PPE and will be supported if they do (i.e. medical or N95 masks, eye protection, etc.)
- Board issued PPE will continue to be provided to staff upon request

TRANSPORTATION

- School vehicles can operate at full capacity
- Assigned seats and cohorting are no longer required
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of school transportation vehicles will continue
- Accommodations will be made for immunocompromised and otherwise medically vulnerable students and students with special transportation needs (e.g. arrange separate vehicle, assign seating at the front of school bus)

TRAVEL GUIDANCE FOR FAMILIES

Students and their families who choose to travel must follow all federal and provincial travel restrictions and guidelines. These can be found on the federal [COVID-19: Travel, Testing and Borders](#) website and Ontario's [Travelling During COVID-19](#) website.

Rules for unvaccinated individuals as of February 28, 2022:

- Unvaccinated children **under 12 years old**, travelling outside Canada with [fully vaccinated](#) adults:
 - are exempt from quarantine and may attend school, camp or child care, as long as they pass the [provincial screening tool](#)



- must wear a mask at all times when in public spaces for 14 days after returning home - including school, camp and child care (masks may be removed briefly to eat/drink)
- Unvaccinated travellers **over the age of 12** are not required to quarantine upon entering Canada **if** they meet the following conditions:
 - Have proof of a valid medical contraindication to a COVID-19 vaccine, **and**
 - Comply with the public health measures outlined in the handout provided to them at the border
- Unvaccinated individuals **ages 12+** who travel outside Canada and do not meet the conditions listed above continue to be required to quarantine for 14 days and cannot attend school, camp or child care during that time.
- Unvaccinated individuals who travel **within Canada** are permitted to attend school, camp or child care as long as they have no symptoms and pass the [provincial screening tool](#)

Fully vaccinated individuals travelling outside Canada:

- are not required to quarantine and may return to school, camp and child care, as long as they pass the [provincial screening tool](#)
- must wear a mask at all times when in public spaces for 14 days after returning home - including school, camp and child care (masks may be removed briefly to eat/drink)

VACCINATIONS

York Region Public Health and Public Health Ontario clearly state that vaccinations remain the best defense against COVID-19, including the Omicron variant. They are an important tool to help stop the spread of the virus and allow students, families and staff to safely resume normal activities.

- The most important thing parents can do to ensure the return to school is safe is to get vaccinated and to ensure their children are vaccinated
- It is not mandatory that students be vaccinated to attend school in person
- Information about upcoming vaccination clinics can be found at www.york.ca/COVID19Vaccine

VENTILATION

YCDSB has developed an action plan to improve school ventilation, including the following steps:

- Addressing all Ministry guidelines.
- HVAC units upgraded with MERV13 filters. Filters are replaced four times/year.
- Schools with less than optimal ventilation systems have been fitted with HEPA filtration units.
- Portable HEPA filtration units are being installed in all classrooms as they are received from the Ministry of Education.
- All classrooms equipped with openable windows can be open up to four inches to provide more ventilation (weather permitted).



- All HVAC systems schedules modified to operate two hours before and after the full occupancy at the school by students and staff; to provide adequate ventilation
- All our schools are equipped with BAS (Building Automation Systems) to increase the Free Cooling procedure, which involves opening outside dampers in Air Handler units to increase fresh air intake and distribute throughout the system.
- The CO2 sensors are installed in all schools to monitor the IAQ (Indoor Air Quality) via BAS (Building Automation System).
- The space temperature setpoints are adjusted to provide more cooling to improve comfort conditions considering the occupants' use of protective masks.
- The HVAC operation is monitored through BAS (Building Automation System) by automatic detection and alarm systems to ensure it is operating correctly.
- We continually assess the needs for any additional measures that may be needed on a case-by-case basis.

VISITORS

- Visitors are permitted to enter the school and are encouraged to contact the school office to make an appointment
- Parents/guardians should contact the school by telephone or email if assistance is required or to book an appointment
- Visitors to a school are required to:
 - perform a COVID-19 self-screening before arriving at school using the [Provincial Screening Tool](#)
 - use hand sanitizer upon entry
 - sign in and out in the [Visitor Log](#), if required
 - report to the designated reception area
- Parents/guardians are allowed to drop off lunches/snacks during the school day - however, students are encouraged to bring their lunch with them or go home for lunch
- Delivery services such as Uber Eats are not allowed

