

July 30, 2020

Minister of Education Releases Guide to Reopening Ontario Schools

Dear Parents and Guardians,

You are receiving this letter because you have one or more children enrolled in an elementary school within the Halton Catholic District School Board.

I am writing to let you know that on Thursday, July 30, 2020, the Minister of Education announced that in September, 2020, **all elementary students (Kindergarten to Grade 8) will return to school for in-class instruction with enhanced health and safety protocols.**

As outlined within the Ministry's guide, multiple strategies will be in place to ensure our schools are healthy and safe for students and staff, including:

- Self screening
- Adapted school environments
- Hand hygiene
- Masking
 - Students in Grade 4 to 8 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks while in school.
 - Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in common spaces.
 - Medical masks will be provided for teachers and all other school staff.
 - Reasonable exceptions to the requirement will be put in place.
- Cohorting
- Distancing
- Limiting visitors in schools

More information is available in the [Ministry of Education's Guide to reopening Ontario's schools](#).

Option of Remote Learning

Parents and guardians will make decisions regarding in-person attendance for their children for this school year and will have the option of remote learning if they do not wish to send their child(ren) back to school in September. In August, we will be sending out an **Intent to Return to School Survey** to all parents and guardians.

Next Steps

I recognize that for some of our students and families, the reopening of our schools will raise concerns around health and safety. Over the next few weeks, we will be sharing additional details about the return to school plan, which will hopefully alleviate many of your concerns.

Since June, a working committee has been busy developing a very detailed Return to School Plan to address all of the potential scenarios. This plan includes a comprehensive list of health and safety protocols, as well as mental health supports and resources for students, families and staff.

Having now received the Ministry's guidelines for the re-opening of our schools, we will be able to finalize the Return to School Plan based on the latest requirements and expectations.

Our Goals As We Prepare to Transition Back to School

As we prepare to transition back to school, our goals will be focused on -

- Ensuring protocols are in place so that students and staff are healthy and safe.
- Providing an enhanced online/remote learning experience for students who continue to learn from home.



- Assessing student learning gaps and developing plans to provide appropriate intervention, where needed.
- Maintaining a focus on mental health supports for students and staff returning to school and those who will continue to learn and work from home.

More Details to Come

From now until the start of the school year, you will be receiving additional details about the return to school plan and what it will look like for your child and your family.

In the meantime, we have posted some [frequently asked questions \(FAQ\)](#) and updates on our [HCDSB Return to School website](#).

As always, we will continue to share information with parents directly via email, as well as post updates on our [website](#) and through our social media channels:

- Twitter: [@HCDSB](#)
- Instagram: [@HaltonCatholicDSB](#)
- Facebook: [Halton Catholic District School Board](#)

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support. The health and well-being of our students, families and staff remains our highest priority, and we will continue to work closely with our Public Health professionals as we prepare for a safe and healthy return to school.

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pat Daly".

Pat Daly
Director of Education