



York Catholic District School Board

Catholic Education Centre, 320 Bloomington Road West, Aurora, Ontario L4G 0M1
Tel: 905-713-1211, 416-221-5051, 1-800-363-2711
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August 28, 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we at the York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) continue to prepare for September, we are looking forward to welcoming students back to school after many months of separation. Whether they are attending in person or participating in remote learning we are eagerly awaiting their arrival. Staff has been working endless hours to prepare for their return.

Following recent updates from the Ministry of Education and York Region Public Health, we have had to update our re-entry plans for our elementary schools. Here to help you are some additional updates about the start of the elementary school year.

Switching Between In-person and Remote Learning

As a result of the staggered start to school, we have changed the first date when elementary parents can switch their child between face to face and remote learning - from October 13, 2020 to November 16, 2020. Parents must notify the school of their request by November 1, 2020.

Daily Self-assessment

On a daily basis before leaving home, parents/guardians are responsible to conduct a COVID-19 self-assessment with their child. Please review and adhere to the [Checklist from York Region Public Health](#). If you are experiencing any symptoms on this checklist, please complete Ontario's [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) for next steps.

Revised Staggered Re-entry Dates

As stated in the [parent letter](#) from yesterday, the staggered re-entry schedule has changed to allow more time for staff to review all of the health and safety protocols and new school routines established through directives from York Region Public Health and the Ministry of Education.

All Elementary and Secondary Schools: September 8 and 9: no students will attend school. During this period, staff will be preparing for learning during COVID-19.

Elementary Start Dates:

September 10: Grades 1-3

September 11: JK/SK

September 14: Grades 7 & 8

September 15: Grades 4-6

All elementary students will be in school by Tuesday, September 15, 2020.

For parents of students in Grades 7 and 8 at Our Lady of the Lake Catholic Academy, the revised staggered re-entry schedule is as follows:

- September 11: Grade 7 (Orientation)
- September 14: Grade 8

NOTE: Once students return to school on their designated start date, they will continue to attend school every day after that.

Staggered Drop-off Schedule for Families

In efforts to reduce congestion and to allow for physical distancing when dropping off students at schools, some elementary schools will implement staggered drop-off schedules depending on the school enrollment



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numbers. Information regarding staggered drop-off schedules will be coming from your school principal through School Messenger and/or school newsletters.

What happens when a case of COVID-19 is detected at a school?

On August 26, 2020, the Ministry of Education released its [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#) document. The document guides and directs school boards on the steps that will be taken if a case of COVID-19 occurs in schools. If a case of COVID-19 is detected in one of our schools, we will work with York Region Public Health to notify families immediately, provide updates and take the appropriate next steps.

For more information, please read the Province of Ontario's [COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management](#) document.

Rules of Mask Wearing

As per the Ministry of Education's direction, students in **Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks** while in school, with accommodations for those with a medical condition. Students in **Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged, but not required**, to wear masks in common areas. If families choose to have their children wear masks, care will be taken that the children not be stigmatized. Correct mask wearing procedures will be taught, and reinforced through signage and verbal reminders. Staff will also be required to wear masks.

For more information on our process for requesting a student mask-wearing accommodation, please [click here](#). Parents are invited to watch this [back to school resource video](#) for more information. For instructions on proper mask wearing procedures, please go to the 11-minute mark of the video.

Below is the procedure that should be followed for the donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) of face masks/coverings, along with potential options that can be considered in order to minimize the risk of cross contamination when donning and doffing masks/face coverings during recess.

Students must bring either a **paper bag or breathable cloth bag in which to store their masks at their desks during recess** times. Plastic bags are not preferable and only recommended for short periods of time (i.e. up to 15 minutes).

As per the Ministry of Education guidance, recess can be an opportunity for students to remove masks/face coverings while outside in order to give students a break from the prolonged wearing of a masks/face covering. Improper donning, doffing and storage of masks/face coverings can increase the risk of a student contaminating themselves. Therefore, schools will develop protocols for the safe removal and storage of masks/face coverings. This activity will be supervised and teachers will remind students of the proper techniques:

Taking off/Doffing of a mask

- Clean hands
- Remove from ear loops being careful not to touch the front of the mask
- Fold it inwards and place in a clean individually labeled paper or cloth bag
- Clean hands again

Putting on/Donning a mask

- Clean hands
- Open mask/face covering storage bag, be careful not to touch anyone else's mask/face covering
- Pick up face covering by the ear loops and put on the face being careful not to touch the outside of the mask/face covering



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The supply of student masks provided by the Ministry is intended to be a "back-up" supply rather than the primary supply for students. **This means parents are expected to supply masks/face coverings for their children. Please always include an extra one in their knapsacks.**

Students without a mask will be provided with one upon entry to the school. Students choosing not to wear their masks, without a valid accommodation, will be immediately sent home. Parents will be contacted and students welcomed to return to school when their mask is in place.

For more information, please visit our [2020-2021 School Re-entry Plan](#).

What to Bring On Your First Day of School

Individual schools will be sending out their own list of requirements for families on what to send to school with students through School Messenger and/or school newsletters.

Below is a brief overview of things to keep in mind before sending your children to school:

- Eating well and staying hydrated will not only help your children focus in school, but also to fight off illness. Please prepare **healthy ready to eat food and snacks that don't require reheating**, packed in an insulated bag to keep food warm/cool. Please label lunch bags, containers, bottles and reusable utensils with your child's name
- Students should bring their own **refillable drinking bottles**. Please label the water bottle with your child's name
- Personal school supplies. Please label your child's school supply case (i.e. pencil case) with their name
- Students must bring a **paper bag or breathable cloth bag** in which to store their masks during recess times. Plastic bags are not preferred and only recommended for short periods of time (i.e. up to 15 minutes)
- Please send **extra face masks** in their knapsacks.

When will families learn about our school specific plans?

Parents/guardians will receive a letter from their school for school specific plans during the week of August 31. We encourage parents/guardians to continue checking their emails for updates. Please ensure you check the email that is registered at the school. Parents/guardians are reminded to check both their inbox and spam/junk box.

On behalf of everyone at YCDSB, I would like to thank our families for your continued support, patience and understanding as we plan for a safe restart in September.

Yours in Catholic Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mary Battista'.

Mary Battista
Director Designate