



York Catholic District School Board

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February 12, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians:

On February 3, 2021, the Minister of Education announced that students in York, Peel, and Toronto would return to school for in-person learning on February 16, 2021.

As always, the safety and well-being of our students, staff and community members are our top priority. The Minister of Education has provided additional direction and guidance on measures that will further enhance robust safety protocols intended to prevent community spread of the virus in our schools.

Mask Wearing Expectations

The Ministry of Education has revised direction on mask wearing that differs from what was being followed prior to the Christmas Break. As per the Ministry of Education's updated direction, students in **Grades 1 to 12** are required to wear non-medical/cloth 2 or 3 layer masks at school, with accommodations for those with a medical condition. **Students in Kindergarten are strongly encouraged to wear masks.**

Donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) procedures will be reviewed with all students upon our return to school along with other safety and hygiene routines.

In addition, students in **Grades 1 to 12 must now wear masks throughout the school day.** This includes when indoors such as in their classroom and common areas (i.e., hallways) and when **outdoors on school grounds during recess**, entry and exit routines.

Because students are required to wear their masks outdoors, a greater number of masks will be needed each day so they can be replaced when they get wet or dirty. For this reason, it is recommended that parents supply their children with **four clean masks in a paper or breathable cloth bag each day.** Students without a mask will be provided with one upon entry to the school. In order to do our part to keep all our students safe, students choosing not to wear their masks, without a valid medical accommodation, will be immediately sent home. Parents will be contacted and students are welcomed to return to school when their mask is in place.

Elementary Students Daily COVID-19 Self-Screening

On a daily basis before leaving home, parents/guardians are responsible for conducting the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) with their child. If your child has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or answers yes to any of the questions on the screening tool, do not send them to school, seek assessment and testing at a COVID-19 [Assessment Centre](#) and notify your school.

Secondary Students Daily Self-Screening

Every day before leaving home to come to school, secondary students are responsible for completing the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening tool](#). Students will receive an email every morning to their YCDSB K12 email with a reminder to complete the daily self-screening and a link to the screening tool. If students have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or answer yes to any of the questions on the screening tool, they should not come to school, seek assessment and testing at a COVID-19 [Assessment Centre](#) and notify their school.

NEW! Secondary students are now also required by the Ministry of Education to **confirm they have completed and passed the COVID-19 daily self-screening** every day that they attend school in person. Teachers will ask students to confirm they completed and passed the screening when they take attendance at the start of class. If a student has not completed/passed the self-screening, he/she will be sent to the office to complete it before being allowed to return to class. If the student does not complete and pass the self-screening tool they will be sent home immediately. Students who are late and arrive after attendance has been taken must confirm their self-screening as soon as they arrive in the classroom.

Ongoing Safety Measures

On the advice of York Region Public Health, we will continue to practice good hand hygiene, physical distancing and other safety protocols in all our schools. Teachers and support staff will continue to reinforce and practice these important safety measures with our students.

Pick-Up and Drop-Off Routines

Parents and guardians **must wear masks at all times** when assisting their children with entry and dismissal routines on school property. Mask wearing is mandatory for everyone on school property even outdoors, including parents.

Transportation

A reminder that **students from Grades 1 to 12 must wear masks when riding the bus**. Students must also wear masks when they await the bus at their designated pick up location.

Hybrid Learning Model

The hybrid learning model will continue with the resumption of in-person learning on February 16, 2021. For more information on student attendance and switching modalities, please review [this infographic](#).

Before and After School Programs

Before and After School Programs will resume once in-person learning begins. For additional information please contact your school's Before and After School provider. Contact information is available on each school website.

Important Updates from York Region Public Health

York Region Public Health believes it is safe to return to school. They are working in close partnership with School Boards to ensure we are all taking appropriate steps for the health, safety and well-being of our school communities. Please read this [Letter to Families from York Region Public Health](#) for important updates on changes to daily self-screening guidance and more stringent protocols being implemented.

Mental Health and Well-being

Going back to school after a break can be stressful, even under normal circumstances. Whether it's in-person learning, remote learning or a combination of both, you can help your children to know what to expect, be flexible when things are uncertain, and feel confident about the return to school. Please see this [Letter from YCDSB Mental Health Lead, Michelle Prinzo](#), for tips and resources.

Board Re-Entry Plan & Infographic

As always, our York Catholic community is encouraged to review our [Board's Re-Entry Plan](#) that outlines all practices and procedures we are diligently following in our schools. A [helpful infographic](#) has also been created that highlights the new practices of our return to school plan.

We remain deeply committed to ensuring a safe and engaging faith-filled Christ-centred learning environment for all our students. 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 return to school on February 16, 2021.

Yours in Catholic Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Battista". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mary Battista
Interim Director of Education