



HURON-PERTH CATHOLIC

District School Board

August 26, 2021

Dear staff and parents/caregivers:

As September approaches we are excited to welcome our students and staff back to in-person learning across the district! We have been working diligently developing plans to make the transition to our schools as smooth as possible for everyone, with up to date health and safety guidelines, refreshed academic professional development, and mental health and wellbeing resources available for students, staff, and parents/caregivers. We are guided by our spiritual theme rooted in Luke's gospel narrative 'the road to Emmaus'. May the days and weeks to come be filled with accompaniment and hope. We offer the following updates for your consideration.

In-Person School

The vast majority of our students will be back to learning face-to-face with their peers and educators. Our elementary schools and secondary schools will have very similar health and safety protocols as the previous school year. Secondary schools will have a modified semester schedule. Two courses will run each week, rotating on a bi-weekly schedule (one course in the morning, and one in the afternoon).

Virtual School

We are eager to continue to offer a virtual learning option for students through our remote school, Blessed Carlo Acutis Continuing Education School (BCA). For elementary students at BCA, the option to return to in-person cannot be guaranteed but will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Online learning at BCA will continue to be 300 minutes of synchronous (online learning with a teacher) and asynchronous (independent student work) learning daily. The secondary semester schedule at Blessed Carlo will continue with quadesters.

Screening

Students and staff will be required to self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19. The screening tool and the method (active/passive) may be updated so stay tuned for more information.

Mask Requirements

Students will continue to be required to wear masks indoors. We await direction from public health regarding any outdoor mask requirements or variations to indoor mask requirements.

Cohorting/Distancing

Students will continue to remain in their classroom cohorts to the extent possible. Where cohorts gather, distancing and mask requirements will be in place.

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene will be reinforced this year as there will be an increase in the use of shared spaces, materials and equipment. Please continue to reinforce hand hygiene best practices prior to the start of the school year with your child/ren.

Contact and Case Management

Current variants of concern and vaccination rates will mean that contact and case management will be different this year. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

Vaccination Requirements

Huron Perth Public Health strongly encourages staff and students to be vaccinated. Staff that are not vaccinated will be required to complete an education program and will be subject to regular testing. Students that are not vaccinated will be eligible to participate in all aspects of student life, however they may be subject to restrictions based on the case and contact management protocols established by public health officials (e.g. self-isolation/quarantine).

Common Areas

Students will have more access to gymnasiums and learning commons (libraries) than last year with safety protocols in place.

Visitors

There is no change to the visitor protocols from last year. Non-essential visitors are not able to access our schools. Itinerant staff and contractors that had access to schools last year - will continue to have access.

Lunch

There are no changes to elementary lunch protocols; students will continue to be cohorted for lunch breaks. At secondary schools, students will have more flexibility for lunch with cafeteria access (on a rotating basis in cohorts) and outdoors (on/off school grounds).

Cleaning and Disinfection

The cleaning and disinfection program for schools will be similar to last year. Emphasis will be on strong hand hygiene practices where common touch points will be difficult to sanitize.

Co-Curriculars

We expect there will be an increase in the number of co-curricular activities offered to students this year. Mask and location requirements for athletics are still uncertain - more details will be provided soon. Students are not required to be vaccinated to attend school in-person which means that the safety protocols for student athletes will be more stringent than they would be for athletic endeavours outside of school.

Ventilation

Upgrades continue in our schools to improve ventilation. Schools with partial or no mechanical HVAC are being upgraded. Any remaining classes without mechanical ventilation will have HEPA filtration systems in place to help mitigate transmission of viruses. We will endeavour to improve ventilation by keeping windows and doors open as much as possible. Parents are asked to be conscious of proper clothing for students as temperatures fluctuate. We will be reporting the status of our ventilation systems on the Board website this fall.

Transportation

The Huron Perth Student Transportation Services [Parent Portal](#) is now open. Similar health and safety protocols are planned for September.

Technology

All students in our district have access to one-to-one mobile technology. We have made considerable upgrades to network infrastructure and have replaced aging Chromebooks. More information regarding distribution of devices is forthcoming.

Special Education

Special Education services will continue to be available for students. Services from itinerant or partner agencies will continue with safety measures in place.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Mental health supports are available to students at all of our sites. We have a growing department of qualified and experienced professionals available to support our families. If you have any questions about access to these services please contact your school.

If we have learned anything from the pandemic it is this - things change. We are expecting more information over the coming days that will have an impact on our plans. We hope to have another update for the community early next week. As always our schools are here to help - if you have questions please call.

Herculean efforts have been underway this summer to get ready for the start of school. Please join me in congratulating our staff on their hard work and service to our community. We ask for your continued prayers for our community.

Prayer for our Community

Gracious God, we come to you at the beginning of this academic year with our many feelings, expectations, fears and hopes. Help us to remember, however, we have the comforting assurance from you: "I will always be with you."

Loving God, for all of us this is a time of transition. It is transition from the work and leisure of summer back to the classroom. It is a transition from time spent with family and friends. Give us patience with ourselves as we transition as well as patience with one another.

Please consider following us on [Twitter](#) and/or [Facebook](#) for access to the latest information.

Sincerely,



Chris N. Roehrig
Director of Education

