

March 9, 2022

Today, the Province of Ontario announced the removal of a number of COVID-related restrictions that will have an impact on schools, students and staff. In this regard, the following information is provided for your information and reference.

Effective March 21:

Masking

The use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including wearing of masks and face shields within schools and other DPCDSB facilities, will no longer be mandatory. Please note, however, if staff and students wish to wear PPE, it will be made available to them.

Respect for Individual Decisions Made

Echoing Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Kieran Moore, it is the expectation of the DPCDSB that proper respect and understanding be given to the decisions staff and students will make regarding the use or non-use of PPE. Patience and understanding will be required to ensure that each individual's comfort level is respected and honoured.

International Travel

Under [current federal travel requirements](#), upon return from international travel, individuals must wear a mask at all times when in public spaces (including schools and child care), maintain a list of all close contacts for their first 14 days in Canada, and monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. We ask that these requirements are kept in mind with regard to any travel over the March Break.

Visitors and Volunteers in Schools

Volunteers, visitors, and community partners, regardless of vaccination status, will be welcomed into schools. In person Catholic School Council meetings will be permitted to take place, as well as face-to-face interviews or meetings.

Self-Screening

Daily self-screening using the Provincial Screening Tool, continues to be a requirement for students, staff, visitors and volunteers. However, daily verification will no longer be required.

Student Cohorting and Physical Distancing

All student cohorting and physical distancing requirements will be lifted. This includes assigned seats and cohorting on school bus transportation. Elementary students can play and learn together across cohorts, classes and grades, both indoors and outdoors and during lunch and recess. Secondary students do not need to cohort or physically distance. Cafeterias in secondary schools will open to full capacity. Shared spaces, such as libraries, tech labs, theatres and music rooms can be fully utilized without distancing. Programs across grades, such as reading buddies, can return.

Schools now Open When Buses Cancelled

If buses are cancelled in a certain zone of the Board, schools will remain open to staff and students and there will be no remote-only learning.

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Graduations and Proms

Limitations on in-person gatherings and assemblies will also be removed; therefore, schools can plan and host in-person events (e.g., proms, graduation ceremonies, and assemblies). More information on proms and graduations will come forward from individual schools.

Fundraising and Food/Lunch Programs

Fundraisers as per DPCDSB Fundraising Policy and food/lunch programs may resume.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should continue to be followed by students and staff.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting

The enhanced cleaning protocols that have been in place throughout the pandemic will continue.

Option to Switch to Remote Learning

We are aware that some parents/guardians may have chosen to send their children to in-person learning based on the COVID health and safety measures that have been in place during the pandemic. Any parents/guardians who are not comfortable with in-person learning based on the reduced restrictions have the option of switching to remote learning for the remainder of the school year. Any parents/guardians who would like to switch to remote learning in this regard should contact their child(ren)'s principal.

Thank you for your ongoing patience and support. Please know that we are committed to supporting all students and staff as we transition to a more normal learning environment. This includes close collaboration with our local public health agencies to promote the health, safety and well-being of students and staff.

May God bless you and your family with a peaceful and restful March Break.

Marianne Mazzorato, Ed.D.
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