

July 23, 2020

On June 22, the DPCDSB advised its community of the Ministry of Education's direction to all Ontario school boards to prepare return to school plans for September 2020 using three scenarios:

1. Continuation of online/distance learning if schools remain closed;
2. Adapted delivery of program with students attending school in-person on alternate days/weeks and participate in some distance learning when not physically attending. Students would be placed into a cohort of up to 15 students per class or course, per day. Special Education students enrolled in self-contained classes of less than 15, not including students who attend Gifted programs or students who spend part of their day in a Special Education Resource Class, would be in school every day in this program delivery model.
3. Conventional delivery of program with strict Health and Safety protocols where all students attend school all-day, every-day and class sizes remain unchanged.

DPCDSB staff has been working over the past few weeks to develop a plan for each scenario, which will be presented to the Ministry of Education next week.

School boards will be presenting their plans to the Ministry of Education beginning the week of July 27, and it is expected that the Ministry will provide final direction/guidance on boards' reopening plans by early August.

An overview of the DPCDSB plan, which is in draft format at this time is provided below for information and reference. Please note that the plan is in unapproved, draft format and subject to change due to numerous factors including Ministry of Education and Provincial Health Authority approval.

Overview

The DPCDSB *Return to School Plan* is rooted in three key considerations:

1. Ensuring the safety of students and staff.
2. Adapting to Public Health/Ministry of Education direction regarding mode of Catholic teaching and learning.
3. Supporting student faith formation, well-being and achievement.

Our plans are based on the most recent advice from Public Health officials. Our plans for re-opening schools are necessarily flexible and adaptive to meet the direction regarding school models in real time. The recommendations in these plans are subject to change, based on the guidelines from the Ministry of Education, the Provincial Health Command Table and current and updated information from Peel Public Health and Wellington/Dufferin/Guelph Public Health on COVID-19 in our communities.

We accept that the current pandemic creates uncertainty and that disruption is a reality as we strive to support our students' needs as they return to school while keeping the safety and well-being of all at the forefront.

The Ministry of Education's stated preference is to see all students back in class full-time, but this has not been finalized. The Ministry has also indicated that student attendance for in-person learning will be voluntary and that students who do not attend in person will be engaged in distance learning.

Parents/Guardians recently completed a return to school survey that helped us in designing our return to school draft plans. A follow-up survey will be sent via School Messenger as soon as the Ministry announces back to school details. This survey will provide parents/guardians the opportunity to inform their school of their intention for their child(ren) to return to face to face or online learning so that staff can begin planning.

School boards will be presenting their plans to the Ministry of Education beginning the week of July 27, and it is expected that the Ministry will provide final direction/guidance on boards' reopening plans by early August. This direction/guidance will be based on advice from our public health authorities. DPCDSB will communicate its return to school plans to parents/guardians and other stakeholders once the Ministry direction/guidance has been received.

Components of Plan

DPCDSB re-opening plans include information on a wide range of operational and instructional content including, but not limited to:

- Ontario Self-Assessment Tool
- Outbreak Protocol for students or staff that test positive for COVID-19
- Managing Students or Staff that display COVID-19 symptoms during the school day
- Attendance
- School Signage and Physical Distance Markings
- Playgrounds and Play Structures
- Requirements for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Use of Hand Sanitizer and Disinfectant Wipes
- Use of Sinks and water refill stations
- Community Use of Schools
- Outdoor Space for Recess
- Sharing of Classroom Resources
- Privacy of Information
- Use and Deployment of Technology
- Use of Lockers and Cubbies
- Board wide Classes
- Transportation Protocol
- Classroom Setup
- Entry and Dismissal Requirements
- Use of Washrooms
- Extracurricular Activities, Clubs and Sports
- Visitors, Volunteers and Parent Access to Schools
- Emergency Evacuation and Lockdown Drills
- Use of Lunchroom/Cafeteria and Breakfast Programs
- Contactless Payments
- Cleaning Protocols

Proposed Program Delivery Models

We will not be able to provide five days a week in-person schooling if an adapted model limits the number of students in a class. That is to say, if we are instructed by the Ministry of Education or the public health authority to open in an adapted delivery model, students will be cohorted into groups of 15 and attend school on an alternate two days one week and three days the following week format.

Elementary: Full Attendance Five Days Per Week

If elementary schools return to conventional, full attendance five days per week, bell times would remain the same as they were prior to school closure, i.e., 6.5 hours in length. Students would receive instruction from their core and planning time teachers and would have two recesses and a lunch daily. They would venture outdoors with their own classroom teacher and/or planning time teacher. Enhanced health and safety protocols would support students and staff in this environment.

Secondary: Full Attendance Five Days Per Week

This model will closely resemble a typical school day, however, there may be some restrictions to limit student movement from class to class where possible. There may also be some changes to the teacher rotation in the class to minimize cohort contact. For Grades 9-12, the lunch period and congregating in groups are still being reviewed with Public Health. We anticipate that if the school day is not shortened, by either having students dismissed earlier than regular dismissal time, or by attending later in the morning, students will be permitted to eat in assigned areas as long as they adhere to physical distancing requirements. If the school day is shortened, then lunch could be eaten during the day in class. Secondary students will only be taking two courses at a time for four terms, or “quadesters” throughout the first semester of school at least.

Adapted Delivery: Elementary Partial Attendance Two to Three Days In-Person (TO BE CONFIRMED SUBSEQUENT TO MEETING WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)

In this mode of delivery, students will be placed in different cohorts. Every effort will be made to place students in consistent cohorts with family who may live at the same address, elementary and secondary. Students will attend school either Monday, Tuesday and alternate Wednesdays (Cohort A), or Thursday, Friday and alternate Wednesdays (Cohort B). A sample schedule is identified in below:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
A	A	A/B	B	B

The elementary school day will be shortened by 48 minutes to adhere to the *Elementary Teacher Collective Agreement*. Students will be supported with their non-core subject learning (i.e., French, other subjects delivered by a Planning Time Teacher) on alternate days when learning at home.

Adapted Delivery: Secondary Partial Attendance Two Days In-Person (TO BE CONFIRMED SUBSEQUENT TO MEETING WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)

Secondary school students would be cohorted the same as elementary. The school day would be three hours in length with continued online learning at home. Students would take two periods at one time in a “quadmestered” structure, (i.e., four terms throughout the semester). A sample weekly schedule is provided below:

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
A Period 1	A Period 2	A/B Period 1 / 2	B Period 1	B Period 2

Full-time Distance Learning (TO BE CONFIRMED SUBSEQUENT TO MEETING WITH MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)

Parents who choose not to send their child back to school will be provided the option of distance education with daily teacher check-in and instruction. In order to meet the terms of collective agreements, those students taking part in full distance learning may receive support from multiple educators and this will be coordinated centrally. Parents will be informed of specific times throughout the year when students can return to face to face learning, as this transition will not always be possible. In secondary schools, students will need to commit to full-time distance learning for quadesters at a time. Secondary school students who choose online, distance learning will be taking one course at a time for approximately 4.5 weeks.

Additional Plan Components

- Additional Support for Students with Special Needs
- Outbreak Protocol and Return to Distance Learning
- Outdoor and Non-Classroom Space
- Experiential Courses
- Sports – Intramurals and Interscholastic games
- Physical Education, Science, The Arts, Music and Technology-based Courses
- Student Transitions (Movement between classes)
- International Students
- Fitness Rooms and Equipment Use
- Use of Learning Commons (Libraries)

Supporting student faith formation, well-being and achievement

DPCDSB is committed to ensuring that student faith formation, student achievement and student well-being are supported regardless of the mode of program delivery. An emphasis will be placed on supporting student mental-health and well-being as they transition back to school.

Transportation

In the Adapted model, buses would only be permitted to carry 23 students, plus siblings on any one school bus at a time. Transportation staff are currently working on routes and cohorting students (A/B). There is no restriction to the number of students on a bus in the Conventional model of returning to school. Parents/guardians will be advised of bus information the week prior to school start-up.

Informing the Community

Once the DPCDSB re-opening plans have been reviewed by the Ministry, we will share with parents/guardians through School Messenger email, posting on the DPCDSB website and through the DPCDSB's social media platforms, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. We will also be posting the plans on our intranet and staff will be alerted by email.

We know this is an uncertain and unsettling time for families and can assure you that we are committed to do whatever we can to make the return to school experience a positive one for students, families and staff alike.

Thank you for your patience and, as always, thank you for choosing a Dufferin-Peel Catholic education for your child(ren).



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