



Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
REOPENING SCHOOLS SAFELY AMID COVID-19**

Last Updated August 11, 2020

On Wednesday, August 5, 2020, parents / guardians of students in the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board (HSCDSB) were invited to complete an online survey by no later than the end of the day on **Wednesday, August 12** at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/preregister2020-21>. In completing this survey, many parents requested clarification about some important items. We have provided as much information as we could in our letter home to parents on August 5 and are providing additional details in what follows.

The board recognizes that it may be very difficult for some families to choose between virtual and face-to-face delivery. However, without this information, the board cannot staff its schools appropriately in time for a September 8 start-up. We are asking that all parents share their decisions with us by August 12 so that classroom arrangements can be finalized.

Common and Shared Spaces	
Q:	How will elementary students entering and exiting schools be handled?
A:	<p>In a regular school year, students would normally be expected to remain and line up outdoors before being admitted into the building. Where school populations are small enough to permit this to continue safely in the next school year, they may do so.</p> <p>Most of our schools are not small enough to support this model during the pandemic. In an effort to contain students’ contact with each other (i.e., 50 contacts in elementary, 100 contacts in secondary), students arriving on school buses before the start of the school day will enter the school building and proceed directly to their classrooms. School staff will be on hand to ensure students remain safe between the time buses arrive and when classes begin.</p> <p>Principals and vice-principals will coordinate student dismissal in such a way that physical distancing between cohorts of students can be safely maintained.</p> <p>Parents not using and/or not eligible to use the transportation consortium’s services may drop off their children 15 minutes or less before the start of the day. These parents may retrieve their children 15 minutes or more before the end of the day to prevent congestion. These students will be dismissed early and parents will be asked to remain outside the school when dropping off and retrieving their children.</p>

Q:	Will students be able to use and access the school gymnasium and gym equipment?
A:	<p>Yes. As a rule, school gymnasiums will only be used when students are under the supervision of a staff member (e.g., classroom teacher, ECE, EA). For example, at the secondary level, physical education classes will continue to be held in the gym during the appropriate blocks. At the elementary level, classroom teachers may opt to bring their classes to the gym for physical education at their scheduled times. Alternatively, classroom teachers may also choose to offer physical activities outdoors with their classes at scheduled times.</p> <p>Should classroom teachers choose to use the school gymnasium and/or gym equipment (e.g., volleyballs, basketballs, dodgeballs), then such gym equipment will be clearly separated by cohort (e.g., stored in a labelled, covered bin) and disinfected at the end of each day. Hand hygiene will be emphasized and hand sanitizer will be available. An additional protocol related to physical education will be created before the beginning of the school year.</p>
Q:	Will before and after school programs be permitted to operate next year, and if so, how will that work?
A:	<p>Yes, before and after school programs will be permitted to operate next year, so long as the provider continues to offer them. School caretakers will clean high-touch surfaces before the program begins and after the program ends.</p> <p>In order to protect everyone’s health and safety, some local adjustments / agreements might need to be considered (e.g., which doors are used). Program operators will be provided with additional information regarding the use of refrigerators and staff washrooms, so that they are compliant with the board’s protocols.</p>
Q:	What procedures will be in place to assist with the safe drop-off and pick-up of students who are not being transported by school bus?
A:	<p>As mentioned previously, parents not using and/or not eligible to use the transportation consortium’s services may drop off their children 15 minutes or less before the start of the day. Parents may retrieve their children 15 minutes or more before the end of the day to prevent congestion. These students will be dismissed early and parents will be asked to remain outside the school when dropping off and retrieving their children.</p>
Q:	What is the cleaning regime that will be used in classrooms, common areas, and washrooms?
A:	<p>In most schools, caretakers normally work early in the morning (e.g., 7:00 - 10:30 a.m.) and again in the afternoon (e.g., 2:00 - 6:00 p.m.). These work hours allow caretakers to ensure classrooms, washrooms, hallways, and other common areas are swept, vacuumed, mopped, cleaned, and disinfected. For the foreseeable future, permanent caretakers will continue to work their normal hours and complete these tasks.</p> <p>In addition, the board will be adding more caretakers or increasing part-time caretakers’ working hours so that additional cleaning of high-touch surfaces (e.g., door handles, washrooms, drinking fountains, handrails, outdoor play equipment) can occur throughout the school day while students and employees</p>

	are in the building. Such high-touch surfaces will be disinfected at least twice a day. Each classroom will be outfitted with various products (e.g., disinfectant wipes, foaming hand sanitizer in a dispenser), which will allow students to sanitize their hands and/or surrounding objects.
Q:	Will elementary students be permitted to use the schoolyard during recess and lunch hours?
A:	<p>Yes, elementary students will be permitted to use the schoolyard during recess and lunch hours, as they normally would. On days where the weather does not permit students to go outdoors (e.g., days when it is raining heavily or bitterly cold), students will remain inside during recess and lunch.</p> <p>The times when elementary students eat their lunches and/or go outside for recess may be staggered so that fewer students are outside at one time. For example, rather than having one 15-minute recess block in the morning and one 15-minute recess block in the afternoon, as is common in our large or mid-sized schools, schools might opt to have two 15-minute recess blocks so that individual cohorts of students can play more freely and not intermingle with other cohorts of students.</p>
Q:	Will students be permitted to use the playground equipment during recess and lunch hours?
A:	<p>Yes, weather permitting, students will be permitted to use outdoor playground equipment during recess and lunch hours. In order to prevent cohorts of students intermingling with each other during unstructured time, school administrators may schedule specific times for classes to use this equipment. For example, school administrators might permit the Grade 1 class to use the playground equipment every Tuesday and Thursday during morning recess and the Grade 2 class to use the playground equipment every Tuesday and Thursday during afternoon recess. As recommended in the ministry's guidance document, playground equipment will be washed at least once a day with soap and water.</p>
Q:	Will students at St. Mary's College and St. Basil Elementary in Sault Ste. Marie be assigned lockers, as they normally are?
A:	No, for at least the first several months, students will not be assigned or able to use lockers in either the elementary or secondary panel. After a few months, the board will re-evaluate the matter.
Q:	Will breakfast programs be permitted to operate at schools?
A:	Yes, schools can and will continue to offer breakfast programs. However, students will not be permitted to congregate in breakfast rooms or areas. Only grab-and-go items (e.g., granola bars, yogurt, juice boxes) will be made available for distribution in classrooms.

Elementary and Secondary Student Timetabling / Scheduling

Q: What is the difference between a cohort and a contact?

A: Cohorting refers to the practice of keeping students together in a smaller group throughout their school day, with limited exposure to multiple teachers and/or a wide variety of classmates.

In the elementary panel, each class forms a cohort (e.g., Mr. Smith's Grade 4 class). A close contact is someone a student will interact with at a distance of closer than six feet for longer than fifteen minutes. For example, students may be exposed to contacts during specialty programs such as Empower Reading. Students at the elementary level will not be exposed to more than fifty contacts.

In the secondary panel, a cohort is defined as the group of students that a particular adolescent interacts with in his/her two assigned classes. For example, a student may have ENG1D0 and SNC1D0 as their assigned courses for the first quadmester; the students in these two classes are defined as the student's cohort. A close contact is defined as a person that is closer than six feet for longer than fifteen minutes.

Q: Why have transition dates been established for students who want to move between face-to-face and online learning? What happens if I want to move my child earlier or later than those dates?

A: For various reasons, the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board is attempting to avoid having teachers deliver instruction in two modalities (i.e., face-to-face and online) at the same time. Thus, transition dates need to be established because the teachers who are instructing face-to-face classes are not likely to be the same teachers who are teaching fully online classes or courses. The number of families choosing online versus in-school learning will directly affect the number of teachers teaching in a school or via the Internet.

Assuming that public health circumstances permit schools to remain open throughout the 2020-21 school year, once a parent chooses a mode of learning (face-to-face or on-line learning) for their child, the student must remain in that mode until the transition date should they wish to change to a different mode. In elementary, students may only transition to another mode after Christmas holidays. In the secondary panel, the transition dates are November 14, February 5, and April 22.

Note: The exception to this rule will be if an outbreak occurs in a particular area, which may require the local public health unit to close a particular classroom or school for a period of time. In such an instance, all students affected by such a closure would be permitted to learn online together with their regular classroom teacher until the health unit permitted in-class delivery to resume.

The following scenarios might prove helpful. Mr. Smith is assigned to teach a Grade 4 class of 26 students at School X in Community Z. Of those 26 students, 24 families pre-register their children for in-school learning; two families pre-register their children for online or at-home learning. Mr. Smith will likely teach only the 24 Grade 4s who come to school in person. Another teacher, Mrs. Jones, will be assigned to teach the students who have opted for virtual instruction. Mrs. Jones' class will be completely online and likely composed of Grade 4 students from various schools and communities across the board.

	<p>Scenario 1: The school year is going very well. The number of cases of COVID-19 in Community Z is very low, and Mr. and Mrs. Parent, who had selected online learning for their Grade 4 daughter in August, believe it is now safe to send their daughter to an actual school building. The daughter remains in Mrs. Jones’ online class until the established transition date, at which point she is able to transition to Mr. Smith’s face-to-face classroom. In January, the daughter is welcomed back to face-to-face learning in School X.</p> <p>Scenario 2: Although there are very few cases of COVID-19 in Community Z, Ms. Care is becoming more concerned because an elderly family member has suddenly developed a serious health issue. Over the Christmas holidays, Mrs. Care decides to move her son from Mr. Smith’s face-to-face class; her son is placed in Mrs. Jones’ online class, where he finishes the year with other Grade 4 students from across the board.</p> <p>Scenario 3: On November 26, Community Z learns that there is a serious outbreak of COVID-19 in the community, which prompts the local public health unit to close all schools in the community. Mrs. Jones continues to teach her students from various communities online. However, Mr. Smith, who used to teach Grade 4 in a face-to-face manner, now transitions to an online environment with his students. When public health officials deem that it is safe to return to school, Mr. Smith returns to School X to continue teaching his students in a face-to-face environment.</p>
<p>Q:</p>	<p>Can parents choose to have their children spend part of their time in class and part of their time online?</p>
<p>A:</p>	<p>Generally speaking, no. Students cannot spend part of their time in class and part of their time online. The only exception to this is students enrolled in the Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) course. Once a student chooses a mode of learning (online or face-to-face), the only time the student is able to move to a different mode is at the appropriate transition date.</p>
<p>Q:</p>	<p>What will schools’ start and end times be this year?</p>
<p>A:</p>	<p>All elementary schools will be operating on the same start and end time schedules that were in place prior to school closures. St. Mary’s College’s end time might shift slightly by five to fifteen minutes, depending on several factors.</p>
<p>Q:</p>	<p>What will be the daily schedule for students at St. Mary’s College?</p>
	<p>Students at St. Mary’s College will follow this approximate timetable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Block 1: 8:30 - 11:10 AM (A ten-minute break will be included in this block.) ● Lunch: 11:10 - 11:50 AM (Students will remain in their Block 1 classes to eat their lunches.) ● Block 2: 11:55 AM - 2:40 PM (A ten-minute break will be included in this block.) ● Dismissal: 2:35 - 2:40 PM (Staggered)

Q:	How will the Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) work for next year?
A:	<p>The Pre-Advanced Placement (AP) program will be offered entirely online because of the restriction of 50 elementary student contacts. The science AP course will be offered both synchronously and asynchronously. Students will remain in their Grade 8 classroom or at home and work from their laptops. If a student chooses to remain at home rather than learn from their Grade 8 classroom, parents would be required to provide transportation to the home school. The AP teacher will be sending out information regarding next steps.</p> <p>Students participating in Pre-AP will have the option of bringing their own device (BYOD) to school or using a board Chromebook for this purpose. For health and safety reasons, Pre-AP students are advised to bring and use their own headphones.</p>
Q:	Will students be permitted to leave the school building during the lunch period (e.g., go home to eat lunch)?
A:	<p>Elementary students will not be permitted to leave the school property over the lunch period, unless they provide written parental permission.</p> <p>Students at St. Mary's College will be permitted to leave the property during the lunch period, although this will be greatly discouraged to maintain the recommended 100-student contact limit. Students will not be permitted to leave the building during the lunch hour and remain on school property.</p>
Q:	Will the Hockey Canada Skills Academy (HCSA) proceed this year, and if so, how will it work?
A:	<p>The Hockey Canada Skills Academy will proceed this year. The elementary program will not have any significant changes aside from following safety protocols. With regards to the secondary program, it will run from September until November (quadmester format), essentially in a condensed format. Students at SMC will have the HCSA portion in the morning and their religion class for the afternoon. Students in both programs will engage in dryland training at KBX along with on-ice and classroom programming. Safety protocols will be followed when attending KBX and the ice rink.</p>

General Health and Safety

Q:	How will schools handle situations in which students who come to school without a mask or whose mask becomes compromised during the school day?
A:	Each school will have a supply of non-medical masks, which will be provided to students who come without one or to students whose masks become compromised during the school day (e.g., ripped, lost, soiled).
Q:	Which disinfectants and hand sanitizers does the board use?
A:	The primary disinfectant that the board uses is called Oxivir 5. The board uses a number of different brands of hand sanitizers (e.g., Reliable Instant Hand Sanitizer with 70% alcohol). However, the hand

	sanitizers the board uses all meet Health Canada’s requirements and are not on their recall list of products not to be used.
Q:	How will the board assure that students and staff remain physically distant from one another, particularly in classrooms where there are 25 – 30 students learning together?
A:	In keeping with Ministry of Education and local health unit guidance, as much distancing as possible between students, between students and staff, and between staff members will continue to be promoted. In classrooms, desks or tables will be arranged with as much distancing as possible within the space, with desks or tables facing forward, rather than in circles or groupings. Within a class cohort, distancing will be encouraged but not expected at all times. Physical distancing is required between different cohorts of students.
Q:	Will students be given breaks during the day when they will not be required to wear masks?
A:	Yes, students will be given breaks during the day. They will not be required to wear masks when participating in physical activity outdoors (e.g., physical education class, recess) and when eating or drinking (e.g., during their snack or lunch time). Teachers will be encouraged to host classes outdoors, to give the students’ opportunities to have additional breaks from wearing masks.
Q:	In what circumstances can students or employees receive an exemption for wearing a mask?
A:	The Ministry of Education has directed that masks or face coverings are mandatory for students in Grades 4 to 8. In Kindergarten to Grade 3, masks are encouraged. Within those guidelines, the following persons are exempted from the requirement of wearing a mask or face covering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children under two years of age, or children under the age of five years (either chronologically or developmentally) who refuse to wear a mask or face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver; ● Persons with medical conditions who cannot safely wear a mask or face covering (e.g., because of breathing difficulties, cognitive difficulties, hearing or communication difficulties); ● Persons who cannot wear or remove a mask or face covering without assistance; ● Employees who are within or behind a physical barrier (e.g., Plexiglas sneeze guard); ● Employees who work in an administrative building (e.g., Central Office), who are able to maintain physical distancing of two metres.
Q:	How will schools safely handle fire drills and other emergency drills?
A:	According to public health, exposure while walking through a hallway for a brief amount of time is considered a transient interaction and a low-risk exposure. For fire drills, classroom cohorts already use the closest door to their classroom to exit the building, so this will reduce congestion while exiting. Students will walk single file, with one cohort on each side of the hall. Once outside, students will remain with their classroom cohort, in a separate space from other cohorts. For re-entry into the building, the cohorts will use the same door and enter one cohort at a time. <p>For both lockdown and hold and secure drills, students remain in their classrooms, so compliance with physical distancing between cohorts should not be an issue.</p>

Q:	For how long do you expect that students and staff will need to wear masks (e.g., a few weeks, all year)?
A:	The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board takes its direction from the local health units and the Ministry of Education. When these authorities advise it is safe to stop wearing masks, we will do so. The situation is continually evolving and there is no way to predict when this will occur.
Q:	What will happen if someone in my child’s class contracts COVID-19 or shows symptoms of COVID-19?
A:	In consultation with the local health units, our board has developed an Outbreak Protocol. If a student shows a symptom of COVID-19, they are isolated from others, supervised and family members are contacted for pick up. The family of the ill student will be referred to the Ministry’s COVID-19 Self-Assessment website (https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/) for assessment and instructions on what to do next. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19, the local health unit is notified and completes the required contact tracing and monitoring.
Q:	Will daily temperature checks be taken of students and staff in schools with infrared thermometers?
A:	No, daily temperature checks will not be taken of students or staff. Each school will have infrared thermometers available, if needed to confirm a fever in an ill student or staff member.
Q:	What will happen if the community in which I live experiences a severe outbreak? Will my child be able to move to at-home learning at that time?
A:	The local health unit is responsible for managing community and/or school outbreaks. It is the health unit that would make the decision to close the school. If this were to occur, all students would move to at-home learning with their face-to-face teacher for the duration of the school closure.
Q:	Will children be required to self-isolate for 14 days if they contract a cold or the flu?
A:	As mentioned previously, our board has developed an Outbreak Protocol, which outlines when and for how long a child or staff member should stay home from school when ill. Because many of the symptoms of COVID-19 are very similar to cold and flu symptoms, even if children are well enough, they should not attend school while symptomatic. If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the online Self-Assessment website and/or a COVID-19 Assessment Centre, the child is able to return to school 24 hours after symptoms resolve.
Q:	My child has allergies that cause him/her to cough and sneeze frequently. Will my child be prevented from entering school because of these allergies?
A:	No, a child will not be prevented from entering school because of allergies. Parents will complete the “Student Screening Tool for School Attendance” each morning, before their child(ren) attend(s) school. The screening tool helps to differentiate between a “new onset of cough” and “runny nose/nasal congestion without other known cause” and allergies.

Q:	Will children need to be swabbed, and if so, how often?
A:	No, children will not need to be initially or routinely swabbed. The Ministry’s online COVID-19 Self-Assessment website helps to determine if a COVID-19 test is recommended. If the site recommends a COVID-19 test, the nearest assessment centre will determine if one is completed or not.
Q:	Can my child wear a face shield instead of a mask?
A:	No, according to public health guidance, a face shield is not a substitute for wearing a face mask as it does not filter respiratory droplets.
Q:	Can children take off their masks during lunch hours and recesses?
A:	Yes, children can take off their masks while they are eating or drinking and while participating in physical activity outdoors (e.g., recess).
Q:	My child has a skin condition that prevents her from using alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Can she bring her own supply of antibacterial wipes with her to school?
A:	Yes, if a skin condition prevents the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer, a student could bring antibacterial wipes to school. The wipes should be labeled with the student’s name and must be kept in the student’s bag. The wipes should not be shared with anyone else. Antibacterial wipes have to have either a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or Natural Product Number (NPN). If not, they are not approved for use by Health Canada, nor can they do what the label claims they can (i.e., reduce the risk of infection by, or spread of, microorganisms). For an approved list of sanitizers and wipes, please refer to the following list: https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/hand-sanitizer.html
Q:	How will you ensure that schools are well ventilated?
A:	In terms of indoor ventilation, doors and windows will be open as much as possible. Filters are regularly changed in our HVAC systems and air quality will be monitored. The settings for our HVAC systems will be set to increase the air exchange, as recommended in the industry guidelines for COVID-19. In addition, use of outdoor spaces will be encouraged, whenever possible.
Q:	As a parent, I am concerned about class sizes and the amount of time students will be spending indoors in close proximity to one another. What health and safety measures is the board putting into place to keep children safe?
A:	Building on the guidance from the Ministry of Education and the advice from our local public health units, the health, safety and well-being of staff, families and students is a priority for our board. The risk of COVID-19 transmission can be reduced by consistently practicing personal preventative practices. These practices include frequent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, identification

	<p>of children or staff who are feeling ill, and staying home when ill. Mitigation measures specific to employees include providing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (e.g., medical masks, goggles, face shields, gloves, gowns).</p> <p>Other risk mitigation measures that our board will put into place include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prohibiting individuals who have symptoms of/or have had exposure to COVID-19 from entering the school setting. ● Following directions from the local public health units around screening tools and exclusion from school. ● Promoting and facilitating personal preventative practices. ● Postponing assemblies, team sports, or extracurricular activities where physical distancing or touching of common equipment cannot be avoided. ● Keeping belongings separated from others and limiting items to be carried between school and home. ● Limiting or restricting non-essential visitors/guests. ● Limiting the number of adults with whom students come into contact. ● Limiting the interaction between classroom cohorts. ● Using scheduling to stagger recess/lunch breaks. ● Having staff travel to classes, rather than having children travel to different classrooms. ● Using masks and PPE, as recommended. ● Ensuring the ventilation system operates properly and air exchanges through the HVAC system is increased. ● Increasing the number of carestaff in our schools and the frequency of environmental cleaning, especially washrooms and high-touch surfaces or equipment.
Q:	What will students do with their masks when they are eating, drinking or outside for recess?
A:	<p>When students are allowed to remove their masks, they will be reminded to first wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Masks should not be placed in pockets, around students' necks, or on their wrists.</p> <p>To store the mask, it should be folded in half so that the outer surface is inwards (i.e., so that the contaminated outer surface is not contacting anything during storage) and placed in a clean, sealable bag or in a cleanable container with a lid until ready to use it again the same day. The bags should be discarded at the end of each day and parents / guardians should wash reusable containers at the end of each day. Bags and containers are to be labelled with the student's name to prevent accidental misuse.</p>

Human Resources and Staffing	
Q:	When will families know who will be teaching their children?
A:	<p>Assuming that there are no major announcements from the province between now and Labour Day, families can expect to know this information during the last week of August. Once parents have selected either in-school or at-home learning for their children, as has been requested in the survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/preregister2020-21, the board can then begin the process of finalizing which employees will be teaching / supporting students learning at school and which employees will be teaching / supporting students at home.</p> <p>The board recognizes the difficult choice that many families face and thanks everyone for providing their response by Wednesday, August 12, 2020. The board cannot finalize teaching or other employee assignments until such information has been obtained.</p>
Q:	When will board employees receive additional information about reopening?
A:	All board employees have access to the letters that parents receive, along with any pertinent memos from the Ministry of Education or the board. As the board receives and/or publishes such information, it shares it. In addition, board employees will be expected to participate in three days of professional learning on September 1 - 3, 2020. One full day will be devoted to health and safety protocols and the safe reopening of schools.
Q:	How will educational assistants (EAs) be assigned this year?
A:	Educational assistants will largely be assigned as they have in the past.
Q:	Will the board be hiring additional caretakers to assist with cleaning?
A:	Yes, as has been explained earlier in this document, the board will be hiring additional caretakers and/or offering more hours of work to part-time caretakers to assist with the cleaning of high-touch surfaces (e.g., handrails, washrooms, water fountains) during the school day.

Student Instruction, Assessment, and Evaluation	
Q:	What is required of students and families, in terms of supplies?
A:	In keeping with the Ministry of Education guidance, personal belongings brought to school should be minimized. Necessary personal items (e.g., backpack, water bottle, food, individual school supplies, cloth masks) should be labeled and will be stored separately. Items such as art supplies, hand sanitizer, masks, and tissues will be made available at the school. If students have a laptop or other digital device that they wish to bring to school they may; however, board Chromebooks will be provided for student use.

Q:	What will classes actually look like?
A:	<p>As is the case now, each classroom will have its own character, depending on the grade level, classroom size, subject area, and teacher preferences. However, it would be fair to say that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where required, students and employees in schools will wear masks and other appropriate PPE. ● As much space as possible will be provided between students' desks. ● Students' desks will all face one direction. ● Teachers will continue to use a range of materials and strategies to engage learners. ● The provincial curriculum will be followed. ● Area rugs, plush toys, and other soft-surface items will be removed from the room. ● Health and safety will be a prime consideration in all classrooms.
Q:	How will schools handle students who choose face-to-face learning but then become ill and/or need to self-isolate for two or more weeks?
A:	Students who remain at home because of illness or self-isolation will be offered work to be completed under the direction of their face-to-face teacher.
Q:	Will students who are just entering kindergarten have the opportunity to ride the school bus before the school year begins? What else will you be doing to help our youngest learners transition to school?
A:	Unfortunately, our Welcome to Kindergarten Program, which included a school bus ride, was suspended because of COVID-19. Schools are reaching out to families and are exploring creative ways to introduce staff and the school setting to our youngest learners.
Q:	Will students whose families choose to have them learn from home have the same teachers as those students who are learning at school? In other words, when students are learning from home, are they learning with their classmates who are learning at school?
A:	No. It is unlikely that families who choose remote learning will have the same teacher as those students learning at home.
Q:	Will families who choose at-home learning receive paper packages with a schedule?
A:	Yes, families who choose at-home learning will be provided with a daily schedule of subjects/courses according to a 5-hour instructional day with opportunities for frequent, live contact with a teacher and expectations for synchronous learning. The learning will be based on overall expectations across all subjects/courses and grades. Alternative learning materials will be provided to those families who do not have sufficient bandwidth or reliable access to the Internet.
Q:	Will volunteer hours be required for secondary students to graduate this year?
A:	Yes, graduating students will be required to meet the 40-hour community involvement graduation requirement and can do so virtually.

Q:	How will cooperative education work in a quadmester model?
A:	Co-op placements will be offered virtually, where feasible. In-person community placements can be arranged in alignment with the direction and recommendations of the local health unit, the direction of the school board, and with the safety and curriculum requirements of the cooperative education curriculum.
Q:	How will the board's student attendance policy be applied during the pandemic?
A:	Although in-person school attendance will be optional for the 2020-21 school year, if not attending in-person, students will be expected to attend school remotely. Attendance will be taken for both in-person and remote learning and our attendance procedures will be followed, taking into consideration that students may have to self-isolate while ill.
Q:	Knowing how stressful this return to school is, what plans will schools put in place to ensure students who choose in-school learning can be placed in classes with their friends?
A:	Student placement decisions follow board policies and procedures and are always made by the school team considering a variety of factors. This year is no exception. These factors include each student's profile, ability, learning style, social/emotional behaviour and relationships with peers.

Students with Special Needs

Q:	Will students with special needs (e.g., anxiety, autism) have an opportunity to visit their schools or classrooms before the school year begins?
A:	Students who require one will be provided with a transition back to school, as in previous years and as outlined in PPM 140. Additionally, a week-long transition program was offered at each school in August to support student transitions.
Q:	How will students who experience severe anxiety be supported?
A:	Additional mental health supports were made available all summer. In addition to our regular mental health supports, additional supports will continue to the end of September. Please contact your child's school principal if you feel your child is in need of support.
Q:	My teenager has special needs and is scheduled to take a GLE course. In a regular semester, she would have a GLE (Learning Strategies) block to provide her with support with her three other courses. How will this work with quadmesters?
A:	Students will continue to be scheduled for their GLE block. In the quadmester system, every effort will be made to look at individual student's needs to determine the best placement of the GLE.

Q:	How will EAs maintain a safe physical distance and still offer support to children with special needs?
A:	EAs who cannot maintain a safe physical distance in order to support children with special needs will be required to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., gloves, masks, shields).

Technology	
Q:	If I choose to have my child learn at home, will a laptop be provided?
A:	Yes, if you choose to have your child engage in at-home learning and do not have a digital device, then the board will loan you a Chromebook. If you have your own digital device at home, you are welcome to use it instead.
Q:	The board provided our family with one or more Chromebooks last spring, which helped our children learn at home. Can I keep these Chromebooks if our children are returning to in-school learning?
A:	Unfortunately, no. The board issued approximately 1600 Chromebooks to families in need last spring and it will begin the process of collecting these devices early in the school year so that they can be cleaned and put back in schools for students' use.

Transportation and Communications	
Q:	What health protocols will be in place on school buses?
A:	<p>As mentioned previously in this document, students from Grades 4 - 12 are required to wear masks on school buses. School bus drivers will be wearing masks and shields; the shields will be used when boarding and exiting. Students from Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged to cover their faces as they are boarding and exiting the bus, in order to help our vulnerable drivers and students. Face masks will be available for students who lose or forget them.</p> <p>The seat directly behind the driver will remain empty or be used to transport the driver's children. School buses will be sanitized twice daily, once after the morning portion, and once after the afternoon portion. Hand sanitizer will be available at the front of each bus. Windows may be open to assist in ventilating the bus.</p>
Q:	Will school buses pick students up and drop them off at their homes?
A:	Only students in their first year of kindergarten who do not live on a dead end street or cul-de-sac are picked up and dropped off at their home address, as outlined in board policy. All other students will continue to be picked up and dropped off at bus stops as usual.

Q:	Will seating on school buses be assigned?
A:	Yes, seats will be assigned. Siblings will be seated together.
Q:	How many students will be assigned to one seat on a school bus?
A:	Although primary aged students are allowed to sit three to a seat, there will likely only be two students assigned to each seat. Depending on the load, there may be more than two small children per seat.
Q:	Will my child's cohort at school be the same as their bus cohort?
A:	Not necessarily. Students will be assigned to bus cohorts based on their stop locations, thereby keeping siblings and neighbours together. Classes are largely formed by grade and age. Some classes may include students who reside in the same geographical area, but this is not a given.