



Lindsay Liske  
Chairperson

Rose Burton Spohn  
Director of Education

August 5, 2020

Dear Parents / Guardians:

We hope this finds you and your loved ones well. On Thursday, July 30, 2020, the Ontario government announced that all schools would be able to offer face-to-face instruction in the 2020-21 school year. This same announcement divided school boards into two groups: designated and non-designated. Our board was placed into the non-designated category; this means that we are able to open all our elementary and secondary schools in what has been termed a conventional model.

The Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board warmly welcomes this announcement and we are seeking your input about how your family intends to proceed in the fall. We acknowledge that the decision to have students return to school may be a challenging one for your family and hope the information that follows will help you make a more informed decision. Please take a few minutes to **complete the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/preregister2020-21> by the end of the day on Wednesday, August 12, 2020.** The information you provide will allow us to prepare adequately and determine staffing levels for instruction, cleaning, and transportation.

- **Students in Kindergarten to Grade 8** will attend school five days per week, receiving their usual 300 minutes of instruction per day. They will remain in one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Students will have direct contact with two to four teachers daily and have close or sustained contact with approximately 50 students. Students in Grades 4 – 12 are expected to wear non-medical / cloth masks while in school buildings and on school buses, unless they have a medical condition or other exception that prevents them from doing so. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are encouraged, but not required, to wear non-medical / cloth masks while in school buildings or on school buses.
- **Students in Grades 9 to 12** will attend school five days per week, receiving their usual 300 minutes of instruction per day. However, instead of taking up to four courses per day for 75 minutes each semester, secondary students will take up to two courses per day for 150 minutes each, for a nine-week period over quadmesters, as outlined below:
  - Quadmester 1A – September 8, 2020 – November 11, 2020 – Exams on November 12 – 13, 2020
  - Quadmester 1B – November 16, 2020 – February 2, 2021 – Exams on February 3 – 4, 2021
  - Quadmester 2A – February 8, 2021 – April 19, 2021 – Exams on April 20 – 21, 2021
  - Quadmester 2B – April 22, 2021 – June 25, 2021 – Exams on June 28 – 29, 2021

Secondary students will have direct contact with two to four teachers daily and have close or sustained contact with approximately 100 students. Students in Grades 4 - 12 are expected to wear non-medical / cloth masks while in school buildings and on school buses, unless they have a medical condition or other exceptionality that prevents them from doing so. Since larger common areas (e.g., cafeteria, auditorium) will be largely off limits, students will be required to bring their own lunches and snacks to school and consume them in one of their two classrooms.

**Catholic Education Centre**

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- **School board employees** will be provided with and wear medical masks. Additional personal protective equipment (PPE), such as goggles, gloves, and face shields will be provided to employees, as required. All HSCDSB employees, including casual and occasional employees, will receive detailed health and safety training / information about COVID-19 on the three professional activity (PA) days prior to the start of the school year.
- **Health and safety** information about COVID-19 will also be offered to students, families, and visitors. Daily self-screening will be required of all students, employees, and visitors before they enter board facilities. Physical distancing and proper hand / respiratory hygiene will be encouraged. Class washroom and hand-cleaning breaks may be scheduled throughout the day.
- **Symptoms of COVID-19** will be reviewed / communicated and anyone experiencing even mild symptoms will not be permitted to enter schools or board facilities. Those who become ill during the school day will be immediately separated from others, until they are able to go home. Each school will be equipped with a kit containing additional PPE (e.g., gowns) for such occasions. Ill students will not be permitted to take student or public transportation home. School administrators will immediately report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to their local public health unit; the board will report suspected or confirmed cases to the Ministry of Education. The board will follow all health and safety protocols provided, should an outbreak occur.
- **Visitors** to schools will be limited and schools will keep records of any visitors who do come on site, including occasional / casual teachers or workers. Schools will also keep accurate documentation (e.g., seating charts, daily attendance records, bus lists, lists of children involved in before and after school programs), in the event that an outbreak occurs and the local public health unit must contact trace.
- **Cleaning measures** will be enhanced so that high-touch surfaces in schools and on school buses (e.g., handrails, seatbacks, door handles) are cleaned at least twice a day. All other surfaces, including outdoor play equipment, will continue to be disinfected daily, as is standard procedure. Hand sanitizer dispensers will be installed in all classrooms and clear signage will be installed in common areas (e.g., directional arrows in hallways, hand hygiene posters in washrooms). Additionally, classrooms may be equipped with other supplies, such as disinfectant wipes or sprays that permit the on-the-spot cleaning of high-touch, portable items (e.g., laptops, art supplies) that may be used by multiple students throughout the day.
- **Soft-surface items**, such as carpets, cushions, plush toys, and cardboard puzzles, which may be difficult to disinfect, will be removed from use in classrooms. Hard-surface items, such as wooden blocks, metal vehicles, and plastic toys, will remain in use. Hard-surface toys normally used outdoors by multiple kindergarten classes will be separated according to cohort, so that one cohort of children will use one collection of toys each day.
- **Transportation** will continue to be available to eligible families. The Algoma and Sudbury Transportation Consortia will be providing additional information about the health and safety measures they will be adopting next year.

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- **All secondary and elementary extracurricular activities**, including choirs; clubs; intramural, inter-school, and league athletics; and all other activities that involve students having close physical contact with those outside their class cohorts, will be suspended until further notice. Equally, large, in-person gatherings (e.g., school-wide or grade-level assemblies or liturgies) will be prohibited until further notice. Virtual celebrations and smaller, in-person gatherings involving specific cohorts of students (e.g., class masses) will still be permitted.
- **Parents / guardians of students who are medically fragile** are encouraged to share this letter with their medical practitioner. School administrators would appreciate receiving a medical note, indicating that it is safe for medically fragile students to return to school, given both the pandemic's realities and the precautions the board is putting into place. Students at an elevated risk who do not receive the approval of their medical practitioner will be eligible for at-home delivery and/or home instruction.
- **Students whose families do NOT choose in-person school attendance** will be expected to attend school from home five days a week. Students learning remotely will be provided with a daily schedule according to a five-hour instructional day with opportunities for frequent, synchronous contact with one or more teachers. Note: synchronous contact means that teachers and/or other support staff will use technologies (e.g., telephone, Google Meet) to communicate with students in real-time, from a distance.
- **Transition points** have been established throughout the school year for those who choose one form of delivery for their children (e.g., learning from home) in August and then wish to move to another form of delivery (e.g., in-person at school) later on. Transition points for secondary students will occur at the beginning of quadmesters. Transition points for elementary students will occur after the Christmas holidays.

Should you require more detail about the guidance provided to all school boards, please feel free to visit <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools>. Alternatively, please feel free to contact your local school or the school board at the coordinates provided below.

We hope that this document provides you with sufficient information about the reopening plans of the Huron-Superior Catholic District School Board to allow you to make an informed decision about the start of the 2020-21 school year. We thank you in advance for your cooperation in completing **the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/preregister2020-21> by the end of the day on Wednesday, August 12, 2020**. If you are waiting to register for the next school year, and/or if you know of anyone else who is doing so, we encourage you to register as soon as possible at [www.hscdsb.on.ca](http://www.hscdsb.on.ca), so that we may include your family in our reopening plans.

God bless,

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