

2020-21 Back to School Parent Information Sheet

Elmsdale District School

As detailed within the Nova Scotia Back to School Plan, there will be significant adjustments to some routines and activities that were typical in a normal school year. To help families navigate these changes, we have created this school information sheet for you.

What to Expect at School This Year:

Before School

- **At-Home Self-Monitoring for COVID:** Families are required to monitor children for COVID-19 using the COVID-19 Daily Checklist. The most up-to-date version can be found online at <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Daily-COVID-checklist-en.pdf>. By monitoring daily, you are helping to identify any potential cases of COVID-19 as quickly as possible. A paper copy of the COVID-19 Daily Checklist will be provided prior when schools reopen.

Students need to stay home when they are ill, even if their symptoms are mild. If you are unsure if you or your child should self-isolate, contact 811.

- **Remember to pack a face mask and water bottle:** Masks are required for students in Grades 4-12 if they cannot physically distance and required for all students travelling by bus. Each student and staff member will be provided with two face masks.

Also, students who travel by bus, regardless of grade, will be required to wear a mask while on the bus.

Water bottles are recommended as water fountains will not be accessible; bottle filling stations or water coolers will still be available. Sending your child with a full water bottle in the morning is recommended and appreciated.

Getting to School

- Masks are required for all students travelling on buses. Family members traveling on the bus should sit together. Buses will be cleaned twice during the school day and in between each run.
- Once bus students arrive at school, bus unloading will be staggered allowing less traffic entering the school at one time. Students getting off a bus as one group will wash/sanitize their hands as they enter their separate classrooms and join their class cohorts within the school, and will remove their mask once inside their classroom, unless they are in grade 4 or 5 and cannot physically distance.
- Parents who drive children to school will drop off and pick-up students outside the building. Visitor access will be limited to only essential visitors. For our elementary schools, our staff will be waiting to welcome our younger students into the building.
- Please stick to the following drop-off and pick up times for our school:
 - Drop Off between 7:40 and 7:55 am, classes begin at 8:00 am
 - Pick up is between 2:00 and 2:10 pm
- More information with specific details on arrival and dismissal will be communicated prior to students starting

During the School Day

Hygiene

- Hand Hygiene: There will be an emphasis on hand washing, before & after eating and during the day. Hand sanitizing stations have been installed at main entrances and classrooms without a sink.
- Students who are in grades 4 and 5 (including the 3/4 combined) will need to wear masks in class and during transitions in hallways if they cannot physically distance, even if they are in their cohort.
- Every student in grades P-5 and every staff member will be provided two non-medical masks. If a student forgets their mask, disposable masks will be available.
- There is a “no-sharing” policy on food, personal belongings and their individual school supplies.

School Design

- Students in Pre-Primary to Grade 5 will stay with their class (cohort) throughout the day, where possible.
- Classrooms will have less material and furniture, and desks/tables will be spaced out allowing students to have more physical distance.
- Students will notice additional signage including directional signs to control flow in hallways, common areas, and outside spaces. Signage includes traffic flow arrows, physical distancing reminders, and designated Entrances & Exits.

School Schedule

- More classes (including Physical Education) will be held outdoors, when possible to encourage physical movement and support our students’ well-being.
- All students will continue to be able to access healthy options through the school’s Breakfast Program. There will be a focus on individual servings and access that is organized to prevent students from gathering.
- Students in Pre-primary to Grade 5 will eat lunch in their classrooms. If your child is bringing their own lunch, please ensure it is something they can manage independently to avoid unnecessary handling of items by others. If students require food from our lunch program, their meals will be delivered to their classroom to limit interactions among cohorts and social gathering.
 - Outside break during the lunch hour will have class cohorts playing in a designated area, and students will play with others in their class cohort.
 - Breaks/Recess: Students will have breaks with their class on a staggered schedule.

Illness at School

- If a child feels unwell or begins to exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, a parent or guardian will be contacted for pick-up. **It is very important to ensure that your contact information and other emergency contacts for your child are kept up to date with the school during the school year.**
- Any student who becomes unwell at school will have a separate location in the school to wait to be picked up. Students who become ill during the day will not be permitted to return home on the bus.
- Students who exhibit symptoms on the bus will be required to isolate on the way to school and the bus driver will notify the school administration.

- If a child exhibits COVID symptoms, parents/guardians must contact 811 to receive advice from Public Health on what to do next, including if/when the child can return to school.
- Our schools will continue to monitor illness in schools and will follow direction from Public Health on specific processes. Parents are asked when they are calling in to excuse their child, if they could provide as much detail as they are comfortable, so we can provide Public Health with accurate information on our illness data.
- If a COVID-19 case is identified, Public Health will provide direction to CCRCE as well as the school.

After the School Day

- Our PLAY program (previously PLAY 4 Kids) will continue to operate. Additional information about their programming will be provided by the provider.
- Parents/Guardians can help reinforce proper COVID-19 hygiene protocols with children. Please help us to remind children about proper handwashing techniques, cough/sneeze etiquette, how to wear a mask properly, and physical distancing. We understand that some students will want to hug/embrace other students upon returning to school, after our long absence. Please talk to your children about this and the need to find alternate safe ways to show each other that we care.

More information on COVID Specific Changes for the 2020-21 school year

- **Technology** - Students are able to bring their own device to school for educational purposes, **if the teacher requests it**. Students who do not have access to a personal device will have access to school-based devices. School-based devices will be cleaned between use.
- **Families with specialized needs** will work together with their school's Student Planning Team. Please contact the school to discuss your child's needs further.

We will be sharing additional school-specific information with you soon.

Do you have a specific question regarding your child's return to school? Let us know and we can help provide you with information. Please call us at 902-883-5350 or email at langilleld@ccrce.ca.