

Blake News

The Newsletter of
Blake Street Public School
Phone: (416) 393-9415

Blake Street Public School
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BLAKE BACK TO SCHOOL GUIDE

We have attempted to put together a short but complete guide to help you prepare for this different type of return to school model. **It is very important that you read this newsletter completely.**

This will be a year like no other, and while it will be different, we will be working extra hard to make it a GREAT YEAR. Challenges bring us closer together, and remind us of what is important: relationships. We are here to support you, to lighten your load, and to make you feel as comfortable as possible. We are sooo excited to see your child's smiling face in the week to come!

We appreciate that as parents, you have many questions, some of which may not yet be answered in this concise guide. For further clarification of specific questions you may have, please contact your child's teacher directly. Their email addresses can be found in the teacher welcome back letter. As a school system, we have never experienced anything like this so planning for this new reality means that information is changing, and the information below is the most current information we can share with you at this time, but please understand that it may change.

How do I Pre-Screen my Child Before Sending them to School Every Morning?

The most important thing families can do to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19, is to screen your children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keep them home from school if they are sick or have had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19. **By now, you may have read the email from TDSB sent out Thursday evening. If you choose to send your child for in person learning, the expectation is that you have pre-screened your child daily. As a parent, you play a VITAL role in keeping our community safe and healthy. Please do your part.**

A self-assessment for students can be verified two ways:

- A parent/guardian signing the TDSB Student Health Pass daily and the student showing it to staff at the entry door.
- A parent/guardian completing the assessment on the TDSB Health Screening App, which generates a QR code that a student can scan at the entry door (if they have a mobile device) or the student can present their name to a screener who can verify their entry status.

We ask that at this time, you only complete the hardcopy form. We do not feel that we have had enough time to navigate and follow up on how we will be able to pull data from the APP in the mornings and will require a few weeks to do so.

And so, daily, parents will need to sign off on the TDSB Student Health Pass completed at home, confirming that their child does not have any symptoms or has not had exposure to COVID-19. Students will not be allowed into the building without it. An e copy of the form is attached to the initial body of my email. Extra copies will be made, and will be left in a box outside of the main school doors on Monday morning. As well, staff will have copies available for you at drop offs all next week.

Learn more about the self-assessment and verification process at www.tdsb.on.ca/healthscreening.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 (PDF) include:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- New olfactory or taste disorder(s)
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion (in absence of underlying reasons for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.)

You must screen your child for symptoms every day before they come to school. You can use the Ministry of Health's Ontario [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) for this purpose. If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are ill, they should not attend school. You should report your child's absence from school by contacting us at: 416 393 9415. Students who become ill during the day will be isolated and must be picked up from school as soon as possible. Symptomatic students will not be able to use student transportation.

Please consult the [Ministry of Health's COVID-19 reference document for symptoms](#) (PDF) for other clinical features of COVID-19 and when atypical signs and symptoms of COVID-19 should be considered, particularly in children.

If you're worried your child or any member of your household has been exposed to COVID-19 or has symptoms, use the Ministry of Health's Ontario [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#). You will get a recommendation on what to do next.

The Ontario Ministry of Health advises everyone to take an active role in protecting themselves from COVID-19. Here are a few things that you and your family can do:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand

sanitizer

- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home and **isolate** if you or anyone in your household is sick

For more information on COVID-19 please visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).

Class Placements, Sibling Cohorts, and Class Caps

Based on our pre-registration data, approximately 319 students from Kindergarten to Grade 6 will be attending in person. As a result of a decrease in enrolment, Blake Street PS has lost 2 full time teachers: one full primary English, a half time library, and a half time special education teacher. The two teachers who have been declared surplus were full year Long Term Occasional Teachers we hired in late August. Teacher Assignments are shared with you below, however please note that this new staffing models and teacher assignments may continue to change if we lose or gain more students.

English

JK (no ECE)	Heather Whiteside
FDK with ECE	Kelly Dymont
FDK with ECE	Asma Motala
Grade 1 /2	Jonathan Lowe
Grade 1 /2	Erin Barr
Grade 3 /4	Frank Tsai
Grade 4/5 AM	Juli Scarr
Grade 4/5	Brad Nicolaou
Grade 6 AM / Grade 5/6 PM	Steve Richman

French

SK FI (no ECE)	Kelsey Molder
SK FI (with ECE)	Roz Morton
Grade 1 FI	Sophie O'Sullivan
Grade 1 /2 FI	Maria Jang
Grade 2 /3 FI	Ellen Wald
Grade 2 /3 FI	Amy Thomas
Grade 3 /4 FI	Lucy LaFontaine
Grade 4 / 5 FI	Heather Prakesch
Grade 5 / 6 FI	Jesselyn Dungo

In addition to homeroom teachers, we will have 3.5 prep teachers. In previous years, students received instruction in rotary subjects (ie drama/dance, music, physical education) from a number of different teachers. This year, they will receive rotary instruction from one generalized teacher.

Prep and Special Education

Anna Psaralogos
 Anna Kiil (PM)
 Adrianna Stagni
 Lynne Logan
 Shelby Kagan
 Jackilyn Wallace (AM)

We would like to welcome back Ms. Barr, Ms. Dymont, Ms. Kiil, Ms. Wald and Ms. Dungo, all of whom are returning from leave; and let you know that Ms. Paton has taken a leave this school year. Finally, a reminder that we hired Ms. Pao last spring to teach the grade 4/5 AM class, however she has extended her maternity leave until January, and in her absence, we have hired Ms. Scarr.

Class Sizes and Student Placements

Where possible, we have grouped siblings (twins and siblings only a year apart) into the same classroom. Information shared with you last week regarding class size has been reviewed. It is important to note that these are soft caps, and can therefore go a few students above the number.

	JK / SK	Grades 1 -3	Grades 4-6
In Person	24 (15 with no ECE)	20	27
Virtual School	29	20	35

What can Parents and Guardians Do to Ensure Their Children are Ready for School?

- pre-screen them for COVID-19 every day before sending them to school. If they are unwell or demonstrate symptoms, keep them home. See the attached screening poster. <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/96fa-Screening-poster-Schools-August-2020.pdf>
- practice healthy hygiene (sneezing and coughing into your arm) and healthy hand washing skills.
- practice the “rules of the road” by walking on the right side along the halls and stairwell
- practice wearing masks for extended periods of time throughout the day.
- TDSB preparing for back to school: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Resources-for-Preparing-for-Back-to-School>

When does my Child Start School?

To support a smooth, successful and organized return, we have staggered start dates. This will reduce large numbers of parents gathering outside and will help to better support a sense of routine for the coming weeks. Our staggered start dates are as follows:

Tuesday, September 15 th	SK and Grade 6 students
Wednesday, September 16 th	JK, Grade 1 and Grade 5 students
Thursday, September 17 th	Grades 2, 3 and 4 students
Friday, September 18 th	All students

What Happens if I Signed Up for Virtual Learning?

Once you have chosen virtual learning, your child will be placed into a virtual classroom and will be assigned a teacher (not a Blake teacher). You will be receiving an email from the TDSB (not me) to prepare you for the start up. You will not necessarily be placed with other Blake students, however, you remain a Blake student when you decide to return to in-class learning. Changing between virtual and in person learning will be available after the Thanksgiving weekend in mid-October.

Bussing

Bussing for approved French Immersion students will not begin until **Monday, September 21st**. Grade 6 students are not eligible for bussing, and will need to apply for an empty seat if they are in need of transportation. If you have not yet logged on to the TDSB portal, please be sure to do so at <https://busplannerweb.torontoschoolbus.org/>

This will allow you to receive automatic messages relating to bussing delays or time changes.

Bus routes have been finalized (note they have been slightly updated since my last newsletter). They are as follows:

SCHOOL NAME	AM PICK UP TIME	PM DROP OFF TIME
Thorncliffe Park	7:24 (PFT0133)	3:39(PTF0133)
William Burgess	7:34 (PFT0133)	3:31 (PTF0133)
Chester	7:41 (PFT0133)	3:25 (PTF0133)
Frankland	7:48 (PTF0133)	3:20 (PTF0133)
Wilkinson	7:56 (CSC0877)	3:10 (CSC0877)
Roden	8:06 (CSC0877)	3:01 (CSC0877)

To assist elementary students to be prepared for the bus in this new COVID world, some very brief videos can be found at link: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Resources-for-Preparing-for-Back-to-School>

Do Students Need to Wear a Mask?

All students (K-6) will be required to wear a mask while at school. Masks can be taken off while outside. Non-medical masks will be made available for students who require one, though we encourage students to bring their own. It is also encouraged to pack an extra. As well, we ask that all masks are clearly labelled. If you are using disposable masks, please be sure to write students names on the outside face portion of the mask for easy identification. TDSB info regarding masks:

<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Health-and-Safety/Mask-and-Face-Covering-Requirements-For-TDSB-Students-and-Staff>

Bell Times, Drop Offs and Pick Ups

A reminder that our school bell times have changed this year to accommodate for bussing. **Our school day starts at 8:26 AM, and ends at 2:50 PM.** The yard is supervised before school beginning at 8:11 and after school until 3:05. **See the School Day Scheduled attached in the body of my email.**

Where do I Drop my Child Off and Pick Them Up?

Because we are trying hard to limit the number of adults on the field and outdoor school property, we are asking that **only kindergarten, and grade 1 parents (and for the first week only, families new to Blake this year) enter the school's outdoor property at morning drop off.**

Parents/guardians of students in grades 2 – 6 are asked to drop their child off outside of the fence and allow them to meet their class at their designated homeroom social gathering circle (see map attached) Teachers will be holding up bright signs (yellow for English and blue for French Immersion) with their name, room number and grade. There will be lots of staff outside to help them find their classroom teacher.

While the yard is supervised from 8:11 a.m. – 8:26 a.m., it is strongly recommended that students not come to school before 8:26 a.m., as they will not be permitted to run around and play in the yard, but instead will need to stand/sit in their homeroom assigned social gathering circle mapped out on the field.

After the first day of school, your child's teacher will meet them in their designated social gathering area at 8:26. At that time, teachers will verify the at-home COVID-19 assessment, complete attendance, and provide each child with a squirt of hand sanitizer to clean their hands prior to entry.

In the event that your child is late and their class has come into the building from their outside gathering area, they will need to pick up a late slip from the office. To do this, they will need to access the front doors of the school. If there is a line up, children will be asked to wait on the designated lines to allow for social distancing. You are able to wait with your child in line outside of the building, but will be asked to say goodbye to them once they enter the front doors.

Students will not have access to coat hooks or cubbies. They will need to hang all of their belongings on the back of their chair.

During dismissal, all Grades 4- 6 students will be dismissed directly from the school exit doors (doors 5 or 6). They will need to leave school property immediately. Grades 4 to 6 students who get picked up will need to meet family along the fence on Boulton Avenue. To plan ahead, it is suggested you choose a specific area where you will meet your child before the first day of school.

Kindergarten – Grade 3 parents picking up their child at the end of the day are to remain off school property until 2:50. This is very important as it will allow our students to safely exit the school and get to their pick up locations without having to weave through a large group of parents. At 2:50 p.m. parents may enter school property to pick up their child on the field. The only parents on the asphalt area should be kindergarten parents. There should be no parents in front of exit doors 5 and 6, or at the basketball court. Again, we need this space to be left empty. **When you come to pick your child up, you are asked to enter the field area using the double gates by the soccer posts. Once you have picked up your child, you are asked to immediately leave the school property, and exit via Jones Avenue. This will support a one way traffic flow.**

Parents and guardians of students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will have access to the field, and will need to pick up their child at their class' designated social gathering area. Please be sure to see the map attached to this message, showing the location of your child's social gathering drop off and pick up area. Once you pick up your child, you are asked to leave the school property.

The yard is supervised until 3:05. After that time, any remaining children will be brought to the office to await pick up. It is helpful to call the office to notify us if you are running late for end of day dismissal.

What is a Nutrition Break and How do I Pack for it?

As we shared in the spring, Blake PS has moved to embrace a balanced day, meaning that we will be having 2 Nutrition Breaks throughout the day (10:10 AM – 10:50 AM and 12:10 PM – 12:50 PM), instead of shorter recess periods and a lunch. **Please see the attached information page explaining the benefits of a balanced day model, and how to best plan and pack meals.**

To allow for smaller numbers of students out at a time, the Grades 1 – 6 classes have been divided into two separate groups. While one group begins the nutrition break eating inside, the other half of the school will be out for their outdoor play. These groups switch half way through the nutrition break. During outdoor activity, physical distancing is not required within the same cohort / class.

Students will be eating in their classrooms, at their designated tables, and will be supervised by teachers and lunch room supervisors. **A reminder that we are a nut free school.** During outdoor play times, classrooms will be kept separated, and students will have a rotating weekly area to play in on the field.

After consulting with Toronto Public Health, all TDSB play structures will be open to students during the school day (one class / cohort at a time). As always, everyone who uses the play structures will practice hand hygiene before and after use.

We are an OPAL school (Outdoor Play and Learning) and we are committed to playing outside in all weather; this is especially true during this time. It will be vital for students to get fresh air and time to take their masks off. Please be sure to send them in clothing that will keep them warm, dry, and comfortable (rain jacket, rain boots, umbrella, sweater, indoor shoes...)

Classrooms will be spending as much time outside as possible, though keep in mind that there is a limit to the number of classrooms that can access the outdoor spaces at one time.

If a child goes home for the second nutrition break, they are not permitted to return to school until the break is over at 12:50 PM.

Will there be a Breakfast Program and a Morning Meal this year?

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, our Breakfast Program will not begin until November at the earliest. We will continue to offer every child a morning meal (served in classrooms) consisting of three food groups. For safety measures, we will be using mostly pre-packaged food servings with a focus on healthy food choices.

Will Children Be Able to Access Drinking Water?

Water fountains will be closed for individual drinking. As such, it will be necessary for students to come to school with a pre-filled water bottle. Students will be able to fill up their bottles at school using our water refill stations.

Parent Access to the Building

Schools will significantly limit visitors, including parents and guardians. Any visitor to the school will be required to make an appointment in advance and will need to conduct a COVID-19 health screening prior to their appointment. They will also be required to wear a mask while on school property. We will not be accepting late lunches/snacks/clothing so please be sure to be super organized and send your children with everything they may possibly need for the day.

What Happens if my Child Attends EDP?

The Extended Day Program will continue this year with a smaller enrollment allowing for smaller class sizes. We have done our best to cluster siblings into the same EDP classroom. The old passcode located in the daycare door has been removed, and the back parking lot doors will be locked. In the event that you drive, you will now need to walk to the front main doors, and use the EDP (daycare) buzzer. An EDP staff member will greet you and your child at the main doors, verify the Student Health Pass has been signed (confirming your child is healthy, symptom free, and hasn't been exposed to someone with COVID-19), provide hand sanitizer, and then they will take your child to their EDP classroom. Parents will not be allowed in to the school building.

At pick up times, you will again buzz in at the main doors (be sure to use the EDP buzzer) where you will be asked your child's name. The child(ren) will be brought out to you at the main doors. Again, no parents will be allowed into the school building.

EDP classrooms used this year will be Rooms 104, 105, 106 and 107. Currently, we only have 23 students attending EDP. There are a number of children on the waitlist, but if you are in need of child care, you can apply to the program at www.tdsb.on.ca/EDP

What Happens if my Child is Feeling Unwell During the Day?

In the event that a child is unwell or begins to show any symptoms of COVID-19, a staff member will bring them to the Wellness Room (located in the back conference room of the main office). There they will be supervised by staff, and the school will call parents requesting that they pick up their child as soon as possible. If COVID-19 is suspected, parents will be asked to go to an assessment centre for testing as soon as possible and to self-isolate at home until the results are available, or return after the child has self-isolated for fourteen days. To find the nearest COVID-19 assessment centre, please go to: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

What Happens if there is a Confirmed Case of Covid?

In the event of a positive COVID-19 case, TDSB Health and Safety will be notified and they will follow up with Toronto Public Health. TPH will contact positive cases directly and provide a letter to the other students identified as having had a high risk of exposure. The exposed

areas of the school will be closed until enhanced cleaning is completed. Additional direction will be taken from TPH and is based on Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health guidance in the workplace.

I appreciate that this is a lot of information to digest. While we have taken great time to develop these plans for return, there will be glitches and new knowledge and insight gained from the experience. Please expect some changes to be made as the weeks progress and understand that everything is up for review. This will no doubt be a year like no other. We do not know all the answers, but we promise you that we will be here right beside you through it all. We thank you for your ongoing support, and for trusting us with your cherished children. We don't take this responsibility lightly.