

Blake News

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

Blake Street Public School
 21 Boulton Avenue, Toronto, ON M4J 1A7
Jennifer Zurba, Principal **Jackilyn Wallace**, Vice Principal
Marc Sprack, Superintendent of Education **Jennifer Story**, School Trustee



2020/21 Return to School

As promised last week, here is some additional information regarding the return to school that we hope will help you decide if your child will return to school in person or if you will opt for virtual learning. More specific information will follow next week about pick up and drop off locations and other site specific operational protocols.

Class Placements, Sibling Cohorts, and Class Caps

Next week, we will be notified of expected in school student numbers based on pre-registration data. As a result of possible lower numbers than planned for, we may need to review and change our class models (example: change a grade ½ class to a straight grade 1). We will not know this until late next week. Class lists will be posted on the afternoon of Friday September 11th, on Door 5. Only the first names and last initial of children who have pre-registered for in class learning will appear.

Twins and siblings w one grade year apart will be placed together in the same class should our class models allow.

Based on the information I have today as I share this newsletter, class caps are;

JK/SK: 27 with ECE (15 without ECE)

Grades 1 – 3: 20

Grades 4-6 - 27

Entering, Moving Through and Exiting the School

Students and staff will practice physical distance **to the extent possible**. To reduce clusters of non-cohorted students (students from different classes), we have allocated and clearly labelled specific doors for entry and exit. Due to the layout of our school, our stairwells and hallways will allow for traffic flow in both directions, with the understanding that movement in the hallways and stairs will be limited mainly to entry, recess, dismissal and washroom breaks. We have also placed decals on the floor signaling a one way traffic flow on each side of the hall. It will be helpful, if before children return to school, you explain to them the “rules of the road” - meaning that we always walk along the right side of the wall towards the direction we are facing.

Staggered Starts and School Times

To support a smooth, successful and organized return, we will be having staggered start dates. This will alleviate 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	Grades 4 to 6
Wednesday September 16 th	Grades 2 and 3
Thursday September 17 th :	Kindergarten and Grade 1
Friday September 18 th :	All students

I understand that this may pose some inconvenience for those of you who have children with different start dates. We apologize, however, these staggered dates will not be negotiable.

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.

Bell Times, Drop Offs and Pick Ups

A reminder that our school bell times have been changed this year to accommodate for bussing. Our school day starts at 8:20 AM, and ends at 2:50 PM. As was also shared in the spring, we have moved to embrace a balanced day, meaning that we will be having 2 nutrition breaks throughout the day (10:10 – 10:50 and 12:10 – 12:50). More information on how to pack food and snacks for this new format will be shared in the next newsletter.

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 line area independently. There will be lots of staff outside to help them find their classroom teacher and their assigned gathering area.

During dismissal, all grade 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.

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 area. A detailed map of each class' gathering area will be shared in the following newsletter. Once you pick up your child, you are asked to leave the school property.

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.

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.

Co-Teaching Models

To limit the number of children in classrooms, we will not be offering a co-teaching model at this time. Rooms 106 /107 and 206/207 will be separated with a divider. Rooms 208/209 do not have a divider and so one of these classes (yet to be determined) will be moved to the music room that will not be used this year.

Masks

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. 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.
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Hand Hygiene, Class Seating Plans, Staff Training and our School Facility

Upon pick up from "gathering areas", classroom teachers will provide each child with a squirt of hand sanitizer to clean their hands prior to entry. Students will be taught proper hand washing skills, which will be reinforced daily. Classroom sinks will be used to wash hands prior to each nutrition break and after other transitions (such as gym), and washroom sinks will be used after washroom use.

Many of our classrooms use tables as opposed to desks. If a classroom has desks, they will be separated to support social distancing. For classrooms that use tables, we will limit the number of children per table, but replacing desks for tables is not an option at this time. A classroom seating plan will be developed to ensure that children sit at their own desk area every day. This will be for instructional time as well as for lunch. Because of the play based nature of our Kindergarten program, we continue to develop a plan that will support these new safety precautions in such a model, but given the limited number of children in each cohort, there is an understanding that children will play together and interact. That is why the wearing of masks for all students (K-6) is mandatory. If you are planning to have your child return to school in the coming weeks, we suggest that you have them practice wearing their masks so they are used to the feeling before coming to school.

All staff will be provided with a full day of Health And Safety Training prior to the start of the school year. This will include training on COVID -19 awareness, screening, signs/symptoms, donning / doffing PPE, and other safety protocols for the return to work.

Caretaking staff will perform routine cleaning of general facilities throughout the day and will conduct enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces twice daily. Mechanical HVAC systems have been checked during the summer months to ensure they are operating as designed and we will increase the frequency of filter changes. Keep in mind that Blake Street PS has no windows (with the exceptions of the kindergarten classrooms). Our air conditioner units are broken and we await replacements, though the schedule of delivery and roof installation are unknown. This means that our school is hot(particularly the second and third floors).

French Immersion

If you choose to take the virtual learning option for your child who is already in French Immersion, their spot in French Immersion at Blake Street PS will be held for them.

Virtual Learning

Should you choose a virtual learning model for your child, a TDSB teacher will be assigned to your child's virtual classroom. This will not be a Blake Street PS teacher. Your child will be able to transfer from virtual learning to in person learning at strategic assessment points throughout the school year, the earliest one being in November after progress reports have been completed.

I appreciate that this is a lot of information to digest. We hope this will help you in making this important decision and alleviate some anxiety. 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. 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.