

# Fern Avenue Public School

*Return to School Manual for Parents*  
*September 2020*





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# Fern Avenue Public School

## *Return to School Manual for Parents*

### **A Shared Message from the Toronto District School Board and Fern Avenue. P.S. Administration**

We are planning for a school year like none other. COVID-19 has significantly impacted how we operate and we have been busy thinking about how to navigate these circumstances as we prepare to welcome our students and staff back to Fern Ave. P.S. in September. Much of our direction is based on guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Toronto Public Health and, of course, the Toronto District School Board. Above all else, in planning for the start-up of this school year, we are striving to ensure a consistent approach to learning and prioritizing the health and safety of students and staff. We will have to remain flexible and recognize that circumstances may change depending on the evolution of COVID-19. We are committed to provide students with regular and meaningful learning opportunities as well as connectivity to staff while also maintaining a safe environment for the entire school community.

We do not know what this year has in store and we will need to be responsive to ensure the safety of our students, staff and community. This may mean changes to the way things work at Fern Ave. P.S. throughout the year. We recognize and appreciate the challenges and anxiety that this uncertainty can bring, but one of the principles that has guided our planning and will continue to guide us as we move forward is the needs of staff, students and families.

We encourage you to continue to look at the TDSB's website for specific board wide information - <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School>. What we are striving for with this Parent Manual is to provide some contextual information about how the TDSB's Return to School guide will be implemented at Fern Ave. P.S..

As you know, these things are extremely fluid and things change on a daily or even hourly basis. As new direction is given to us and as things change, we will continue to keep you informed. We both feel extremely blessed to have such an amazing staff who have worked with us throughout the summer to develop the procedures we hope will keep our staff and students safe and learning. The ongoing support of our students, parents and the Fern Ave. P.S community is very appreciated. Thank you for your support and continued patience as we navigate through this critical work.

### **The Critical Role of Families**

Families play a critical role in supporting health and safety in our school. The most important thing families can do to help mitigate the transmission of COVID-19, is to screen their 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. <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Portals/0/docs/ACCESSIBLE-ChecklistElementary.pdf> Parents/guardians should also encourage their child to adhere to the health and safety measures put in place and outlined in both the TDSB's [Return to School](#) guide and specific to Fern Ave. P.S. below. This includes following physical distancing, practicing good hygiene habits, including hand washing, and wearing a mask while inside.

Many of our routines such as drop off and pick up have to change and we ask that you read this information carefully so you know what the expectations are for supporting our efforts to keep everyone safe.

### **Delayed Start and Staggered Entry**

Given the amount of time that will be needed to prepare for the return to school, the decision has been made by the TDSB to move the first day of school (for elementary, secondary and virtual school) to start on Tuesday, September 15th at which point we will stagger the entry of grades over a few days. All students will be in school by Thursday, September 17th. So, if your child is in grade 4, they will start school on Tuesday and will continue to attend moving forward. If your child is in grade 7, they do not come to school on Tuesday, but start on Wednesday.

- **Tuesday, Sept 15th ENTRY:**
  - SK room 102, SK room 104L,
  - Gr. 4 room 214,
  - Gr. 4/5 room 203, Gr. 4/5 room 205, Gr.4/5 room 201, Gr. 4/5 room 211,
  - Gr. 8 room 302, Gr. 8 room 310, Gr. 8 room 309
- **Wednesday, Sept. 16th ENTRY:**
  - JK/SK room 109, JK/SK room 110, JK room 104 Upper,
  - GR.1/2 room 213,
  - Gr.1 room 105, Gr.1 room 108,
  - Gr. 7 room 312,
  - GR. 7/8 room 305, Gr. 7/8 room 301
- **Thursday, Sept. 17th ENTRY:**
  - Gr. 2 room 209
  - Gr. 2/3 room 208, Gr. 2/3 room 206, Gr. 2/3 room 215,
  - Gr. 3 room 207,
  - Gr. 5/6 room 306 ,
  - Gr.6/7 room 311, Gr.6/7 room 307, Gr. 6/7 room 308
- **Friday, September 18th** - All students in school

### **Bell Times**

#### **Kindergarten (Junior and Senior Kindergarten)**

Entry: 9:15am

Lunch 11:45am-1:00pm

Dismissal: 3:30pm

#### **Grades 1-5**

Entry: 9:15am

Recess #1: 9:55- 10:10am

Recess #2: 10:35-10:50am

Lunch 12:00pm.-1:00pm

Afternoon Recess: 2:20 – 2:35pm

Dismissal: 3:45pm

#### **Grades 6-8**

Entry: 9:15am

Recess 10:35-10:50

Lunch 12:00-1:00pm

Dismissal: 3:35pm

### **Elementary Class Sizes**

As of August 20, 2020, the TDSB has directed Fern class sizes to be:

- Kindergarten capped at 27 (change from 29)
- Grades 1 to 3 capped at 20 (no change)
- Grades 4 to 8 capped at 27 (change from no official cap)

### **Hygiene Practices**

According to Toronto Public Health, hand washing is one of the most effective ways to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Signage about hand washing and proper respiratory etiquette are prominently displayed around Fern Ave P.S. Teachers will be building regular hand-washing time into their timetables. Non-scented, alcohol-based sanitizers will be available in each class and throughout the school and at designated entry and exit points.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

All staff members have been provided with the appropriate PPE (medical masks and face shields - the latter is optional) to safely interact with each other and with students. All students are required to wear masks. We encourage you to send at least 2 masks with your child as well as a way to store one clean and one dirty. You should also label the masks with your child's name. If the mask is attached to the lanyard, and worn around the neck, we will have less likelihood of misplaced masks when the students take them off outside and while eating. Please teach your child how to wear a mask, how to store it and change it, and the importance of wearing it properly. We know this is one of the biggest stumbling blocks for many parents. A simple Google search will provide you with a plethora of information on suggestions on how to do this.

### **Cleaning and Other Additional Measures**

Caretaking staff will perform routine cleaning of general facilities throughout the day and will conduct enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces such as light switches, handrails, door handles, etc. twice daily. Shared items will be used minimally and will be cleaned between users. 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. In addition, the intake settings will be adjusted to increase the amount of fresh air and reduce recirculation. Where possible, windows will be opened to increase natural ventilation.

### **Suspected Cases of COVID-19**

The TDSB [Return to School](#) guide outlines the procedures we will follow if there is a suspected case of COVID-19.

### **Well-Being and Supports for Students**

Returning to school after many months away will require time to address the social and emotional needs of students and we continue to provide ongoing support to students who need it. All staff have a role to play in supporting students' mental health and well-being. Building relationships and connections, offering support and building capacity of school-based staff will help ease the transition back to school and help meet the needs of students. Professional learning has been provided to staff to help identify students' specific needs and appropriate strategies during the return to school.

Based on the information provided in the TDSB's [Return to School](#) guide, direct and indirect contacts in school for elementary students should be limited to approximately 50. This has informed many of our school-wide decisions regarding where and when more than one cohort or class and individual students will be. This includes our entry and exit routines, the movement of students inside the school, washroom routines, classroom supplies, outdoor learning opportunities, recess and lunch. Much of this is a change from what we have done in the past, and we ask that you take some time to review it with your child as well, so they are prepared for what things are going to look like in September.

We will continue to be flexible and responsive to the public health data and recognize that we may need to adjust plans and practices based on current health information. This will be an ongoing process throughout the year.

### **Entering, Moving Through and Exiting School**

Before coming to school, all staff and students are expected to conduct a [self-assessment](#) for COVID-19 symptoms. This is the most important defence against transmission of COVID-19. Students and staff will practice physical distancing and remain 2 metres apart to the maximum extent possible. Classrooms will be organized to encourage the maximum space between students but in all likelihood their desks will be closer to 1 metre apart. Our Fern floors have directional arrows and footprints that give an indication of how far students should be from each other while in the hallways. The arrows control the direction of flow for students. There are decals in front of the washrooms asking students to stop before entering. There are a number of posters and signs reminding students about proper hygiene and social distancing. Our goal is to maintain physical distancing whenever possible. In order to reduce the potential for larger gatherings of students, we will be limiting occupancy levels in common areas such as hallways, stairwells and the library. Lockers and hooks will not be used by students at this time. Since students will have to keep all their belongings with them at their desk, we ask that only the very bare necessities be brought back and forth from home and school. After the first few days, your child may not even need a backpack and only a lunch bag, if they are staying for lunch.

### **Student Drop Off and Pick Up**

We know that as parents you are anxious and want to be sure your child is safe and in line. One integral part of our Fern community is the parental involvement and the relationships you have with each other and with staff. Morning drop off, in the past, has been an opportunity for you to connect with other parents and teachers. Unfortunately, we have to forgo this for a bit and ask that you tighten up your drop off routines so that you are dropping off your child to their line and then leaving. This should be done as close to entry as possible (9:15) so that we do not have too many people congregated together in one spot. Teachers will be supervising starting at 9:00. Similarly with pick up, we ask that you do not spend time in the school yard after school. Please pick your child up and leave. We recognize that this is counterintuitive to everything we value about the “community” aspect of our school and trust you understand that we are asking this solely for the health and safety of everyone.

### **Visitors to the School**

We are very appreciative of all the parent volunteers who are in our building on a regular basis. Unfortunately, we are going to have to limit the number of people in the building, which means we cannot have volunteers in the class at this time. Volunteers are a fundamental aspect of our learning community and this was a very difficult decision to make.

When you need to pick up your child from school early, we ask that you ring the bell, let our office staff know who you are picking up and then wait outside for them. When you are bringing your child to school late, we ask that only the parents of our youngest students enter the building, come straight to the office to let our office staff know your child is late, and we will take it from there.

### **Entry and Exit**

Each class has been assigned a specific area to line up and a specific door that they are to use for entry and exit. When you arrive on the first day of school, you will notice the pink lines on the ground, which are 2 metres apart. Students will be expected to wear a mask while in line so that they will have it on when they enter the school. Parents are encouraged to wear masks while on school property even though they are outside.

Teachers will be coming outside to greet their class and do the screening as a class outside. Then the class will move inside together.

**Exit 1:** Main entry doors for staff, parents/ guardians/ visitors only in order to abide by school safety protocols: screening (checklist of questions) signing in, sanitizing, masks and gloves available if needed

**Exit 2:** Ferncliff Daycare use only for their staff/ families/ students

**Exit 3:**

Room	Grade	Teacher
301	7/8 EF	Nikolajevic
302	8 FI	Munteanu
305	7/8 FI	Morales
310	8 FI	Kertesz
311	6/7 E	Sanchez
312	7 FI	Dumont

**Exit 4:**

Room	Grade	Teacher
201	4/5 FI	Voicu
203	4/5 EF	Mably
205	4/5 EF	Tse
211	4/5 E	Ashworth
306	5/6 FI	TBD
309	8 E	Cameron

**Exit 5:**

Room	Grade	Teacher
213	1/2 E	Nitsis
214	4 FI	Balaisis
215	2/3 FI	TBD
206	2/3 FI	Centeno
209	2 FI	Roch

**Exit 7:**

Room	Grade	Teacher
109	JK-SK E	Heller
110	JK-SK E	Foster

**Exit 8:**

Room	Grade	Teacher
108	1 FI	Jamieson
207	3FI	Tchaptchet
208	2/3E	Eyre
307	6/7 FI	Rachadi
308	6/7 EF	Duquette

**Exit 9**

Room	Grade	Teacher
102	SK FI	Gilmore
104 Upper	JK E	Jolic
104 Lower	SK FI	Oda
105	1FI	Edelshtein

**All students will be screened by staff and sanitize their hands.**

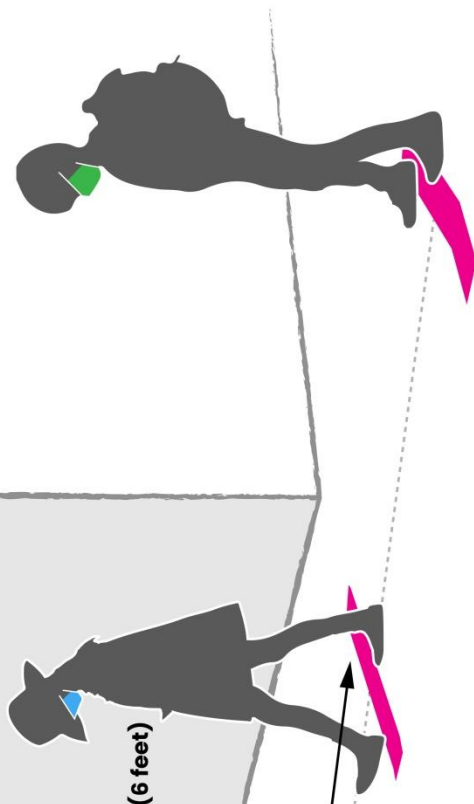
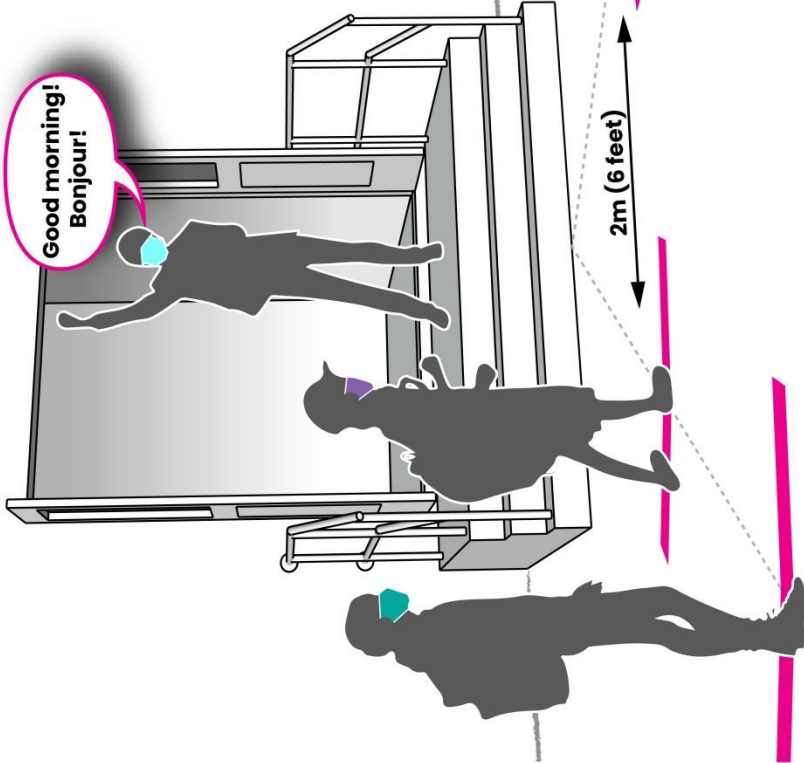




Find Your Assigned Door Number

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9

Good morning!  
Bonjour!



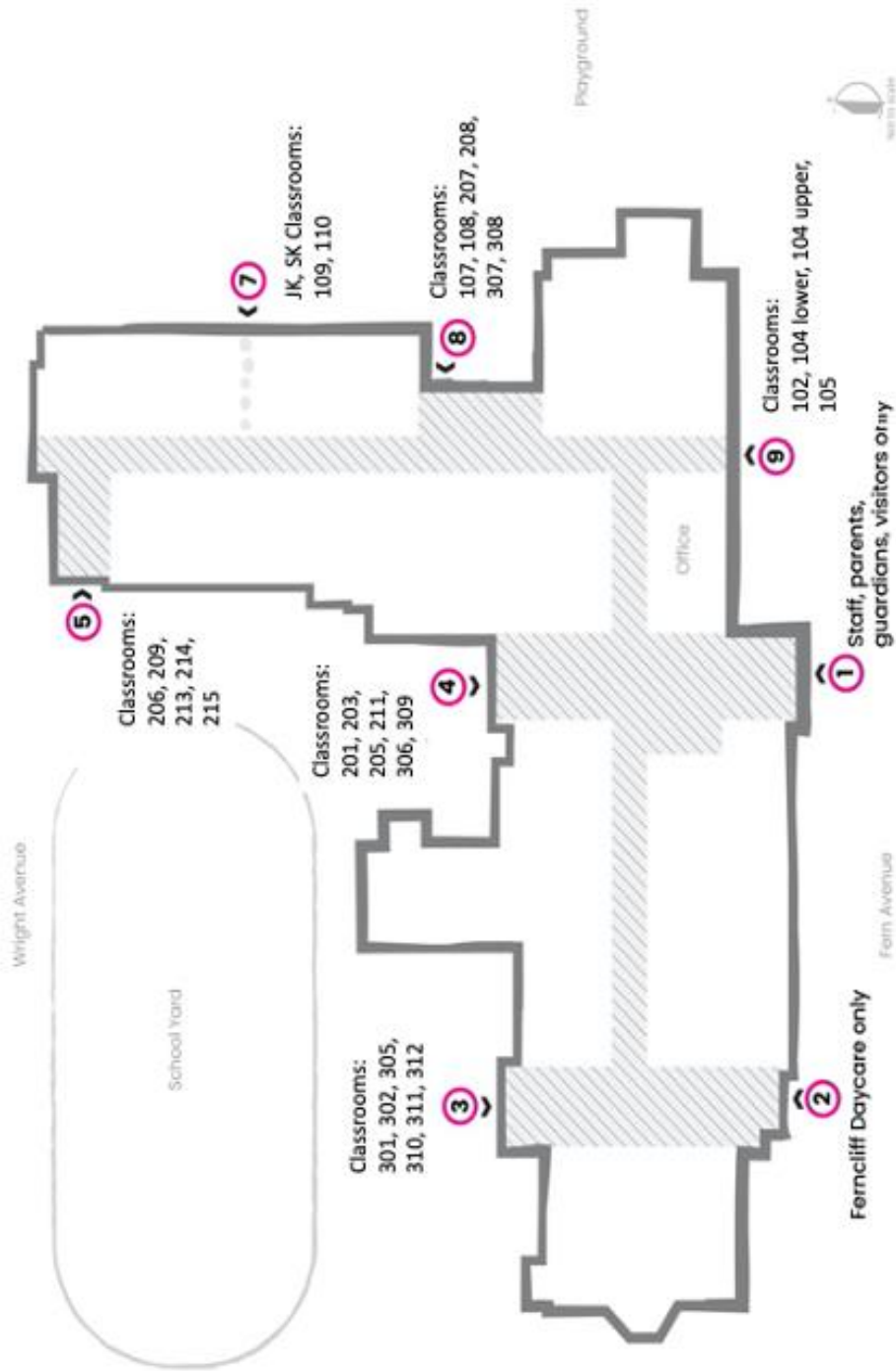
## Fern Avenue PS 2. Morning Line-Up

**Step 1.** Find your assigned door number as indicated on Figure No. 1: Entrance Plan.

**Step 2.** Line up using the pink painted lines to maintain physical distancing.

**Step 3.** When directed to begin entering school, staff will screen and sanitize each student.

**Step 4.** After entering school, line up in hallway until directed to move to classroom.



**Fern Avenue PS  
Entrance Plan**

**Staff, parents, guardians and visitors.**  
Screening questionnaire, signing in, sanitizing, masks and gloves available if needed.  
Entrance 1 Only

**JK to grade 8**  
Screening, sanitizing, and masks for all students.  
Entrance by classroom #

### **Outdoor Learning and Recess**

We need to stagger recess and we want the students outside as much as possible. Masks and face coverings are not required while outdoors if you physically distance.

### **Lunch**

Students are encouraged to go home for lunch whenever possible. Students should not return to school until 1:00p.m. For the students who are staying for lunch, our routines have changed.

- As you may be aware, this school year we will not be able to have a hot lunch program in our wonderful cafeteria. I have been in contact with the TDSB Nutrition Services and they have offered FERN a bagged lunch option for all grade 1 to 8 students.
- The Kindergarten students will continue to receive their hot lunch and snack program in their classes as in previous years.
- Ferncliff Daycare will continue to receive their hot lunch program for their pre-school children. A reminder that Ferncliff Daycare school aged children will receive their bagged lunch option as part of their program fees.
- Please see attached bagged lunch options for our school aged students at a cost of \$5.00 .Each bagged lunch will be in a paper bag, labelled with the student name, room number and will be delivered to the classrooms.
- Please note that the lunch and snack program will be via cash on-line only and more details will follow.

If your child is bringing their own lunch and for all snacks brought to school from home please be sure to use containers that your child can open and close independently. You may want to consider not sending packages that your child cannot open independently such as yogurt tubes. Students must take all food waste and wrappers home with them. More information will be provided as we figure this one out. Because we must limit people in the building, we ask that you send your child to school with lunch and not drop it off later in the morning.

### **Rotary**

With the exception of Library and Physical Education, all subjects will be taught in the students' homerooms. This means the teachers will be moving from class to class, not the students. This should limit the opportunity for cohorts to interact and keep our hallways fairly clear.

### **Washroom Routines**

As much as possible, classes will travel as a group to use designated washrooms. These breaks will be coordinated to prevent mixing cohorts in washrooms. Teachers will regulate the number of students entering the washrooms (2 at a time) and will follow the maximum capacity. Shared surfaces in the washrooms will be frequently cleaned and disinfected. All washrooms will be thoroughly cleaned nightly using hospital grade disinfectant. There will be paper towels in the bathrooms and soap dispensers will be checked regularly to ensure that they are operating correctly and have enough soap. Please remind your child regularly about hand washing routines.

### **Classroom Supplies**

We want to limit shared materials so we will be asking parents to provide personal school supplies such as pencils, erasers, scissors, glue sticks, pencil crayons, crayons, etc. If you are able to put these supplies in a container that students can open and close independently and be kept at their desk. Kindly let your teacher know if this presents a hardship, so that the school can provide appropriate supplies.

### **Technology**

When school first closed in March, the TDSB redeployed most of our technology to be distributed to students across the system that needed it for remote learning. These Chromebooks and iPads will eventually be collected and returned to Fern. Until then, we are ordering some replacements, but this will take some time. For this reason, we are allowing students to bring their own devices to use in the classroom. We continue to be a cell-phone free building and students will not be allowed to use their phones as a device, unless otherwise instructed by their teachers. Phones will stay in students' backpacks at all times unless otherwise permitted by their teacher. All TDSB owned technology, computers, Ipad, Chromebooks will be cleaned and disinfected regularly after each use.

### **A Note About Remote Learning**

For parents who are opting for Remote Learning, please know that we respect your decision and know that you are doing what is right for your family. Once you have opted for remote learning, your child will be assigned to a central remote class that will be taught by either a centrally assigned TDSB teacher or a TDSB teacher who has chosen to teach remotely because of their own personal circumstances. You will not necessarily be with only Fern students. You are still a Fern student if/when you decide to discontinue remote learning and return to in-class learning. Changing between remote learning and in-person classes will be looked at after reporting periods. The first opportunity will be after Thanksgiving in October.

<b>Opportunity to Change</b>	<b>Date the Change of Class would Take Effect</b>	<b>Deadline for Requesting Change</b>
#1: Approximately One Month into School Year	October 13, 2020 (day after Thanksgiving)	September 30, 2020
#2: Following Progress Reporting Period	November 23, 2020	November 06, 2020
#3: Following Distribution of First Provincial Report Card	February 16, 2021 (day after Family Day Holiday)	January 29, 2021

Movement from one model to another will be requested through the Principal of the student's home school. If a switch is required outside of the designated times, a limited number of exceptions may be made and will be reviewed by Principals on a case-by-case basis.

### **Google Classroom/ Bright Space**

Each teacher will maintain a Google Classroom or Brightspace where assignments and information is shared with parents. Depending on the grade level, assignments may be submitted this way as well. This is NOT a replacement for in-class learning. Students who are away for a couple of days can look to their on-line platform to see some of the work that was missed, but it will not have all the learning and/or assignments that happened in the classroom on any given day. Most of our students are familiar with how to use their on-line classroom spaces after our distance learning from April to June. Please note that while teachers will maintain their Google Classroom or Brightspace, with a few exceptions, they will not be using it to teach their students.

### **Transportation**

We were told last week that transportation would not be available for the first week of school except for students in Special Education classes. This may change with the delayed opening of schools. You are encouraged to check transportation's website regularly for updates and questions

### **Item Drop-Off**

Very often parents will drop-off lunches or items students have forgotten at home. This is going to be strongly discouraged. We are limiting hallway traffic as well as the number of people in the building. Please try your very best to send your child to school with everything that is needed for the entire day. A drop-off table will be put in the stairwell of the main entrance where you will be asked to leave any items you absolutely have to drop off. Office staff will not be calling students down to pick up the items.

We know that this school year will be different, so to help ease your worry and anxiety we have prepared the following guidelines to help you visualize what a typical school day will look like. We look forward to welcoming back our students.

### **A Day in the Life of our Fern Students:**

**Before School:** Make sure your child(ren) have what they need for the school day

- Reusable mask ( well fitted and cleaned as needed)
- Packaged lunch
- Reusable water bottle, labelled with child's name, as only the water bottle filling stations will be available for water
- Items not needed should be left home as there will be limited space for students to store items
- Be sure to complete the screening at home. If your child is showing any symptoms, please keep your child home
- When dropping off students at school, only one parent or caregiver should bring child to school to limit number of people in the school yard and to support physical distancing. Drop off should be swift and not lingering

### **Arriving at School:**

- Children that walk to school are encouraged to arrive to school as close to the start time of 9:15a.m. as possible and should arrive with masks on
- Children who take the school bus should keep their masks on when they get off the bus and come into the school yard
- Children have their pre-arranged entry location to school (see above)
- Before entering school, staff will provide hand sanitizer to students
- If students arrive late, they must go to the office through the front doors and follow entry procedures indicated there

### **During Class:**

- Students will remain in their classroom for most of the day with their class
- Rotary teachers ( Music, Phys Ed, French, Drama, Dance ) will be coming to the students class as much as possible (or outdoors)
- Students will have access to the essential learning materials they will need for the school day at their desks
- Bathroom breaks are available for students when needed
- Most of the learning in class will take place at students' individual desk places, which will not change
- Storage of all student's belongings will be at the student's desk area

### **During Lunch:**

- Students will have an opportunity to clean their hands before and after they eat
- Students will eat their lunches in their classrooms and at their own desks
- Please ensure that students are able to open food containers on their own and bring their own utensils

### **During Outdoor Time:**

- Weather permitting, students will enjoy their outdoor time throughout the day and with their class cohort
- Outdoor time will be staggered to help minimize the number of students outdoors at one time
- Students will not have to wear masks while outdoors if able to practice physical distancing
- Before entering the school, teachers will provide hand sanitizer to students. Teachers will bring their students into the school in a physically distanced way

### **After School:**

- During the last period of the day, staff will help students walk to appropriate dismissal area in a physically distanced way, even older grades
- Parents or caregivers are reminded to wear masks and ensure physical distancing while on school property and picking up children

## **What to expect during the school day:**

### ***In class Instruction:***

Although in-class instruction will be different across the grades, classes and teachers, these are some expectations that will be consistent throughout as students return to school.

- Kindergarten to grade 8 students will receive in person learning 5 days per week full time (300 minutes of instruction per day)
- Students will remain in one cohort all day to limit interactions with other students, including lunch and recess as per TPH and Ministry of Education direction. Students will remain in same location as much as possible
- Students will be supported in transitioning back to school acknowledging the prolonged absence of students from the classroom

### ***Our focus will be the overall expectations of the Ontario Curriculum***

- Learning experiences, instructional strategies and assessment practices will be centered around students identities, lived experiences and unique learning needs
- While there may be some review of last year's curriculum, students should be expected to learn new material during this school year and be assessed and evaluated in their learning

### ***Kindergarten:***

- Continue to address the 4 frames as defined in the Kindergarten Program 2016
- Continue the model of 2 educators in the classroom
- Use designated washrooms and entry and exit doors with the classroom (where allowed 109, 110) to allow for individualized schedules of cohorts
- For Kindergarten classes in non-purpose built spaces (102, 104 L, 104U) they will enter through Exit 9 and follow procedures
- Follow schedules for outside plan time to ensure that no more than 2 classes are outside at one time, with physical distancing established between cohorts

### ***Health and Physical Education:***

- Our gyms will remain open as much as possible.
- Whenever possible, Health and Physical Education classes will take place outside.
- Activities to avoid the use of equipment or with limited equipment (eg Badminton) will be encouraged.
- Change rooms will be closed.
- **Pool** will be closed at the start of school year.

### ***Music Program:***

Fern will follow the following considerations to ensure a safe music environment:

- Most overall expectations for the music strands can be met without the use of Instruments
- When possible use fewer or no instruments or restrict type of instruments in group settings (use strings/keyboard/guitar)
- Cleaning and disinfecting after each single use
- To reduce shared materials students will be encouraged to not hold their paper music
- Use of display stands or projector will be encouraged to decrease touch points in classes
- When singing students will be encouraged to physically distance as much as possible in the classroom and to sing forward facing rather than in circle or facing each other
- The music teacher should maintain as much physical distancing as possible from the singer or use face shield and mask

### ***Science and Technology:***

- In science and technology classes, equipment is typically shared between students – this will be avoided during this school year. If goggles are used in class students will be provided their own set, which will be sanitized after each session.

**Contact Us**

Congratulations if you have made it this far! We cannot stress enough how much we have missed the staff, students and their families and we are very excited to see everyone again! We know that things are going to look and feel different and it is our sincere hope that we can support all stakeholders as we navigate this new learning environment.

As you can imagine, this will be an extremely busy school start up. Please leave us a message or send us an email, if you need assistance.

Yours in partnership,

Rosanna and Tricia