



September 10, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

With TDSB schools beginning to open in less than a week, we wanted to provide families with another information update. We look forward to welcoming all students back to school — in-person and virtually — to continue learning. While we have been working diligently to prepare to safely reopen the system in this new reality, there will be a period of adjustment while everyone learns and adapts to the new protocols and practices in place and reconnects after being away for several months. We are committed to working together through this phase of reopening and will make any necessary adjustments along the way. We ask for and appreciate your patience during this transitional time and remind everyone that the health and safety of staff and students continues to be our priority.

Mask Wearing

For the health and safety of students and staff, all students are required to wear non-medical masks/face coverings indoors on school property and on school buses and staff are required to wear medical masks (with exemptions and accommodations, as required). Please ensure that students come to school with masks/face coverings each day and bring a breathable bag (paper or cloth) to store masks during outdoor breaks and/or when soiled. While students are encouraged to bring their own, all schools and buses will be equipped with extra masks. More information regarding the mask/face covering requirements is available [here](#).

Daily Health Screening

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. All staff and visitors will also be required to screen themselves before entering a TDSB building. Once staff and students arrive at school, they will enter through the designated doors with a screening station to verify their self-assessment. Learn more about the self-assessment and verification process at www.tdsb.on.ca/healthscreening.

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.

Student Transportation

There will be a phased start to Student Transportation for the 2020-21 school year. During **Week 1** of school (starting September 15), only students with special education needs will be provided





with bussing, and parents/guardians of all other students will be required to arrange transportation to and from school. Beginning **Week 2** (starting September 21), all other eligible students will be provided with bussing, unless there is a shortage of drivers or other unforeseen issues related to COVID-19. At this time, school bus operators have indicated that they have sufficient drivers and backup drivers to cover all routes. Learn more about the [COVID-19 health and safety protocols and precautions](#) in place and visit the [Toronto Student Transportation Group website](#) for more information. Login or register on the [Transportation Parent Portal](#) to access your child's transportation information.

Elementary Schools

There will be a staggered start for elementary students over September 15, 16 and 17. Start dates are based on grade configuration in each school for each grade level and can be found [here](#). Virtual School will begin for all elementary students on Thursday, September 17. In cases where unique circumstances require a school to adjust its opening schedule, the school will contact families directly to provide more information. All elementary students attending Intensive Support Programs (ISP) will start school on September 15. Once a student starts the first day of school for their grade, they continue to attend school every day. We have also heard from a number of parents with questions about elementary class sizes and we want you to know that we remain committed to achieving class sizes that do not significantly exceed our targeted caps. We are looking at strategies to address situations where the in-person enrolment is higher than we anticipated. As the numbers continue to change, please note that any necessary adjustments may not be in place on the first day of school, but we will be working to rectify these situations as quickly as possible.

Secondary Schools

Given the complexities of the secondary staffing and timetable process, the start dates for most secondary schools have been adjusted — both in-person and virtual — as follows:

Tuesday, September 15: Students attending Special Education Congregated Sites (York Humber HS, Central Etobicoke HS, Frank Oke SS, Maplewood HS, Drewry SS and Sir William Olser HS) and students attending Developmental Disability (DD) Intensive Support Programs in secondary schools. These students will follow a semester schedule.

Thursday, September 17: All remaining secondary schools, including students attending Intensive Support Programs (Autism, PD, MID, LD, and Gifted). Students will follow a quadmester schedule.

While most secondary schools will open on one of these two days, any schools with unique circumstances that require additional time will contact families directly. Please note that quadmester start and end dates will be slightly adjusted due to the delayed school start date.





TDSB Connects App for High School Students

TDSB has launched a new online app to help high school students stay connected and organized. Once a student logs into the app with their TDSB school ID, their timetable is automatically populated and they will have access to school announcements, updates, local calendars and more. [Learn more here](#) or download the app now at the [Google Play Store](#) or the [Apple App Store](#).

Virtual School

Due to the large number of families who have selected Virtual School (more than 66,000 students), we require additional time to staff and timetable to ensure a more consistent opening for all staff and students. As a result, all students, including those in Special Education classes, attending Virtual School (elementary and secondary) will begin on **Thursday, September 17**. Our top priority is to ensure students experience success in both our in-person schools and virtual schools. Prior to the first day of school, you/your child will hear directly from the teacher with details about the class and other important information.

During the first week, the focus will be on connecting with individual students, building community and getting everyone accustomed to and settled into the new online environment. An important part of the initial start for the Virtual School will also be to ensure that all students are aware of and understand the [TDSB Online Code of Conduct](#) and privacy issues and expectations related to online learning. Students will also be introduced to what the daily schedule will look like going forward and be provided with a schedule of web conferences.

All students (Kindergarten to Grade 12) enrolled in TDSB's Virtual School will use Brightspace, a learning management system provided to all Ontario school districts by the Ministry of Education. Students login to Brightspace with their TDSB email address and password to access announcements from their teacher, view class calendar information, access learning materials, submit assignments and add to their digital portfolio. Brightspace will also be available to all parents/guardians to provide a window into your child's classroom to view upcoming events, portfolio items, grades and other information.

More information is available at: [Elementary Virtual School](#) and [Secondary Virtual School](#).

How Parents/Guardians Can Help

Now more than ever, the partnership between home and school is so incredibly important to help keep everyone healthy. We ask all parents/guardians of students attending school in-person to please review and follow the daily checklist for [elementary](#) and/or [secondary](#) schools. This includes daily monitoring of your child's health and checking for any [signs or symptoms of COVID-19](#), as described by Toronto Public Health. Please also review the [COVID-19 Response Plan](#) so you know what to expect and steps to be taken to manage any COVID-19 cases in TDSB schools and buildings.





Toronto Public Health (TPH) – Parent/Guardian Update

Toronto Public Health has prepared a communication for parents/guardians regarding TPH School Health Services and important updates during COVID-19. (attached)

We know that there is a lot of information to review and want to assure you that we are doing everything we can to help make the transition back to learning as smooth as possible. Whether attending school in-person or virtually, school staff are here to help answer any questions you have and address any concerns. Working together, we will do everything we can to ensure the 2020-21 school year is a success and that all students are well-supported. Thank you again for your ongoing patience and flexibility during this transitional time.

As always, please continue to monitor the TDSB [website](#) for the last updates and additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Alexander Brown'.

Alexander Brown
Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Carlene Jackson'.

Carlene Jackson
Interim Director of Education

