

Return to School

September 2020



As we look ahead to September, we know that school will look quite different as a result of continued efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19. Rainy River District School Board staff have been actively planning for the return to school by considering all possibilities, while ensuring that student and staff well-being and safety remains the top priority.

The RRDSB takes direction from the Ministry of Education, as well as Public Health, with respect to how students and staff return to school in September. On July 30, the Ministry of Education confirmed the following models for return to school in September:

ELEMENTARY (Kindergarten to Grade 8)

All students will attend school 5 days per week, with one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Enhanced health and safety protocols will be in place.

SECONDARY (Grade 9-12)

Students will attend school 5 days per week, with cohorting in place to limit the number of student-to-student contacts, where feasible. In larger secondary schools, students may need to attend class online at school to reduce the number of direct and indirect contacts. RRDSB staff are working on the details of timetabling cohorts. Enhanced health and safety protocols will be in place.

WILL YOUR CHILD RETURN TO IN-PERSON CLASSES?

Parents/guardians will be able to decide if they want their children to attend in-person for this school year and will have the option of a remote learning program delivered by RRDSB teachers.

We are asking parents/guardians to confirm your child's attendance either in-person or remotely by completing the online form found at https://www.rrdsb.com/reopening_schools (please fill out one form per child in your care).

Your response to this survey by **August 17, 2020**, will be critical to our planning at the school level, including school bus transportation.



Masks

- Students in Grades 4-12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks while in school.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in common spaces.
- Medical masks will be provided for teachers and all other school staff.
- Reasonable exceptions to the requirement will be put in places.

Please see other side for more on health and safety protocols.

LINKS

- RRDSB Reopening Our School website: https://www.rrdsb.com/reopening_schools
- The Ministry of Education's Guide to reopening Ontario's schools: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-reopening-ontarios-schools>

MORE ON HEALTH AND SAFETY



MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

In reopening our schools this September, we look forward to welcoming our students back and continuing our work to build their mental health self-care and social-emotional skills.

Mental health and well-being is our priority. The Rainy River District School Board is committed to enhancing and protecting mental health as we return to school. This is a shared responsibility, between staff, parents/guardians, and community partners, to prepare and support students for the return to school.

We are well-positioned to support student mental health and to continue our work in reducing stigma and encouraging help-seeking. Our counselling program will continue to be open to all students, whether in person or online, and we will work collectively within a trauma-informed lens.

SCREENING FOR COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

- All students and staff must undergo screening for symptoms of COVID-19 at home prior to leaving for school/work.
- Upon arrival at the school, visitors will complete an entry screening.
- Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms will be directed to return home, with the recommendation to be tested.
- If symptoms appear during the school day, individuals will be isolated and sent home.
- Ill students will be kept in a designated isolation room until picked up.
- The room will be thoroughly disinfected after pick up.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- All staff and students will be required to self assess prior to leaving home.
- Entry/exit times will be staggered, where possible.
- Parent pick up/drop off protocols will be established within each school.
- Visitors to schools will be limited to essential visitors only.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Classrooms will be organized to encourage maximum space between students.
- Staggered recess/break times will be scheduled, where possible.
- The use of lockers will be restricted.
- Capacity limits for washrooms, elevators and other common areas (e.g., staff rooms) will be set.
- Assemblies or any other group gatherings will be postponed.
- Traffic flow for hallways and stairs will be established.
- Floor markings have been ordered to assist with one-way travel and distancing.
- Signage will reinforce safety protocols.

HYGIENE PRACTICES

- Frequent handwashing breaks will be scheduled throughout the school day for staff/students.
- Staff will encourage and teach proper respiratory etiquette.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided throughout the school and at designated entry/exits.
- Portable sinks have been provided for spaces without handwashing facilities.
- Schools will minimize the sharing of items and clean items, if shared, between users.

NUTRITION BREAKS

- Lunch periods will be staggered whenever possible to reduce the potential for interaction.
- Lunch will be eaten in classrooms, with the sharing of food or beverages prohibited.
- Students will perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating.
- Fountains will be closed off; water refill stations will remain open.
- Nutrition programs will be delayed in opening; when operational, these will only serve pre-packaged items/meals, single serve fruit and vegetables, and single use cutlery and dishes.

FACILITIES

- While routine cleaning of general facilities will occur throughout the day, increased frequency of cleaning of high touch surfaces will be the focus.
- To increase natural ventilation, windows will be opened, where possible.
- We will continue to maintain our HVAC systems and supplement spaces without mechanical ventilation by opening windows and/or portable filtration units.
- Nonessential items and furniture in classrooms and common areas will be removed.