



School Guidelines

COVID-19

October 2020

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	4
II.	Voluntary School Attendance	4
	Students Learning from Home	4
	Transitions Between In-School and At-Home Learning	5
	The Nature of At-Home Learning	5
III.	Protection Strategies	6
	Self-screening	6
	Masks	6
	Cohorting	7
	Distancing	7
	Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette	8
	Mandatory Quarantine Following International Travel	8
	Visitors	8
	Adapted School Environments	9
IV.	Mental Wellness	9
V.	Academics	9
	Music	9
	Health and Physical Education	10
VI.	Building and Classrooms	10
	Classroom Setup	10
	Plexiglass Dividers	10
	School Signage	10
	Lockers and Cubbies	11
	Washrooms	11
	Discovery Centre	11

Table of Contents

VII.	School Operations	11
	Communication and Collaboration with Parents	11
	Arrival and Dismissal Requirements	11
	Sharing of Resources	11
	Class Instruction Delivery Models	12
	Recess Protocol	12
	Lunch and Snacks	12
	Cleaning Protocols	12
	Student Transportation	12
	School Assemblies	13
	Fire Drills	13
	Lockdown Drills	13
	Field Trips	13
	Before and Aftercare	13
	Staff Room	13
	Tracking of Data	13
VIII.	Responding to a Suspected Case of COVID-19	13
	Individuals Developing Any Symptom of COVID-19 Outside of School	13
	Suspected Case at Home	13
	Suspected Case Identified in School	14
	Suspected Case Follow-up	14
	Handling Confirmed Cases	14
	COVID-19 Reporting and Contact Tracing	14
	Returning to School after COVID-19	15

I. Introduction

We look forward to welcoming our students back to our classrooms in a structured manner that will ensure the safety of our students, staff and community. We recognize that circumstances may change based on new information and updated Public Health guidelines and will continue to evaluate our options. COVID-19 has significantly impacted many aspects of our lives and there is no doubt this school year will be unique in so many ways.

We have been carefully planning for our return to school in accordance with the guidelines and protocols established by the Ontario Ministry of Education and York Region Public Health. The policies and procedures provided in this document are intended to support the safe reopening of JDOHSS for the 2020-2021 school year and have been developed under the following principles:

- providing a healthy and safe school environment for students, teachers and staff, and safeguarding the broader communities in which they live
- delivering high-quality education
- addressing potential gaps in student learning, mental wellness and well-being, arising from the school closures in 2019-2020

JDOHSS will reopen with in-person delivery of teaching and instruction, with enhanced health and safety protocols.

Students in preschool through Grade 8 will attend full day school five days per week, learning as part of one or two cohorts (cohort is a defined group). Cohorted classes will stay together with a limited number of teachers, during class, recess and lunch. Students can expect to see changes in the timing of recess and lunch as they are staggered to support cohorting. Specialized teachers (ie: French, Ivrit and Physical Education) will still be able to go into classrooms to provide the full breadth of programming for students. Students will also be able to receive additional support from Resource Teachers but direct and indirect contact to others will be limited to approximately 50 people.

Thank you for your support and partnership during these unprecedented times. We appreciate the hardwork and dedication of everyone in our community to ensure the safety and well-being of the children, their families and our staff.

II. Voluntary School Attendance

The return to school in September is voluntary and based on parent choice. In the event that parents choose to keep their children at home, the school will arrange for classes/lessons to be livestreamed so that students at home can join the learning virtually. This will be in place for as long as public health circumstances require adapted delivery of education.

Students Learning from Home

Students may be learning from home for different reasons. Due to health concerns, some may have been advised by family physicians to remain at home and not return to the school buildings. There may also be families who choose not to return to in-school classes at this time. In addition, there will be students who are at home temporarily as a cautionary measure or due to illness.

Any given class will be made up of students who are both in the school buildings and those who are learning from home. There will be no separate classes for students studying from home. In this way, regardless of whether a child learns in school or at home, they will have the same teacher and classmates.

Transitions Between In-School and At-Home Learning

JDOHSS is providing families with flexibility for students to transition from in-school to at-home learning and vice versa.

- Students who choose to learn at home on an indefinite basis may **opt to return to school at specific entry points throughout the school year**. These opt in dates are to ensure a smooth transition for the students returning to school, as well as the class they are entering. Families are asked to provide at **least three business days of notice**, before returning to school on one of these dates. The opt in dates are as follows:

○ Monday, September 14	○ Monday, January 4
○ Monday, September 21	○ Monday, January 18
○ Tuesday, October 13	○ Monday, March 8
○ Monday, October 26	○ Tuesday, April 6
○ Monday, November 23	○ Monday, May 3
- Students who are at home due to **COVID self-isolation do not need to return on an opt-in date**. These students may participate learn from home until it is safe for them to return to school (please see specific information regarding a safe return to school in the section called *Returning to School After COVID-19* on page 15)
- Healthy students who are learning in school may opt to transition to at-home learning at any time with at **least three business days of notice** of the family's desire to have the student learn at home.

The Nature of At-Home Learning

We will do our best to accommodate and support any student who is learning from home. This approach differs from the Distance Learning Program offered last spring as teachers will not be creating "remote only" programs and materials. Rather, they will be including students, who need to be at home, into the classroom environment and activities using a hybrid approach. In classes where students are learning from home, teachers will livestream lessons via Zoom. Please note that gym will not be livestreamed.

For students who are engaged in distance learning, attendance will be taken at different points throughout the day. Students will be provided with a daily schedule of subjects according to a regular instructional day with opportunities for live contact with a teacher and expectations for synchronous and asynchronous learning.

We recognize that remote learning for our youngest learners poses greater challenges, as these students do not have the same level of independence to navigate the online learning platform as our older students. It is likely that these students will require adult support.

III. Protection Strategies

The school will employ multiple strategies, informed by public health advice, to ensure JDOHSS is a healthy and safe environment for students and staff.

Self-screening

All staff and students must self-screen every day before attending school. Parents are **emailed** a [screening checklist](#) to be performed on their children each day before arriving at school. [Staff](#) are expected to self-screen each morning. Signs will be posted at school entrances to remind students, staff, parents/caregivers, and essential visitors of screening requirements. **Students will not be allowed in class without completion of the daily screening.**

Random temperature checks will be conducted frequently using a non-contact thermometer.

All staff and students who are experiencing **any** symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must not attend school and should seek appropriate medical attention as required, including getting tested at a COVID-19 testing centre ([click here](#) for the COVID-19 Assessment Centres closest to school).

Staff and students feeling sick should remain at home while waiting for test results.

Masks

Masks play an important role in reducing transmission of COVID-19 settings where consistent physical distancing is unpredictable. Wearing a mask can help limit the spread of respiratory droplets when people breathe, speak, laugh, cough or sneeze. Wearing face masks in indoor spaces is part of our layered approach to mitigating risk of transmission of COVID-19 from individuals who are asymptomatic yet infectious. Significant training on the proper wearing of masks will be provided and frequently reviewed.

As an added measure of safety for the entire school community, **all students must wear their own non-medical cloth mask to school each day.** Additionally, **masks must be worn by all students when entering the building in the morning and leaving the building in the afternoon.** A mask should be changed if visibly soiled, damp or damaged. Fleece masks and any mask with a valve is not permitted because they may disperse droplets. Parents are asked to label their child's masks, preferably on both sides, and to send a spare in their child's knapsack. If a child's mask is damaged during the day and they do not have a spare, a disposable mask will be provided by the school.

We understand that this may take time getting used to, especially for younger students, however, our staff and students' health and safety is our main priority. Students are encouraged to [practice wearing masks](#) before school begins and learn what type of mask is most comfortable for them. Students with sensory issues may prefer to wear a 3D mask. Practicing wearing a mask before the start of the school year will help prepare children and alleviate any anxiety around wearing a mask. When necessary, teachers will support their students in properly wearing their masks.

Additionally, **all students will have 5-6 mask breaks throughout the day** (morning snack, morning recess, lunch, lunch recess, afternoon snack, afternoon recess).

A face shield alone does not provide sufficient protection. Hence, a face shield will be accepted **only** in addition to a mask.

Masks should be worn across the face, covering nose and mouth. It is not acceptable to wear the mask below nose and/or mouth, under the chin or hanging from one ear. Lunch and outdoor times (ie: recess) can be used as an opportunity for students to take a mask break. If a student misplaced his mask, the school will supply a disposable mask for a \$1.00 replacement fee.

Students are asked to wear clothing with pockets so the mask can be kept in their pocket during recess. Alternatively, when not in use, masks can be worn on the arm using one of the ear loops. To prevent risk of choking, mask lanyards may be worn (and not shared) only with a breakaway clasp attached to the lanyard.

All school staff will be required to wear masks. Some staff members may elect to wear a face shield in addition to their mask.

Masks with clear sections will be a consideration for teachers leading classes with students who are hard of hearing.

Cohorting

“Cohorting” refers to minimizing the number of students and teachers any individual comes in contact with, and to maintaining consistency in those contacts as much as possible.

The purpose of cohorting is to limit the mixing of students and staff so that if a child or employee develops infection, the number of exposures would be reduced. This supports contact tracing, and helps prevent wide-spread shutdowns in the event of an outbreak. Classes will be cohorted so that students stay with the same class group and a limited mixing between classes. This model recognizes that for younger children, close interaction such as playing and interacting is central to child development.

To minimize the mixing of cohorts in the hallways, all class cohorts will remain in a single classroom throughout any given school day; teachers will move between classrooms as needed.

Distancing

Physical distancing measures are to be supplemented with other public health measures supported by health and safety strategies, such as screening, adapted school environment, cohorting, hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning and masking. As much distancing as possible between students, between students and staff, and between staff members will be promoted. Physical classroom sizes vary, but unnecessary furniture will be removed and desks will be placed with as much distance as possible to allow teachers as much teaching space as possible. Desks will face forward rather than in circles or groupings.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Appropriate hand hygiene is one of the most important protective strategies. [Hand hygiene](#) refers to hand washing or hand sanitizing to remove or kill the virus and is the most effective way to reduce the transmission of organisms. Hands must be washed with either soap and water for at least 20 seconds or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (minimum of 70% alcohol concentration).

JDOHSS is prepared to partner with parents to train students on appropriate hand hygiene and to reinforce its use by scheduling hand hygiene breaks at appropriate times during the school day. Hand hygiene must be conducted by anyone entering the school.

Students must wash or sanitize their hands at the following times:

- Before removing or putting on a mask.
- Upon arrival in class in the morning and during dismissal.
- Before and after eating.
- Before and after leaving the class and reentering from recess or gym.

[Respiratory etiquette](#) aims to reduce the risk of transmitting droplets that may contain the virus directly onto other surfaces where they may be picked up by others. Students are expected to cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow when a tissue is not available.

Mandatory Quarantine Following International Travel

Any student or staff member who travels outside of Canada must self-isolate for 14 days upon their return.

Visitors

Only essential visitors will be permitted in the building during school hours. Any school visitors are required to self-screen, use hand sanitizer upon entry and wear a mask while on school premises.

Please note that parents/caregivers are not considered essential visitors. Any item being dropped off during the school day must be left outside the front doors and retrieved by a staff member.

Local protocols for school access by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals and paraprofessionals for the purpose of delivering school-based support and services will be developed with any external community-based agencies providing these supports and services. See the section on special education below.

Visits to ensure school safety, such as inspections by the Fire Marshal's office or by public health, will continue to take place.

Adapted School Environments

JDOHSS is adapting the learning environment, both physically and operationally, to support the multiple protection strategies available.

Cohorts will remain in the same classroom for learning and lunch.

Signs will be posted to reinforce self-screening and hand hygiene, directional signage to support distancing and one-way use of hallways, adjustments to entrance and exit practices, playground schedule, indicate maximum capacity in bathrooms and common areas and availability of soap and/or hand sanitizer.

Student desk partitions

Student desk partitions are not mandatory at JDOHSS. They can be used as an extra layer of protection in addition to masks.

IV. Mental Wellness

A focus on the whole student will be the priority for the return to school. Mental health and well-being are core elements of the school reopening plan. JDOHSS will implement a tiered approach for mental health support that will capture all students and target intensive help to those who have been most affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.

V. Academics

We acknowledge that due to the students' prolonged absence from the regular classroom, students will need increased support as they transition to their next grade. Part of this support will include diagnostic assessments to identify students' strengths and gaps in learning and to ensure students have fundamental building blocks in advance of new content.

To the greatest extent possible, assessment and reporting activities will proceed as usual, with a focus on the achievement of overall expectations. The primary purpose of instruction and assessment is to raise the skill level of all learners in their achievement of overall curriculum expectations across all subjects, courses, and grades.

Report Cards and Progress Reports will be provided for all students, including those who may plan to only participate through distance learning.

Music

The safety of students and staff will require additional procedures for music classes including the disinfection of instruments and classroom layout consideration to allow for distancing.

Health and Physical Education

The Physical education teachers will put in place curriculum modifications to ensure that physical distancing is maintained. Classes will be conducted outdoors, where possible, and will emphasize activity and movement programs. The sharing of equipment will be limited. Where equipment will be needed for different classes, the equipment will be sanitized before use. Students will be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in physical activity and equipment use. Additionally, to minimize risk of exposure, students will not have to change their clothes for gym. Students will be required to wear sneakers to participate.

VI. Building and Classrooms

Classroom Setup

Class furniture will be placed as far apart as possible. Students will occupy the same seat and desk in the classroom as much as possible. This area becomes their personal space and should be as far away from the nearest student as practical. The number of teachers interacting with any given class cohort will be limited. Classroom design will vary from teacher to teacher, but the same goal remains to keep everyone as distant as possible.

Where possible, and safe to do so, classroom doors and windows will be left open during the day to increase air circulation and to minimize the number of students or staff that need to open the door physically.

While distancing may not be as practical for four and five year-olds, the rule of no physical touching should be reinforced. Activities will be designed for small groups, and furniture and playing areas should be used to help maintain physical separation. Plush toys will be temporarily stored. The use of shared toys and manipulatives will be reduced where possible while still providing for students a wide variety of play-based learning.

Plexiglass Dividers

Portable plexiglass dividers will be placed in high traffic areas where physical distancing may be problematic, such as at the front reception area of the main office, the Discovery Centre circulation desk, and remedial classrooms. Plexiglass dividers will be installed on teachers desks as well.

School Signage

Signage on walls and floors will help students maintain distance from one another. The signage will be posted at entrances to classrooms, school entrances and exits and hallways.

Visual guides, such as tape on floors and posters on walls will be provided to guide appropriate distances in lines/queues and at other times (for example, guides for creating "one-way routes" in hallways).

Lockers and Cubbies

Students will not have access to lockers in September as this causes students to congregate in the hallways. This will be revisited as the winter months approach. Students will have access to cubbies within the classrooms. Teachers will monitor and ensure that proper distancing is observed when accessing cubbies. Parents should help their children minimize the number of personal belongings being brought to school to ensure desks and cubbies include only the necessary items. It will be helpful to not send all the required supplies on the first day of school; rather, they should be stored at home and replenished as needed.

Washrooms

Signage will be placed at the entrance to washrooms to remind students of physical distance, washroom capacity and proper hygiene. Washrooms will be cleaned throughout the school day and again each evening. We have implemented a tracking system for staff to record the time and frequency of cleaning.

Discovery Centre

The Discovery Centre will be open to students. A procedure will be put in place for library sessions and the handling and return of books. The Discovery Centre may also be used as additional classroom space.

VII. School Operations**Communication and Collaboration with Parents**

The success of the school reopening plan will depend on parents being informed and following all new policies and procedures. To that end, we will clearly communicate expectations and provide guidelines to parents and students well before in-class instruction resumes, and ongoing throughout the year.

Arrival and Dismissal Requirements

Multiple entrance and exit doors will be used for arrival and dismissal to allow for physical distancing to occur. Children will be dismissed from their classrooms to prevent mixing of cohorts. Exact arrival and dismissal procedures that support physical distancing, discourage congregating and separate cohorts as best as possible will be put in place and communicated prior to reopening. These procedures can be found in the Parent Handbook on the school website. Students will be required to sanitize their hands as they enter the school. Drop-off and dismissal of students will happen outside the school.

Sharing of Resources

Staff will limit student sharing of materials and resources in class. Adequate supplies for instructional units should be provided to each student, and where it is not practical to give each student their own resources, then the shared equipment should be cleaned or disinfected between use. Students should have their own school supplies, and the sharing of school supplies should not be permitted. If a device such as a Chromebook is being scheduled for alternative use, it must be wiped down with sanitizer wipe before changing users.

Class Instruction Delivery Models

JDOHSS will be prepared to implement our adapted delivery models should public health conditions require them. Under this scenario, cohorts may include less students in each class attending on alternate days.

JDOHSS will be prepared to return to the full distance learning model should it be required by Public Health.

Recess Protocol

Recesses will be staggered and each cohort will be assigned a designated area of the yard on a rotating basis. A detailed recess schedule will be put in place to ensure social distancing between cohorts and safe opportunity for students to play and enjoy the fresh air. A distance of 2 metres should be maintained between cohorts and any other individuals outside of the cohort.

Play structures can only be used by one cohort at a time and will be cleaned and disinfected before and after use by each cohort.

Lunch and Snacks

Staff and students will perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating.

Each student will have their own individual meal and snacks with no common food items. The 'no sharing' food and drink policy will be strictly enforced. Each student will be required to bring their own labelled water bottle to be kept with them during the day.

Until further notice, JDOHSS will not be running a Lunch Program or planning non-instructional activities that involve students in preparing or serving food.

Cleaning Protocols

An enhanced cleaning and disinfection program has been developed. In order to carry out these increased responsibilities, additional cleaning staff have been hired.

High touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day. This includes washrooms, doorknobs, light switches, handles, teacher's desks, phones, keyboards, touch screens (Smart Boards), push buttons, handrails, computers and photocopiers.

Classrooms/spaces that are shared by cohorts will be cleaned and disinfected before and after using the space.

Comprehensive cleaning protocols will be reinforced and reviewed as needed to meet the changing public health requirements.

Student Transportation

Families wishing to partake in a car pool are encouraged to employ masks and hand hygiene.

School Assemblies

School assemblies or other large gatherings will be avoided. Virtual options will be offered instead of in person gatherings.

Fire Drills

Practice drills will continue. Classes will move throughout the building while maintaining safe distance between students in the classroom, hallway and at all exits. Locations on the school playground or field will be identified that will allow for safe distance between students.

Lockdown Drills

Physical lockdown drills will not take place during COVID-19. A review will take place going over the procedures in the case of a real life-threatening situation.

Field trips

To align with physical distancing, the school will not plan field trips and activities requiring group transportation at this time, until public health data suggests otherwise.

Before and Aftercare

Before and aftercare and after school programming will not be available this year.

Staff room

Congregation of teachers/staff will be limited to minimize potential for adult-to-adult transmission.

Tracking of Data

JDOHSS will ensure records of classes, including seating charts, class cohorts, and daily records of any approved visitors to the school, including supply teachers and staff are maintained and readily available to be provided to public health for contact tracing purposes.

VIII. Responding to a Suspected Case of COVID-19

While we acknowledge that a simple runny nose or sore throat is typical in school-age children and is generally indicative of the common cold, all symptoms consistent with COVID-19 must be taken seriously for the health and safety of all of us in our school community. Please refer to the [COVID-19 Student Screening](#) for instructions on when to quarantine and/or test your child for COVID-19.

Individuals Developing Any Symptom of COVID-19 Outside of School

All staff and students who develop **any** symptom consistent with COVID-19 (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty swallowing) must not attend school. Appropriate medical attention is required, including getting tested at a COVID-19 testing centre ([click here](#) for the COVID-19 Assessment Centres closest to school).

Suspected Case at Home

If someone living in the same house as your child develops symptoms of COVID-19, your child will not be allowed to attend school until the symptomatic person receives a negative COVID-19 test result.

Suspected Case Identified in School

Any student or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms while in school will be immediately isolated from others, until they are able to go home. Isolated students will be supervised per usual school policy, with physical distancing maintained and PPE provided consistent with public health guidance. To further minimize risk of transmission, the ill individual and staff member attending to them will have access to our 'COVID Kit', which will contain alcohol based hand sanitizer, disposable gloves, masks and gowns.

If a student becomes ill during the day and/or if they exhibit signs of illness, the child will be isolated immediately and parents will be notified in order to pick up their child immediately. Even if unavailable to come, parents must make arrangements for immediate pickup of their child.

Suspected Case Follow-up

It is recommended that school staff and students with symptoms of COVID-19 go to an [assessment centre](#) for testing as soon as possible, and to self-isolate at home until their result is available.

The school must be called immediately upon receipt of the positive test.

A student or staff member who tests negative can return to school as long as their symptoms are resolved, and once they are symptom free for 24 hours.

Handling Confirmed Cases

School staff and students **exposed** to a **confirmed case of COVID-19 will be advised by public health. Public health will complete a risk assessment and determine who had high risk exposure.** They will be excluded from the school setting and must self-isolate at home for 14 days from the day of last exposure to the person who had COVID-19.

The siblings of any child who have come in contact with a confirmed case do not need to be excluded from school.

Should the cohort be asked to quarantine, arrangements will be made to support the continuation of instruction.

COVID-19 Reporting and Contact Tracing

In the event of a positive COVID-19 result, Public Health will provide directions to the school about what information to share with parents in the class or the school.

JDOHSS must immediately report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school to the local public health unit as required under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, and provide any materials (e.g., daily attendance and transportation records) to public health officials to support case management and contact tracing and other activities, in accordance with all applicable privacy legislation. Public health officials will determine any additional steps required. Contact tracing will take place in consultation with Public Health, and some students and staff may need to self-isolate for 14 days.

Returning to School after COVID-19

Per the Ontario [Toronto Public Health](#),

Situation	Return to School after...
Symptomatic (exhibit symptoms) and no test	<u>10 days from the onset of symptoms, fever free AND symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours</u>
After exposure to confirmed case of COVID-19	<u>14 days from the date of the last known exposure</u> (contact with an infected individual). The entire 14 day isolation must be observed, even if a negative test is received during this time frame. Individuals who have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 must get tested if any symptoms develop.
Symptomatic and negative test result	Fever free AND symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours
Symptomatic and positive test result	Mild/Moderate Symptoms: <u>10 days from the onset of symptoms, fever free AND symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours;</u> Severe Illness or Immuno-compromised: <u>20 days from the onset of symptoms, fever free AND symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours</u>
Asymptomatic (not exhibiting symptoms) and positive test result	<u>10 days from the COVID-19 testing date</u>

Note: Updated on October 21, 2020

[Click for the COVID-19 Decision Tool for Schools - October 4, 2020](#)