



Poltimore Elementary School

COVID-19 Back to School Information and Procedures



August 19, 2020

Dear Parents and Students,

We are looking forward to welcoming our students back to school!

This newsletter contains important information about changes to our school routine as we adhere to health and safety guidelines in light of the Covid 19 pandemic. **Please read the newsletter carefully so that you understand your role and responsibilities in keeping our students and staff healthy and safe.** If you have questions or concerns, please contact principal Amy Curry via email (acurry@wqsb.qc.ca) or by phone (819) 457-2335 ext. 2.

As a caution, I am reminding families that guidelines from Public Health and the Ministry of Education may change as the Covid-19 situation evolves. The information in this newsletter is currently up to date and based on the Ministry of Education's Back to School Plan that I shared with you earlier this week. Your patience and flexibility is so important as we navigate these unusual circumstances together.

Thank you for your co-operation!

Transportation

Parents are strongly encouraged to transport their children to and from school. (See information below about drop-off and pick-up procedures.)

Students in grades 5 and 6 must wear a mask while traveling on the bus.

Students in kindergarten to grade 4 are encouraged to wear a mask while on the bus to help prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Buses will be disinfected after each run. Bus drivers will also be wearing PPE (masks, goggles and gloves). Students will be expected to sanitize their hands upon the entry and exit of the bus. All students will have an assigned seat on the bus. Students are not permitted to change seats at any time.

Students must remain in their seat until they are called to get off the bus.

Students must follow this directive, for the safety of all other students on the bus, and for the bus driver. If your child is unable to follow the rules on the bus, they will not be able to take the bus.



You can access your transportation information on August 25th by logging into the Mozaik Parent Portal.



Poltimore Elementary School

COVID-19 Back to School

Information and Procedures



Drop-off/Pick-Up Procedures

When dropping off and picking up students, parents are not to accompany students to the entrance or enter the school. Please follow the procedure:

- Park your vehicle in one of spots labelled: **PARENT ZONE** (if all these spaces are occupied, wait patiently for a spot to become available.)
- At drop-off time- no earlier than 7:50 a.m.-- a staff member will greet your child and escort him/her into the school, respecting the 2 metre physical distance rule.
- At pick up time (2:35 p.m.), follow the same procedure for securing a spot in the **PARENT ZONE**. A staff member will escort your child to your vehicle.

Caretaking

Our custodian will be adhering to all guidelines and directives provided by the WQSB during Covid-19. The school board has increased the number of hours for caretaking at our school during this time to ensure that all standards are met, including routine cleaning of washrooms, replenishment of hand soap and sanitizer, disinfecting high-contact areas, daily cleaning of in-use classrooms and daily disinfecting of in-use desks and chairs.

Classroom Organization and Social Distancing

As per the Ministry of Education's directives, students will be organized into class groups. At Poltimore Elementary School, we are fortunate to have small class sizes. Our students will be grouped as follows:

- K4/K5
- Grades 1 and 2
- Grades 3 and 4
- Grades 5 and 6

Within the class groups, physical distancing among students is not required. Class groups will be together during recess and lunch. Teachers are required to maintain a 2 metre distance from students. Each class group must maintain physical distancing from other class groups. The following protocols are in place to ensure that class groups are distancing from one another:

- Individual class group routines for entry, coats, backpacks etc. (see School Entry section below)
- Students will eat lunch in their classrooms
- The gym will be used on a weekly rotation by each class (Ex: Week 1: Kinders, Week 2: Grade 1 and 2 etc.)
- The school yard will be organized in zones for each classroom group to use, changing zones on a weekly rotation during recess
- Each classroom group will be assigned a 'box-of-fun' filled with recess materials (sports equipment etc.) to be used exclusively by that class group



Procedure for suspected cases of Covid-19

Any staff who are sick (even with a common cold) are NOT to report to work.

Any child who is sick (even with a common cold) is NOT to come to school.

If a parent/guardian is home sick, a child is NOT to come to school.

If your child becomes ill at school you will be called for immediate pick up, no exceptions.

When symptoms suggestive of the disease (fever, cough, difficulty breathing, loss of smell or other symptoms) appear in students, the child will be immediately isolated into a designated isolation room and sent home. The parent/guardian of a child who presents symptoms, will be called immediately for pick-up (no exceptions). The sibling(s) of the child presenting symptoms will also be sent home. All materials will be packed up in a plastic bag and placed in the trunk of the vehicle.

An emergency kit will be at the school containing masks, gloves, eye protection and a re-sealable bag, gown, as well as alcoholic solution in order to protect any member of the staff isolating a potential case of COVID-19; this protective gear will be worn until the removal of the individual presenting symptoms.

Before returning to school following an illness, a child or adult must be fever free for 48 hours – without the help of medication. They must not exhibit acute symptoms for 24 hours (cough, runny nose, sore throat etc.) – without the help of medication.

If COVID-19 symptoms are suspected OR is confirmed within a school, Public Health will step in immediately and the school will follow the recommendations made, no exceptions.

The school administration has a direct COVID-19 hotline only open for elementary schools that will be called for guidance or to report.

A good reference for parents is the COVID-19 Self-care Guide (<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-002492>), which provides instructions on what to do.

Information about the steps to follow, including how to determine if you need to take a test, is also available at Québec.ca (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/>).

Parents can call **1-877-644-4545** if a child is showing symptoms to receive guidelines from Public Health. The child must remain at home in isolation until Public Health guidelines have been received.

Procedure in the event of a confirmed case of Covid-19

In the event of a confirmed case of Covid-19 in a student or staff member, all parents will be informed and we will follow Public Health guidelines.



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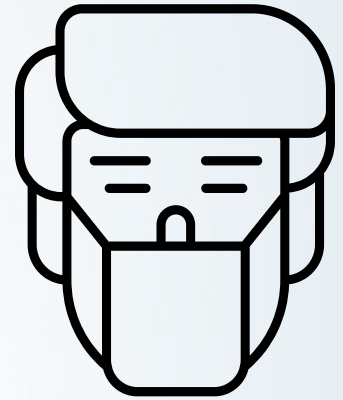


Masks

Masks are mandatory for all Cycle 3 students (grades 5 & 6). The masks are mandatory in all common areas (busses, hallways, bathrooms, the office etc.). The masks are not mandatory within the classroom, unless the student is getting up to move around or leaving the classroom to enter into a common area.

If your child wishes to keep their mask on inside the classroom at their desk, this is absolutely allowed. Masks are not mandatory outside. Again, if your child wishes to keep their mask on outside, this is absolutely allowed.

Masks are mandatory for all staff in common areas. It is each staff member's personal decision if they will wear a mask within the classroom. The Ministry and Public Health recommend an adult wearing a mask if they are closer than 2m in distance to any person.



Hallways

Our school has narrow hallways; we have designed the physical layout with vinyl tape showing a one metre distance. Teachers will ensure that class groups are not in the hallways at the same time.

If your child is returning to school, please prepare them to understand and follow the 1 m distancing from other students not in their classroom and 2 m distancing from all adults. The younger the student, the more difficult this will be, so please use this time to prepare your child. Students will not be permitted to have any physical contact with peers outside of their classroom group (as per public health directives).

Washrooms

Washrooms will be disinfected five times a day, as per Public Health guidelines. The school will have a system in place to communicate to ensure no more than one student is using the washroom at a time.

Class groups will have assigned washrooms:

K4/K5: washroom located in their classroom

Grades 1,2,3,4: washrooms located near the grade 1/2 classroom

Grades 5 and 6: washrooms located near the gym

Handwashing and Hand Sanitizer

Every staff member and student will be sanitizing their hands upon the entry and exit of the building. We will ask students to wash hands or use hand sanitizer at school often. (Some classes have sinks, others do not). Hand sanitizer will be available at each classroom entry point.

Please ensure that your child(ren) understand proper hand washing technique. Your support will help to keep staff and students safe.



Poltimore Elementary School

COVID-19 Back to School

Information and Procedures



Water Fountains

As part of our health and safety measures the water fountains will be closed.

Students are asked to bring a pre-filled water bottle from home each and every day. Please remember to label your child's water bottle.

The students will have access to the touchless water bottle filling station located near the gymnasium.

School Entry and Cloak Room/Coats/Backpacks/Shoes

When the school bell rings to signal entry into the building, students will line up with their class group on the black-top section of our school yard. This routine will be explained to students on the first day of school.

Students in grades 3,4,5 and 6 will enter the school using the door at the front of the building.

Each student will have an assigned hook for their coats and backpacks in the cloak room, keeping each class group within the recommended 1 metre distance from one another.

Students in kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 will enter the school using the door at the side of the building and will have assigned hooks near their classrooms for their coats and backpacks, keeping each class group within the recommended 1 metre distance from one another.

One pair of shoes will be worn indoors and outside until the weather demands winter gear.

Lunches and breakfast program

Students will eat lunch in their classrooms, with supervision provided.

When packing lunches, please make sure items and containers can be opened independently by your child(ren). Please pack a "litter-less" lunch. Your child(ren) will be bringing home in their lunch kit every item brought from home.

There will be no hot lunch program for the time being.

Our breakfast program will consist only of individually wrapped items (granola bars, applesauce etc.) to limit the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Medical Exemptions for Students

Students who have a compromised system or live with someone with a compromised system are eligible for the medical exemption. You will be required to present a doctor's note indicating such exemption from attending school in person. The school will provide remote learning for any student with a medical exemption. The forms for this process can be found on our school website, and were emailed to parents earlier this week.



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COVID-19 Back to School

Information and Procedures



Field Trips and Extra -Curricular Activities

There will be no field trips to start off the school year as field trips require additional adults present to maintain ratios and adhere to supervision. This in line with the Public Health guidelines of minimizing the number of adult contacts minimizing the contact between class groups, support contact tracing. Virtual field trips will be encouraged.

The school year will not start with any team sports or organized recess activities in order to follow the guidelines of keeping class groups separate from one another. We will explore ideas for clubs and activities within class groups as the school year unfolds.

Assemblies and School Gatherings

For the time being, there will be no full school assemblies or community gatherings at the school. Meet the teacher night, general assemblies and Governing Board will all be held virtually. Stay tuned for more details and instructions about how to participate in the coming weeks

First Day of School Procedure

On Friday, August 28th, when students arrive at school:

- They will proceed to the black-top area of the school yard and be greeted by our staff.
- A staff member will direct each student to the area where his/her class group will line up for entry
- Class groups will enter the building in a staggered fashion as we familiarize students with the routine, as well as with the zones for their personal belongings and the distancing practices and signals in place.
- **KINDERGARTEN PARENTS WILL RECEIVE START INFORMATION BY AUGUST 21, 2020**

Adjusting to new routines and expectations

Learning how to work together at school while following the rules for physical distancing and respecting the public health directives will take great effort from our staff and students. We will work hard to create a positive, safe and engaging learning environment to help our students reach their potential.

More than ever, parent support and reinforcement of school routines and expectations will help to create a safe atmosphere for students and staff. Your kindness, understanding and flexibility as we adjust to changing guidelines and new approaches to organizing our school are greatly appreciated.

Please get in touch with any questions, comments or feedback. I am an email (acurry@wqsb.qc.ca) or phone call (819-457-2335 ext 2) away.

Sincerely,

Amy Curry

Principal, Poltimore Elementary School