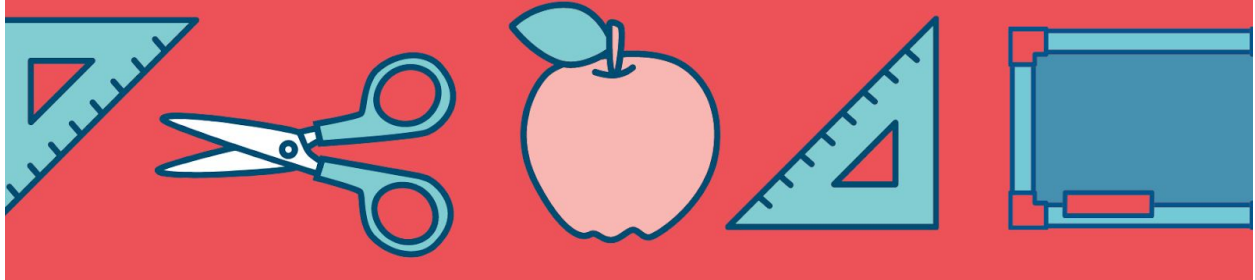


# UGDSB PLAN TO REOPEN SCHOOLS - FALL 2020

Guidebook for UGDSB Parents and Guardians

FALL 2020 REOPENING SCHOOLS

## PARENT GUIDE



Upper Grand District School Board

AUGUST 2020

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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Over the past several months, we have experienced unprecedented changes in our education system. Beginning with the closure of schools by provincial ministerial order on March 13, 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and through to the end of our school year, we have had to reconsider many of the ways in which we work, learn and interact with one another.

We know the value that schools hold in our communities. They are places of learning where students grow intellectually and socially through their interactions with fellow students and staff. This environment, and these relationships, are important to the ongoing development of our students and to their overall well-being. We want our students and staff back in our schools and in a manner that maximizes the safety and well-being of staff, students, and families.

The school board has been directed by the province to prepare for three different scenarios for September. School Reopening Plans will be based on the framework and guidelines provided by the [Ministry of Education's Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year](#).

Boards have been asked to prepare three possible scenarios for reopening schools:

1. **Conventional** - Normal school day routine with enhanced health and safety protocols.
2. **Adaptive or Adapted** - Modified school day routine based on smaller class sizes, cohorting and alternative day or week delivery.
3. **Remote Learning** - Learning at home with opportunities for students to engage with their teachers in both synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous learning occurs live and in real time (e.g. live teacher lesson with students participating virtually), whereas asynchronous learning is conducted remotely but without real-time interaction (e.g. teacher-recorded lesson uploaded to Google Classroom).

While we have been directed to open in a conventional model, boards have to be prepared to transition to either an adapted model or remote learning model as directed by the Ministry based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health or the local Medical Officer of Health.

We recognize that parents/guardians need to have predictability and routine in their family life so that they can arrange child care, home life and work commitments while knowing their child is receiving academic instruction in a safe environment. Given the uncertainty that we face in the coming months, flexibility, patience, and understanding will be needed as we develop solutions to the various challenges with a return to school.

This document is a framework for how we plan to reopen our schools to students and staff. It was developed in collaboration with education partners, such as the Ministry of Education, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health, Student Transportation Services (STWDSTS) and UGDSB employee associations and through the work of various planning committees. Parent, staff and student consultations on the reopening of schools were completed through surveys in late June and early July. Our parent survey alone had more than 9,000 responses. The themes resulting from the surveys were central in our planning to safely reopen our schools and workplaces for September.

The operations outlined in this document are based on the most recent advice from the Ministry of Education, local and provincial Public Health Officials and School Mental Health Ontario. Our plan will evolve as required, recognizing that public health guidance and directives from the Ministry of Education may change.

### Guiding Principles for our Return to School

1. Keep students and staff safe and healthy.
2. Provide opportunities for the continuity of learning; through either conventional, adapted or remote learning.
3. Focus on student and staff well-being and mental health.
4. Address issues of equity and access for our students and families.
5. Keep stakeholders informed through regular communication.

Our parent community will have many unique family situations and work commitments that they need to resolve. This plan will not be able to meet every individual situation. We will work to find creative solutions designed to help as many families as possible so that they can manage their competing demands of work, school and family needs. We recognize that returning to school five days a week for all students will address the greatest number of family needs in our community.

We also know that some of our students with special needs will continue to face challenges and obstacles to learning during a pandemic, given the realities of physical distance requirements. We will work with each family to try and find a solution that meets their child's needs while keeping them and others at the school emotionally, mentally and physically safe.

## Communication

School principals and the Board's Communication Department will communicate regularly with students and their parents/guardians over the next several weeks. Information and updates will be shared with families, students and staff through a variety of means including, but not limited to, the board website at [www.ugdsb.ca/fall2020](http://www.ugdsb.ca/fall2020), email, phone calls, and social media, as required.

## REOPENING MODEL FOR SEPTEMBER

The school board is finalizing its plans for the reopening of UGDSB elementary and secondary schools.

Individual schools will also develop a plan for their school site, including enhanced cleaning and safety protocols as outlined in this document. The plans will include information on new/late student registration, first day routines (and beyond), communication with the school/teachers, and other protocols and safety items. Important details will be shared with parents/guardians and staff before the school year starts.

**Please keep in mind that the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve and the details outlined below could change based on direction from the Ministry of Education and/or public health officials.**

## Elementary Schools

The Ministry of Education has directed all elementary schools (JK to 8) in Ontario to reopen with a conventional in-person delivery model of teaching and instruction, with enhanced health and safety protocols in place. In this model students attend school full time, five days per week starting on September 8, 2020. Students remain with only their class during the day, including during recess and lunch. This class is considered their "cohort." Cohorted classes will stay together with one teacher in their classroom where possible and

specialized teachers would go into each classroom to provide programming for students. All areas of the curriculum will continue to be taught.

## Secondary Schools

UGDSB has been directed by the Ministry to open all secondary schools with the conventional model, with enhanced health and safety protocols in place. Students will attend school in person for five hours per day, five days a week, with start and end times remaining the same..

Secondary school courses will be timetabled using a “quadmestered” approach. In a quadmester, students only take two courses at a time for a 10-week period. Students will then take their next two courses for the subsequent 10 weeks to complete the full semester. In this approach, students would be part of two cohorts of students at a time.

## In-Person vs Remote Learning

Parents/guardians will have the choice to opt their children out of in-person delivery if they do not feel comfortable returning to school in person in the fall.

Therefore, there are two options for UGDSB students:

1. Attend school in person, or
2. Participate in remote/distance learning from home.

At this time, students cannot attend school part-time and also participate in remote learning. If students wish to change from remote to in-person learning (or vice versa), they will be permitted to switch formats at set points during the school year. Parents should be aware that the period of time that students must remain in their chosen delivery format will be an extended period of time, for example an entire term in elementary or quadmester in secondary.

Students who choose remote learning will participate in real-time, synchronous learning every day. Classes will be led by teachers at scheduled times during the school day. The amount of time students will spend each day on remote learning will be equal to the amount of time as students who chose in-person learning.

If students choose to participate in remote learning from home, rather than attend school in person, they will be assigned to ‘central’ classrooms. Classes may be composed of students from different schools, depending on numbers. Central class sizes will be consistent with regular class sizes. Staff who are assigned to remote classes may not be the



staff from your child's school. Therefore, remote teachers may not be the same as if the student were in their home school. In elementary, if a student changes between remote learning and in-class learning during the year (at the defined points as described above), their teacher will change.

### Remote Learning in Elementary

For elementary students, remote learning will be delivered via Google Classroom. All teachers providing lessons for a given class will create a subject specific tab within the Classroom. Special Education, Specialist, French teachers and Early Childhood Educators (for kindergarten) will also have access to the Google Classroom for each class they support/teach. All curriculum areas will be taught, evaluated and reported on. All teachers providing lessons for a class will collaborate to create one Monday-Friday timetable for students to follow indicating live whole group and live small group learning sessions. This timetable will be sent to parents/students in advance of being implemented. This will allow parents time to plan for their children to attend remote learning lessons, with some regularity and will create student routines.

### Remote Learning in Secondary

For secondary students, remote learning will be delivered via Google Classroom and/or BrightSpace. Courses will cover all areas of the curriculum and all overall expectations will be evaluated and reported on. Students will be expected to attend class virtually on a daily basis according to a set schedule indicating live whole group and live small group learning sessions. This schedule will be sent to parents/students in advance of being implemented. The length of the school day for students in remote learning will be the same as those students attending in person. The class makeup of students in remote learning will be coordinated centrally, based on survey results from our pre-registration process with respect to confirmation of intent to return. Although every effort will be made to honour students' existing timetables in a remote model, students may need to alter their selections based on the courses that will be offered remotely.

### Outbreaks and Change to Learning Model

The board will have a plan should it be necessary to switch from the conventional school delivery model to the adapted or remote model depending on the current status of COVID-19 in our region.

To facilitate this transition, staff will determine the 'at-home' technology needs for students in their class at the start of the school year. To prepare for continuity of learning,

all staff will be trained on available district level tools that may be used for distance learning. Google Classroom and Google Meet/Chat and the Brightspace/D2L Learning Platform (for secondary students only) will be used for distance learning. These tools will be used as part of the regular 'in-class' classroom program from the start of the year, and parents will be invited to access Google Classroom where possible. By putting these steps in place, a potential shift to remote learning will be more efficient and responsive to student and family needs.

## ACCESS TO SCHOOL SITES

### Parent and Visitor Access

Only **essential visitors** are permitted inside the school (e.g., maintenance personnel). Essential visitors will complete a self-assessment screen for COVID-19 symptoms BEFORE arriving/entering school. If any signs or symptoms are exhibited, essential visitors must not enter the school.

All other parents and visitors will not be permitted inside schools during the pandemic, except in case of emergency. At entry and dismissal times, parents are to remain outside the school and adhere to physical distancing protocols.

### Child Care Centres and Before/After School Programs

All of our Child Care Centres and Before/After School Programs (BASPs) are operated by third party Operators. Students attending a BASP program would be included as part of two separate cohorts (BASP and classroom). Student attendance lists and information will be maintained and available to public health for contact tracing purposes in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Please submit any inquiries about child care or BASP registration directly to the Operator. The board website includes additional information and contacts: [Before and/or After School Program](#)

### Community Use of Schools

Indoor permits through Community Use of Schools will continue to be on hold until further notice.

## PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

### Pre-Registration Survey

Parents/guardians will be surveyed regarding whether their child will attend on-site schooling in September, based on Ministry directive, or if their child will fully participate online. Regardless of attendance in person or through distance learning, students will be assigned to a specific class or teacher. The aim is to provide parents with access to education for their children within their comfort level be that on-site or through distance learning. The deadline for all students to pre-register for school is August 14, 2020.

### Parent Access to Schools

Only **essential visitors** are permitted inside the school (e.g., maintenance personnel). Parents and all other visitors will not be permitted inside schools during the pandemic, except in case of emergency.

Meetings with teachers and principals will take place virtually in the initial stages of reopening.

### Pick-up and Drop-off

Schools will establish pick-up and drop-off procedures and will communicate these procedures with families. At entry and dismissal times, parents are to remain outside the school and adhere to physical distancing protocols. Parents are asked to avoid the use of school parking lots when possible. Schools may need to make plans to reduce the amount of traffic in parking lots should they become crowded and unsafe.

### Personal Student Belongings

Students will not have access to lockers or cubbies during COVID-19; all belongings will stay with them in the classroom. Students will be asked to bring a minimal amount of personal belongings to school. Student belongings should be taken home each day to be cleaned as needed.

### Water Bottles

Students will be encouraged to bring their own labelled water bottle to school each day. All water fountains can be used to refill water bottles. Drinking directly from water fountains during COVID-19 will not be permitted.

## Screening of Students

Parents/guardians will be asked to perform a **daily** screening of their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms BEFORE leaving for school. Monitor your child for COVID-19 symptoms (see below).

Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- New olfactory or taste disorder(s)
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion – *in absence of underlying reason for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.*

For additional information on symptoms, please see the reference document linked below.

If your child shows any signs or symptoms, they must stay home and the school must be contacted.

### Resource:

- [COVID-19 Reference document for symptoms](#)

## International Students

All international students returning to Canada from another country must self-isolate for 14 days as a requirement of the Quarantine Act before being allowed to attend UGDSB schools.

## SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR SCHOOL SITES

### Safety Inspections

Our Operations Department regularly maintained and inspected our schools throughout the school closure period. Before students return to school, a Joint Health and Safety Committee inspection will be completed at each site.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be in place for all school and board sites. The Operations and Health & Safety Departments are responsible for the training of staff and instruction of cleaning requirements. For information about cleaning and disinfecting protocols, go to page 26.

### Physical Distancing

Signage on walls and floors will help students maintain physical distance from one another, where possible. The signage will be posted at various locations throughout the school or board facility.

Where possible, physical distancing measures will be used. These can include:

- Maximizing physical distance between chairs and tables/desks in all rooms
- Incorporating more individual activities.
- Avoiding activities involving shared objects/toys
- Creating designated routes for students/staff to get to and from classrooms
- Using markings on floors and walls to promote physical distancing, including for lines/queues (e.g., tape on floors, signs on walls)
- Moving activities outside to allow for more space
- Staggering periods of student movement around school and discourage student congregating in hallways where possible
- Staggering student/staff lunch/break times, recess times where applicable

Maintaining physical distancing at all times will be challenging. Adults and students will sometimes forget this important safety measure or will unintentionally enter someone else's space. It is important to recognize that we are aiming for the best efforts and not perfection. A friendly reminder will be provided when someone is failing to keep the required distance apart or when friends are seen in physical proximity to one another.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Each school will be provided with disposable masks for individuals who may exhibit signs of illness, disposable gloves, face shields for those who may require this additional level of protection. The province will guide PPE requirements, and we will communicate that to our staff. Staff will be provided with PPE required for their specific role.

## Non-Medical or Cloth Masks

As per the Ministry's guide to reopening schools, students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Outdoor times like recess may be used as opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks.

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in indoor spaces.

Students are encouraged to practice wearing masks and learn what type of mask is most comfortable for them. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and families who cannot provide a mask for their child may request support from the school principal, and where available, a mask will be provided.

Students receiving a mask will be taught the proper use of a mask. Any logo or design on a mask will be subject to normal school dress code policies.

## Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Schools will ensure that hand hygiene products are available in all rooms where possible and at school entrances (e.g. hand wash sink with soap dispenser or hand sanitizer). All staff, students and essential visitors will be expected to conduct proper hand hygiene, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer, at the following times:

- Upon entering the school
- At regular time intervals throughout day
- Before/after eating food
- After using the restroom
- Before/after outdoor play
- After sneezing or coughing
- Before putting on and after removing PPE and/or non-medical masks/face coverings

The following resources are available from Public Health

- [How to wash your hands \(child focused\)](#)
- [How to wash your hands with soap and water](#)
- [Reduce the spread of COVID-19: Wash your hands](#)
- [How to clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub](#)

Respiratory etiquette includes:

- Covering the nose and mouth during coughing and sneezing with a tissue or sneezing or coughing into your sleeve or elbow.
- Disposing of used tissues into the garbage immediately after use.
- Practicing proper hand hygiene immediately after coughing or sneezing or touching one's face.

## Ventilation

Where possible, windows and doors will be opened to allow fresh outdoor air into the school.

## SYMPTOMS, CONFIRMED CASES AND OUTBREAKS

Symptomatic individuals or anyone who has come into close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days should be tested for COVID-19 (Resource: [Assessment Centres in WDG](#)).

## Isolation Room/Area

Each school will designate an isolation room/area. This room/area will be used for the temporary placement of any individual who becomes ill during the day. A kit will be available for use by the ill individual and staff member attending to them. This will include hand sanitizer, gloves, surgical/procedural masks, eye protection, tissues and a gown.

### **Thermal thermometer:**

A thermometer will be available if needed to verify the temperature of an ill individual. The thermometer must be covered with single-use protective covers (discarded after each use) or cleaned and disinfected after each use. One thermal thermometer will be ordered for each school. This is only to be used with the permission of a parent/guardian when there is concern that a student may be ill and is being sent home.

## COVID-19 Symptomatic Students and Staff

Parents will be notified immediately if a child becomes unwell during the day. Symptomatic students must be immediately separated from others and supervised in a designated room/space. Parents (or designate) must immediately come to the school to pick up their child. Students from the same family may need to be picked up as well if exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms. Symptomatic students will be supervised by a staff member who will follow safety protocols. Soiled personal items will be placed in a securely tied plastic bag and sent home with the student's parent/guardian. Soiled items will not be rinsed and/or washed at school.

Staff will complete a daily self-assessment prior to leaving for work and staff who have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 will stay home. Symptomatic staff and essential visitors will go home immediately. If they cannot return home immediately, they will be isolated in the designated room/space until their departure.

A surgical/procedural mask is worn by the symptomatic person (if tolerated). Caretaking staff will clean and disinfect the designated room/space and any items touched by the symptomatic individual.

## Confirmed cases of COVID-19

When a student or staff member has been diagnosed as positive for the COVID-19 virus, the school and board will follow the directions of Public Health. This may require one or multiple classes to move to a distance learning model or may require the school to be closed to in-person instruction for a length of time necessary, based on the time recommended by WDGPH.

Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 must bring medical clearance before being allowed to return to in-person instruction.

A Clorox Total 360 System - Electrostatic Sprayer will be used to disinfect any area accessed by someone reported as testing positive for COVID-19.

## Privacy

Staff will follow the directions from WDGPH in terms of what medical/health information related to colleagues, students or their families that can be shared. Parents will have to understand that not all personal information can be shared due to privacy concerns.



## SCHOOL DAY OPERATIONS

### Student Transportation

The student transportation consortium that services our school board and other boards in our region (STWDSTS) is receiving its direction on COVID-19 safety protocols directly from provincial officials. The school board is in close contact with the transportation consortium, however, the school board does not decide the COVID-19 safety protocols for student transportation. For more information, visit the STWDSTS website at <https://stwdsts.ca>.

The information the school board has received from the student transportation consortium includes the following:

#### Safety Protocols for School Purpose Vehicles

The safety protocols identified in this section are applicable for all school purpose vehicles, including large buses, special purpose buses and minivans.

To support return to school five days a week, school purpose vehicles will likely operate closer to capacity, as in previous years. To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of non-medical masks or face coverings for students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required on school vehicles. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear face coverings on student transportation. As per school board protocols, exceptions will be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking. Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shields) will be provided for school bus drivers. Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles and is intended to protect drivers during close contact with students, such as during boarding and exiting.

Seating plans will be designed to assign students to seats and a record of the seating plan will be kept to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student or driver contracting COVID-19. Seating plans will assign where possible, students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort, in seats together. These seating plans will require cooperation from student riders and support from parents/guardians.

Where possible, the seat directly behind the school bus driver will remain empty to maintain physical distancing and windows will be opened when feasible to increase ventilation. Enhanced cleaning protocols will also be in place, including additional cleaning

for frequently touched surfaces.

Consistent with school protocols, students who have COVID-19 symptoms are not to go to the bus stop, ride the bus or attend school. If a student rider develops symptoms while on a school purpose vehicle, they will be referred to school staff upon arrival, at which time school protocols will be followed. Students who develop symptoms while at school will not be permitted to return home on a school purpose vehicle and will need to be picked up by a parent or guardian.

### School Purpose Vehicle Operations

Training sessions for drivers will be provided by Bus Operators with practices and parameters shared by WDGPH. The expectation is that routes under the conventional model will follow a consistent schedule, however if circumstances require a change to an adapted model, then pick-up and drop-off times are likely to change due to anticipated changes in route planning.

Disruption in service may occur if there is higher than normal driver absenteeism due to requirements for self-isolation by drivers.

Due to the additional planning and monitoring of bus lists for potential contact tracing, “Courtesy Transportation” will be put on hold until further notice.

### Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

To support a safe return to school, parents and guardians will be asked for the following:

- Provide information on whether they are opting out of the use of transportation. ([STWDSTS opt-out form](#)) The opportunity to “opt back in” will be dependent on STWDSTS’ ability to safely assign student riders back to seats and will require significant lead time. (Note: This depends on the time of the year, school model, as well as existing route alignments and vehicle capacity and may not be available until student ridership stabilizes towards the end of October.)
- Parents/guardians of students should self-assess each day for symptoms and students should stay home if presenting with symptoms.
- Safe distancing practices should be observed at bus stops
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to ensure that student riders have face coverings as face coverings are required from Grades 4 to 12 and encouraged for students Kindergarten to Grade 3.
- Parent/guardians are encouraged to sign up for the notification system to monitor for disruption in services and to monitor STWDSTS and school board websites for

transportation updates: <https://www.findmyschool.ca/Login.aspx>

## Attendance

Student attendance will be taken for all students who arrive at school, and a record will be maintained when students are in areas of the building other than their classroom. This will assist WDGPH for contact tracing should a positive case of COVID-19 be determined. Daily attendance will also be taken for any student participating in remote learning.

## Sharing of Resources/Materials

Staff are to limit the sharing of supplies, equipment, textbooks and toys. Adequate supplies for instructional courses will be provided to each student, and where it is not practical to give each student their own resources, then the shared equipment will be cleaned or disinfected between use. Staff will review specific safety precautions required for classes that traditionally involve the sharing of resources between students (e.g. construction, auto shops, hospitality, science, arts, physical education etc.). Plans will be established for specialized protective equipment that cannot be disinfected between use (e.g. welding gloves, chaps, coat, coveralls, aprons, oven mitts, lab coats).

## Fire Drills

Practice drills will continue. Classes will move throughout the building while maintaining physical distance between students in the classroom, hallway and at all exits. Each Principal will review with staff where to go in case there is a real emergency, and the school needs to be evacuated. Locations on the school playground or field will be identified that would allow for a physical distancing between students to be maintained.

## Lockdown, Tornado and Bomb Threat Drills

These drills will not take place during COVID-19, however, students will participate in a modified drill and review of emergency procedures in case of a real life-threatening situation. The modified practice drill must adhere to physical distance requirements.

## Student Nutrition Programs

Breakfast and Snack programs will continue with the provision of physical distancing and additional cleaning and disinfecting of the area on a daily basis. Grab-and-Go format (no cooking) will be implemented and students will eat in their classroom cohort. Surfaces,

bins, and containers used in all food preparation areas will be disinfected before and after each use.

### Field Trips

In the initial stages of reopening, field trips will not be permitted.

### Intramural and Extra-Curricular Sports

In the initial stages of opening, intramural and extra-curricular sports will not be permitted.

### Clubs

School clubs that can maintain physical distancing or run virtually may continue. Clubs where physical distancing or virtual meetings are not possible will not be permitted at this time.

### Contactless Payments

To reduce the handling of cash, parents are encouraged to use SchoolCash online.

### School Equipment and Communal Spaces:

#### Doors

Where possible, and safe to do so, classroom and office doors should be left open during the day to minimize the number of students or staff who need to open the door physically. Where permitted by the Fire Code, doors will be left open to minimize contact in high traffic areas.

#### Lockers and Cubbies

Students will not have access to lockers or cubbies during COVID-19, so that all materials will stay with them in the classroom. All bags, shoes, boots, coats, etc. will remain at the student's personal space in each classroom. This will be revisited as the winter months approach. Students will not be required to have a second pair of shoes at school.

#### School Supplies and Equipment

Students may bring their own school supplies, but the sharing of school supplies will not be permitted. If a device such as a Chromebook is being shared it will be wiped down with disinfecting wipe before changing users.

## Technology

In the event that students are in a distance learning model at any point throughout the year and do not have access to a device at home, we would continue our loan program for school Chromebooks to support their learning. As part of our commitment to equity, the Board will continue to prioritize assisting families who need assistance with Internet connectivity. Technology support throughout the year is available for parents via our Technology Support website: <https://sites.google.com/ugcloud.ca/parenthelp/>.

## Fitness Rooms and Equipment

Schools can use fitness rooms and equipment for in-class instruction when physical distancing can be maintained. Schools must ensure that proper cleaning procedures are in place for all equipment that is used. Staff/students must agree to clean and disinfect all equipment before and after use and maintain physical distance from others who may be in the room simultaneously.

## Restrooms

Signage will be placed inside the restroom, reminding students of both physical distancing and proper hand hygiene. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the school day and again each evening.

## Outdoor Space

Staff will be encouraged to take advantage of outdoor space for instruction where feasible. Schools will plan for and schedule the use of outdoor space to minimize interactions with other classes where possible.

## Recess

Recess may be staggered based on the size of the outdoor space and the availability of supervisors. Principals will develop a schedule and routine that allows for students to maintain appropriate physical distancing while still having an opportunity for fresh air and physical activity. When it comes to unstructured outdoor time (e.g., recess), students will be taught about the importance of distancing but it's recognized that this is challenging to enforce.

## Playground Structures

Playground structures and sandboxes will be closed to start the school year, due to physical distancing and cleaning concerns.

### Learning Commons/Libraries

In the initial start up, school Learning Commons/Libraries will be closed to students; however, a procedure will be put in place for the handling and returning of books.

### Large Group Gatherings and Assemblies

In the initial start up, all large gatherings and assemblies will be cancelled. Schools will be encouraged to consider virtual options instead.

### Lunch and Cafeterias

In the initial stages of school start up, cafeterias will be closed. Students will be allowed to eat their lunch in their classroom with their classmates to decrease the contact that would have occurred in a cafeteria setting. Students will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands before and after eating. A “no food sharing” policy will be expected. Schools will continue to follow their current protocols with respect to students leaving school property at lunch.

During COVID-19 secondary school microwaves will not be available for student use.

Outside food from restaurants or chains may not be delivered into schools since only essential visitors are permitted in the school during this time.

## PROGRAM, STUDENT SUPPORT & COURSE CONSIDERATIONS

### Special Education

The Upper Grand District School Board is committed to supporting our students who require special education and mental health support in order to successfully engage in learning. School principals will work alongside classroom teaching staff, other school and board support staff as well as families to determine the support required to develop safe learning environments for students. For this work to continue to be successful during these changing times, a great deal of collaboration and flexibility will be required to enable a student’s support network to adjust to the changing needs of the student and the potential changes in learning environments as we work through the year to come with COVID-19 in our community. Some key considerations will be the following:

- Classroom teachers will be reviewing and adapting student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) that consider in-person classroom accommodations and modifications as well as those appropriate for distance learning. This will enable teachers to be prepared to have plans in place to support the changing learning environments of our students.

- Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) meetings will be scheduled and held remotely. School administration will discuss the platform parents would like to use to hold IPRC meetings with a choice of an online virtual phone meeting or telephone meeting.
- Transitioning into a new school year, especially after a unique school closure, can be challenging for many of our students and this includes students with special education and mental health needs. Classroom staff will work collaboratively with students, parents, school support staff, their administration and board teams when necessary to consider the supports and strategies to be best used to support the individual needs of students in their classrooms. This work will be done considering the individual profiles of students with a proactive lens to supporting students to be met with success.
- Board clinical staff will continue to support school staff by providing assessments that inform targeted student intervention.
- Individual student plans (e.g., behaviour mental health and/or safety) will be developed to support our students who show their struggle in a physical/behavioural way, placing themselves and/or others at risk. School staff, board staff and community partners will collaborate as needed to support the behavioural needs of our students in consultation with the Health and Safety Department of the board. The goal would be to assist in the development of proactive strategies that will support our students to be both successful and safe in the classroom. The Health and Safety department in collaboration with the Special Education department, will be responsible for assessing the needs of personal protective equipment for staff who work with students who will find it challenging to maintain physical distancing. Strategies for the desensitization to masks, face coverings, goggles or face shields will be reviewed.
- Many of the students that we serve with high levels of medical and/or special education needs require staff to support them physically with daily living tasks. The UGDSB will be working directly with the Wellington Dufferin Public Health Unit and/or the Board Health and Safety Department to develop safety protocols to support our student population with their physical health and well-being.
- School teams, with the support of the Student Support and Program Services Department staff, are providing summer and fall transition opportunities for students with special education and mental health needs. This work is designed to

be focused on the individual needs of our students with a clear commitment to supporting successful transitions for our students with high risks.

- A review of any required specialized PPE or classroom modifications will be conducted for each specialized class.

## Music

The safety of students and staff will require additional procedures for music classes and bands, including the disinfection of instruments and classroom layout considerations.

- Choir and band practices or performances will be postponed unless they can take place virtually.
- For music/band: Wind or brass instruments (e.g., flutes, clarinets, trumpets, saxophones) will not be used.
- Percussion or string instruments (e.g., piano, drums) can be used while ensuring physical distancing between musicians. Any of these shared instruments must be cleaned and disinfected between users.
- Schools will continue to consult with Public Health in planning instruction for instrumental music and vocal classes

Singing at school will not be allowed. Students will listen to O'Canada rather than sing.

## Specialized Courses and Programs

Some courses and programs will require greater modifications than others given the goal of maintaining physical distance from one another and the need to clean and disinfect any shared equipment. Board staff will be developing guidelines to assist staff in modifying activities such as science labs, computer and technology courses, music, physical education, hospitality courses, etc. Staff will also review experiential learning programs (e.g., CELP, Coop Education), and those programs will run provided appropriate safety measures can be put in place. Where safety cannot be addressed with in-person activities, alternative online activities will be recommended.



## SAFETY, MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

### Students with Health Conditions

Some students will not be able to take part in the in-person component of returning to school due to health conditions or other reasons. For this group of students, remote learning options will be provided.

### Racism, Discrimination and Bullying

We all have a responsibility to prevent discrimination against all students and families. Staff will actively monitor any derogatory comments based on race at all times. Racism and bullying related to COVID-19 myths and misinformation will not be tolerated and will be specifically addressed early in the fall.

### Student Well-Being

All staff will be made aware of the potential impact of trauma on student learning, behaviour and relationships. A school-based trauma-informed approach will help students feel safe to learn. Resources for a school-based approach to trauma will be shared prior to the beginning of school for staff to implement during the return to school.

UGDSB has provided social emotional learning tools and training for many years and these skills and resources will continue to be utilized by staff to support student well-being. As a part of the board wide monthly wellness themes, schools can engage in specific activities and learnings that parallel the work across the board and with parents/families. These themes are based on key wellness skills and tools. Everyday mental health is a key element of return to school and teachers will be provided with a variety of evidence based tools and activities that can be implemented at the beginning of each class/day to further enhance student well-being. This will also increase staff awareness of each student's social emotional needs and they can then facilitate the appropriate pathway of care (be it a more individualized approach to their learning; child and youth counsellor support; more intense mental health support and/or community connections. Focusing on everyday mental health is a key aspect of ensuring our students are re-entering their learning from a trauma informed perspective. This means a focus on relationships and safety - the optimal conditions for learning and student overall school success.

These supports and daily wellness focused tasks will be embedded into all grades in both virtual and in-person formats (as possible and necessary).

## Parent Well-Being

Parent webinars and learning/support opportunities are being developed to provide information, resources and strategies for parents. There will be a wide variety of modalities available and parents are being consulted around topics of need/interest. Parents will also receive monthly wellness theme information with tools and activities they can use to support the skill at home if they choose.

## School and System Level Mental Health Supports - Pathways to Care

While all classrooms will embed well-being into their daily activities, there will be some students who require a higher level of support and some who require more direct intervention and clinical support. Supports at all these levels will continue to be available to students and families whether virtually or in person. If parents have concerns about their child/ren they will be given information on how to connect to the appropriate staff so that they can access the appropriate level of support and/or intervention. There will also be ongoing and continued collaboration with community mental health partners to ensure smooth access and clear pathways to community care when needed. Educational staff will receive learning activities that foster social emotional learning and that will assist all students with coping skills. These activities will be provided to students in both in-person and distance learning settings early in the fall when students return to school.

## Initial Return

While wellness will be a focus in classrooms beyond the first weeks of school, it is also our goal to provide targeted and enhanced activities, supported by our mental health clinicians and counsellors, that provide safe opportunities for students to acknowledge and recognize their own feelings and experiences that have been present in their lives during the initial stage of isolation and that they are arriving at school with. Explicit teaching and dedicated time will be given to these activities and conversations through both in person and distance learning activities. This initial focus will also allow for staff to identify students who may need more targeted support and counselling. Mental health staff will continue to be available in both in person and virtual formats. As mentioned above, all staff will be made aware of the potential impact of trauma on student learning, behaviour and relationships. This school based, trauma informed approach with a focus on relationships

and a safe environment will ensure the best possible outcome for our student's initial return.

## HYGIENE AND CLEANING

### Cleaning Products

The board will continue to use asthma-safe, hospital-grade, green-based cleaning products where available. Scent-free products continue to be recommended for cleaning. Board caretakers are responsible for: cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. Cleaning involves removing dirt, while sanitizing reduces germs from surfaces up to 99.9%; and disinfectants destroy bacteria and prevent them from spreading. Soap and paper towels will be refilled as needed on a regular basis.

### Touch Point Cleaning

Cleaning will take place in all high contact areas including desks, tables, railings, door handles and other surfaces throughout the school. Where a school is open to the students all day, the cleaning will take place at the end of each day with high touchpoint surfaces cleaned throughout the day. Where a school is open based on shifts such as alternating days, touch point cleaning will take place throughout the day and between the rotation of student cohorts. In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands will be cleaned and disinfected at minimum twice per day and when visibly dirty.

The caretaker team at each school will focus on high touch surfaces, including door handles, railings, water fountains, faucets, and areas such as Restrooms. Special attention will also be focused on classrooms and the isolation room when anyone is sent home for exhibiting any signs of illness.

As students and staff return to school, cleaning routines will be based on current advice from WDGPH and directions from the Ministry of Education in consultation with the Medical Officer of Ontario.

### Hand Cleaning

Classrooms that have a water supply will be provided with hand soap and paper towels. Hand sanitizer placement will be prioritized in portables, school entrances and in classrooms without a water supply. Students will also be provided with opportunities for hand washing in regular student restrooms.

## **Water Fountains**

Water fountains are being used for water-bottle filling only, and will be cleaned on a regular basis. Drinking directly from fountains is not permitted.

## **Garbage**

Classroom garbage will be collected and disposed of daily. All garbage pails/bins are lined with plastic bags.

## **Recycling**

Students will be asked to bring home all containers and recycle in their own home rather than at school. Schools can continue to recycle items such as paper and cardboard boxes from school based activities.