

Return to School

September 2020

The Return to School Plan¹ presents the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's provincial expectations and standards for the safe operation of public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The objectives of the plan are to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 while also providing for quality education and student services.

The department, school districts and schools will work collaboratively to support students and teachers. Continued focus will be placed on ensuring consistent and transparent communication, providing opportunities for professional learning and encouraging innovation in the classroom.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND GROUP SIZE

1. Kindergarten to Grade 2

- a. In school full-time with a teacher;
- b. Reduced group sizes, as close to 15 wherever possible; and
- c. Children within groups may interact but must distance from other groups.

2. Grades 3 to 5

- a. In school full-time with a teacher;
- b. Reduced group sizes, wherever possible; and
- c. Children within groups may interact but must distance from other groups.

3. Grades 6 to 8

- a. In school full-time with a teacher;
- b. Regular class size; and
- c. Children within groups may interact but must distance from other groups.

4. Grades 9 to 12

- a. Attend school on a rotational basis (minimum every other day);
- b. Reduced number of students per class to respect physical distancing; and
- c. Physical distancing of students and school personnel of one metre within the classroom. Students will not be grouped due to schedules and course options.

When students in Grades 9 to 12 are not physically in school, they will be engaged in blended learning methods, using a variety of instructional means including online learning, guided projects and experiential learning.



Physical distancing

While [physical distancing of one metre](#) will be required while in the Grades 9 to 12 classroom, a distance of two metres will be encouraged in common areas at all grade levels. This applies to school personnel and students when they are outside their classroom.

School personnel will ensure scheduling aims to reduce congestion and to ensure the student groupings are respected during recess, lunch and other movement within the school.

¹ This document will be adjusted as necessary to reflect the latest public health information. Please refer to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's website for the most recent document. These directives may also change depending on the status of the State of Emergency and Mandatory Order.

EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR SEPTEMBER 2020

Prescribed learning objectives will be mandatory for the 2020-21 school year. A targeted curriculum focusing on students achieving core outcomes will be delivered. There will be reduced in-class contact between school personnel and students for Grade 9 to 12 students. Time spent physically in class may vary amongst grades and schools.

Schools and school districts will organize schools, grades and classes to deliver the curriculum with respect to grouping and physical distancing. Additional health and safety directives will be made available to school district and school personnel as soon as possible.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- All available spaces conducive to learning will be utilized to support learning. School districts are not precluded from exploring outdoor or community spaces to accommodate learning.
- Schools will reconfigure their classes in a way to promote physical distancing within classrooms.
- Schools will reconfigure the common areas to ensure physical distancing between groupings of students.
- Schools may look at combining classes and using mixed-grade groupings.

GRADES 9 TO 12

- Students will be learning in a blended educational model and attending school in person on a rotational basis at a minimum of every second day. When not in school, students will continue to learn remotely.
- Teachers will be assigned students reflecting a regular class size.
- Teachers will be responsible for their entire class, whether they are physically present or engaged in blended learning activities.
- Teachers are responsible to establish learning outcomes for students to accomplish while not in the classroom (e.g., experiential, project-based or online learning).
- Teachers will be required to ensure students at home have learning materials and relevant resources or are receiving direct teaching online.
- Depending on availability, students may be encouraged to take online courses, experiential learning opportunities and other methods of learning (co-op and other types) to satisfy learning outcomes. Flexible course options must be available to students.
- Technology will be used to support learning. The department is exploring options to facilitate distance learning when students are not physically at school.
- Schools are encouraged to look at their daily and weekly schedules to see if these could be modified to limit the interaction between students and to respect health and safety directives.

SAFEGUARDS FOR VULNERABLE STAFF AND STUDENTS

School personnel and students within a vulnerable population are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine if they should attend school. Students who cannot attend school due to a medical condition will have a learning plan established by their assigned teacher with educational support.



Operational Plan

Each public school, in consultation with the School District Occupational Health and Safety coordinators, will develop a COVID-19 Operational Plan, prior to opening, outlining how the school will manage daily operations while respecting the additional standards. The operational plan, approved by the school district, will detail procedures on how the groupings of students will function and move in the school (especially in areas of congestion and common areas such as lockers, washrooms, change rooms, etc.) and plan for the drop off/pick up of students. It will also contain information on the school hours of operation and school transition times as well as the implementation of the health and safety protocols.