

March 19, 2021

High School Students and Families,

When the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development first announced the Return to School plan last spring, we knew that this would be a school year like no other. Over the past year, you have been flexible and patient as we've updated this plan.

Today, changes were announced to the Return to School plan that will see all high school students return to full-time in-person learning beginning April 12, 2021. These changes are based on extensive discussions with Public Health over the past few months and on the success we've had in managing confirmed cases, and keeping schools healthy this year. None of this could have been accomplished without your cooperation understanding.

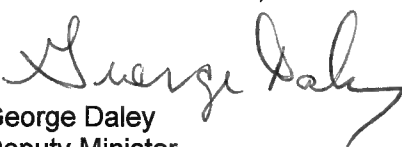
That said, even with a full return, school will still look different. Here's what you can expect:

- Students and staff will be required to wear a clean face mask through-out the day, unless eating or engaged in physical activity;
- Additional spaces will be made available through the school for lunch and breaks;
- On the bus and in the classroom, mandatory seating plans will be implemented; and
- Should a positive case of COVID-19 be confirmed in a high school, it will close for three days to allow for contact tracing, cleaning and a testing and vaccination program will be rolled-out for students 16 years of age and up.

In addition, today it was announced that a program will be put in place to ensure high school staff are prioritized for a COVID-19 vaccination over the coming weeks. I would like to take this opportunity to remind all students and their families that if they have a complex medical condition that they qualify for priority vaccination as well.

By adding these layers of protection to the previous Return to School plan, we are confident that we can welcome all students back for a safe and healthy end to the school year. We have always said our plan is a living document that changes to reflect on new information and best practices, as advised by Public Health. We will continue to update you as more information becomes available and we thank you for your cooperation this year.

Best wishes for a safe, successful and fun school year.



George Daley
Deputy Minister

