

Message to Families – Return to School

September 4, 2020

Subject Line: Getting Ready for the Start of School

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are excited to welcome students and staff back to Sinclair Secondary next week. We know that the start of this school year will be different for students and families and we want to help make the transition to this new environment as smooth as possible. In this message, we are sending you some additional information to help you get ready for the first day of school.

Welcome Back Video

The DDSB has created a [welcome back video](#) that explains key information for families to help you visualize how this school year will be different. We hope you enjoy it and you can watch the video on YouTube by clicking the image below or by [clicking here](#).



Child Assessment Checklist for COVID-19

Before sending your child(ren) to school or child care, every parent/guardian is required to go through the following checklist of NEW, WORSENING, or UNEXPLAINED symptoms of COVID-19. This must be done everyday. If your child(ren) exhibit any of the symptoms on the list, you are advised to contact your health care provider and will not be allowed to come to school.

We suggest that you post the [this poster](#) in a convenient place in your home. You can also use the Ministry of Health's online self-assessment tool for this purpose every day by visiting: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>

Wearing a Mask

In accordance with the guidance of the Ministry of Education, wearing non-medical or cloth masks is mandatory for students in Grade 4 to 12. For students in Kindergarten to Grade 3, the DDSB is strongly encouraging the use of masks. If everyone wears a mask, it will help keep your child(ren) and everyone

in the school safe. We've compiled a few suggestions and links for parents and guardians to help make wearing masks more comfortable on school buses and during the school day with their children. You can view this document by [clicking here](#).

We have also compiled some resources with links at the bottom of this [virtual information poster](#).

COVID-19 Protocols

The DDSB will be following the Ministry of Education's [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#) should a case of COVID-19 be suspected or confirmed in a student or staff member. We will also be following any additional directions of the Durham Region Health Department, who has the responsibility to manage confirmed cases of COVID-19, including what happens if there is an outbreak.

Our school and the DDSB is committed to informing you as parents/guardians of child(ren) in our school, along with school staff if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school. We will be doing this in a message to families and to staff. We will also have a COVID-19 Advisory page on both the school website and DDSB website that will include information on any confirmed COVID-19 cases in schools, along with information on closures of classes, cohorts or schools. While we hope that we will never have to update this page and/or send a letter home, we are committed to being transparent with families.

Return to School Guide

The DDSB has developed a [Return to School Guide](#) that includes information on what schools will be doing to prioritize the health and safety of students and staff for the 2020/2021 school year. This includes enhanced cleaning and disinfection protocols, information on masks, hand washing and sanitizing, self-assessments, physical distancing strategies and other measures.

Student Cohorts and Pick Up/Drop Off

Please remember that Cohort B will be attending in-person classes in the morning on Tuesday, September 8 and Cohort A will be attending in-person classes in the morning on Wednesday, Sept 9.

Students in Cohort A will be attending school in-person on Monday and Wednesday.

Students in Cohort B will be attending school in-person on Tuesday and Thursday.

Cohorts will also be attending school on alternating Fridays with a specific schedule to follow.

School parking lots and drop off areas will be closed off with pylons to all non-bus traffic during the arrival and departure of buses. Students who are walking or being dropped off are encouraged to arrive at the entry bell, **9:45 a.m.** Students will be directed to enter via one of the following entrances:

Front entrance near the daycare, back entrance off the courtyard to the cafeteria, or the main entrance which faces west (the plaza).

Students must wear a mask when entering the building. Please stay to the right in the halls and stairwells to allow distance between people going the opposite direction.

Currently, all individuals who are not DDSB staff wishing to access a building or school site must call the school or central office directly to schedule an appointment before appearing on site. Unscheduled visitors and family members of child(ren) may not be able to enter DDSB schools or buildings without prior arrangements being made. Wherever possible, telephone meetings with parents/guardians, vendors and outside agencies will be held.

Students attending on their scheduled day will be allowed to enter the school **no earlier than 9:45am**. Classes begin at 10a.m. Students will be dismissed at 12:30pm and will leave the building and go directly home. Afternoon online classes begin at 1:30pm.

Mental Health and Well-Being

Mental health, well-being, equity and student learning is important to our school and there has never been a time when uniting these priorities has been more essential. School and classroom environments have an important impact on a student's sense of belonging and overall mental health. Educators will be given resources that support the implementation of everyday strategies that foster strong positive and inclusive classroom practises that in turn lead to a mentally healthy classroom. They will first focus on [The First 20 Days \(and Beyond\) of Creating Connection and Well-Being](#) with students. Be sure to look out for some of these supports for families that will be shared on DDSB's website and through social media.

Staying Safe

All of us have a responsibility to stay safe and to follow the guidance of public health officials to ensure that your child(ren) can be in an environment that supports their learning. We have created a [physical distancing poster](#) to help you speak with your child(ren) about this. We hope that you have found the information in this message helpful and encourage you to visit our school website, the main [DDSB website](#), our social media channels and the [Durham Region Health Department](#) to stay up to date.

On behalf of our entire school team, we are looking forward to welcoming you back next week and hope that you have a wonderful weekend. Don't forget to stay safe!

Warm regards,

Vicky Pidgeon
Sinclair Secondary Principal
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