



Bluewater District School Board

Lori Wilder, *Director of Education*

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August 30, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In preparation for the start of a new school year, I am reaching out to welcome all our students and families, and share an update on what to expect with our return on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

As you may be aware, the provincial government recently announced that the 2021 – 2022 school year will begin with a return to in-person learning for elementary and secondary students across Ontario. In Bluewater District School Board, we are extremely excited to be able to physically return to school.

We firmly believe that learning face-to-face at school among peers and caring staff is very important to students' mental health and well-being, as well as their social and emotional development. While most students will be returning in-person, we will also continue to provide remote learning for families who have chosen this option for their children.

To ensure a safe and smooth transition back to the classroom, we will once again be following several COVID-19 health and safety protocols upon returning. These measures, which are guided by Grey Bruce Public Health and the Ministry of Education, include but are not limited to:

- Mandatory masking indoors at school and on school buses for Grades 1 to 12 students and all staff (kindergarten students are encouraged but not required to wear masks);
- Daily screening prior to coming to school using the [provincial COVID-19 screening tool](#);
 - During the **first two weeks of school (September 7 to 17, 2021)**, all students and staff will have to confirm daily that they have completed their self-screening. Grades 4 to 12 students will do this verbally with their teacher. If your child is in kindergarten to Grade 3, more information will be coming about how confirmation will be given.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols;
- Social distancing;
- Hand hygiene routines; and
- New this year, the installation of portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to improve ventilation in all kindergarten classrooms.

For a full breakdown of our health and safety protocols, details on programming, and ongoing updates as the pandemic situation evolves, please view our three-part Q and A, [School Operations, Program and Instruction](#), and [Remote Learning](#), which can be found on our [Return to School web page](#). You are also encouraged to view the province's return to school document, [COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\)](#).

Thank you for your continued cooperation and patience as we plan for a successful school start-up. We look forward to seeing our students and staff face-to-face once again. As always, please feel free to reach out to your child(ren)'s school(s) with any questions you have.

Sincerely,

Lori Wilder
Director of Education