



School Reopening Plan 2020-2021

A Guide for the Safe Return to our Catholic Schools During COVID-19

Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board

August 2020

Rooted in Faith, Alive in Spirit

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NPSC Mission & Vision

As we prepare to safely return to our Catholic schools and serve our students and families using our faith-based and inclusive approach, we are reminded of our important call to serve our students as a Catholic Faith learning community.

Our Mission

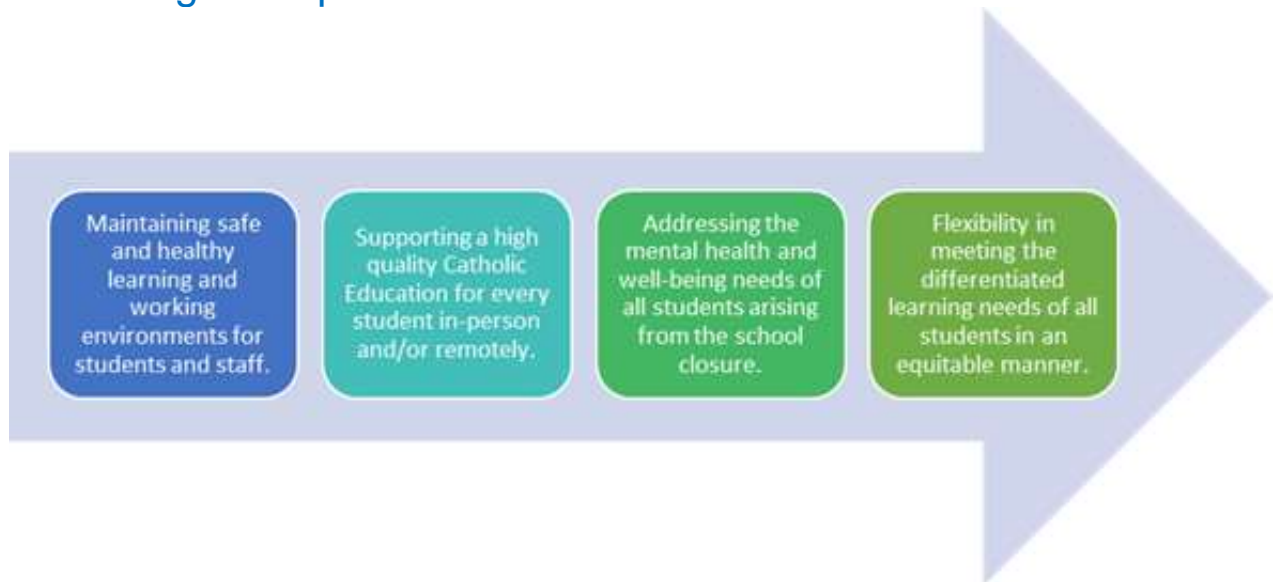
As a faith community, we provide learning opportunities that inspire, nurture and celebrate each learner's journey to:

- Reach their full potential;
- Be a contributing member of society;
- Live the richness of their faith;
- Embrace lifelong learning.

Our Vision

Rooted in Faith, Alive in Spirit

Our Guiding Principles for our Return to School



Introduction

The health, safety and well-being of our students and staff is a top priority as the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board plans to reopen schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

On July 30, 2020, the Ministry announced that this September, all schools in the province will open for conventional in-person delivery of teaching and instruction, five days a week. This applies to all Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. This preferred model of conventional delivery will ensure school every weekday for all students, with class sizes that reflect current regulations, regular social interaction and with enhanced hygiene protocols in place.

We are excited to welcome our students and staff back to school and look forward to planning the full return of our students. We are mindful of how important our relationships are to each individual student's overall success, mental health and well-being and the impact the school closure period has had on many of our students and families. Please be assured that every measure is being taken to prepare our school facilities, staff and students for a smooth and warm welcome back to our Catholic schools.

Parents will continue to have the option for their children to receive instruction remotely with synchronous learning instruction, which respects the fundamental role of parents in making the final determination whether they feel safe with their children returning to school.

In planning for the resumption of instruction in September, it is critical to balance the risk of direct infection and transmission of COVID-19 in children with the impact of school closures on their physical and mental health. Current evidence and experience support the concept that children can return to school in a carefully structured manner that protects children's health and minimizes risks from a public health perspective.

This document provides a high-level framework for how the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board plans to reopen schools to students and staff in a safe manner. It is based on the Ministry's guidance documents [Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year](#), [Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#), [COVID-19 Reopening Schools](#), and shaped by the guidance document [COVID-19 Guidance For School Opening Sick Kids](#) published by Sick Kids Hospital. It is aligned to the ongoing guidance provided by our North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit. This guide has also been informed by the Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic District School Board's Emergency Planning Committee, with representation from health and safety, facilities, communications, curriculum and program, special education, business and finance, human resources and information technology departments, and the Joint Health & Safety Committees. In addition, further consultation with our union and federation partners, students, staff, and parents and guardians will be ongoing as our reopening plans further develop.

The current public health circumstances related to COVID-19 requires Ontario school boards to prepare for a range of delivery circumstances for the 2020-2021 school year.

Considering the continuing uncertainty about future public health risks, this plan outlines guidance on the planning of the following models, in order to be prepared to move fluidly throughout the school year as may be needed according to public health advisement:

- Model 1: normal school day routine with enhanced public health protocols (confirmed for September 2020).
- Model 2: adapted school day routine based on smaller class sizes, cohorting and alternative day model.
- Model 3: at-home learning with ongoing enhanced remote delivery.

It is important to note that the guidance outlined in this document is based on the most recent advice from the Ministry of Education and Public Health officials. As this plan is intended to be a flexible plan that may require revisions, it is subject to change and will be updated as required based on the guidance provided by the Ministry of Education and by provincial and local Public Health officials.

What We Know About COVID-19

Human coronaviruses cause infections of the nose, throat and lungs. They are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets generated when you cough, sneeze, or talk (including singing and yelling)
- Close, personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands
- Touching a contaminated surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose or eyes before washing your hands

How long does the virus survive on surfaces?

It is not certain how long the virus that causes COVID-19 survives on surfaces, but it seems to behave like other coronaviruses. Studies suggest that coronaviruses (including preliminary information on the COVID-19 virus) may persist on surfaces for a few hours or up to several days. This may vary under different conditions (e.g. type of surface, temperature or humidity of the environment).

If you think a surface may be infected, clean the area first with a rag if visibly soiled, then use disinfectant approved by [Health Canada's website](#) to kill the virus and protect yourself and others. Review the Safety Data Sheet and technical data sheet of the disinfectant to confirm contact time for disinfecting. Clean your hands by washing them with soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, or nose.

Symptoms of COVID-19

The most common symptoms include:

- fever (feeling hot to the touch, a temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher)
- chills
- cough that's new or worsening (continuous, more than usual)
- barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing (croup)
- shortness of breath (out of breath, unable to breathe deeply)
- sore throat
- difficulty swallowing
- runny, stuffy or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- lost sense of taste or smell
- pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- headache that's unusual or long lasting
- digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
- muscle aches

- extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- falling down often
- for young children and infants: sluggishness or lack of appetite

Complications from COVID-19 can include serious conditions like pneumonia or kidney failure and, in some cases, death.

Reducing the Spread

Protect your health and help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community by using these simple, easy and routine practices:

- Practice physical distancing: stay 2-metres from those who are outside of your [social circle](#) (up to 10 people)
- [Wash your hands](#) often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Sneeze [and cough into your sleeve](#)
- If you use a tissue, discard it immediately and wash your hands immediately afterwards
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Wear a [face covering](#) when physical distancing is not possible or may be hard
- Clean high touch surfaces frequently
- Avoid contact with people who are sick or who have symptoms of COVID-19
- Stay home if you are sick or have [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If you have symptoms, immediately isolate yourself, complete [the self-assessment tool](#), follow the instructions provided by the self-assessment tool, and arrange to be tested.
- The symptoms of COVID-19 can resemble those of a cold or flu, and it is recommended that any person who is experiencing symptoms related to cold, flu or COVID-19 call Telehealth at 1-866-797-000 or your primary healthcare provider for additional advice and guidance.

Models for Reopening Schools in September 2020

It is important to note that regardless of the model of reopening our schools, the focus must be on providing our students with a rich learning experience in Catholic Education that serves to meet their individualized and diverse needs in a safe, flexible and equitable manner.

As you are aware, on July 30, 2020, the Minister of Education announced that schools will reopen in September for students to attend class full time, five days a week. School boards across Ontario have also prepared to accommodate families who choose not to send their child to school opting instead to receive instruction from home, in an online format facilitated by their teacher. NPSC will accommodate both options.

We recognize the decision parents make regarding their child's education this fall is difficult. NPSC would like to reassure parents that our staff have been working tirelessly to ensure your child will be engaging in rich, Catholic education throughout this school year for both online and in-person learning models.

Model 1: Conventional with Enhanced Hygiene Measures

This September 2020, students are welcome to attend school every day of the week, in their regular classroom cohorts. Cohorting refers to the practice of keeping students together with the same classroom grouping throughout their school day, with limited exposure to or interactions with other classes. This practice limits the number of other students that a single student is in contact with. Of equal importance, this practice will also facilitate contact tracing, should that be necessary.

In the conventional model for September, students will remain in their class cohort with their classroom teacher(s) for the school day and during recess and lunch breaks.

Elementary students will be cohorted with their classmates and their homeroom teacher, with limited contact to other subject teachers for classes such as French-as-a-second language/Core English, the arts and physical education. Secondary students will also be cohorted with limited contact to multiple subject teachers and other students – please see below section “*Returning to School – School Operations: Secondary*” for further details of secondary scheduling.

The specific enhanced hygiene measures outlined throughout this document is a requirement in the conventional model, adhering to current public health measures such as physical distancing and hand hygiene to limit the spread of COVID-19.

This model will closely resemble a regular school day; however, students, parents and staff can expect that there may be some restrictions to limit student movement from class to class where possible, and daily schedules may look different from the previous year. There may also be some changes to the teacher rotation classes to minimize the number of cohort contacts.

Model 2: Adapted School Day Routine

While the return to school in September will be conventional, the following section outlines a proposed model for an adapted school day routine *in the event school boards are directed to change fluidly from the conventional model due to the changing circumstance of COVID-19*. The adapted school day model would require each class of students to be grouped into cohorts of approximately 15 per class (Cohort A/B).

In this model, students at both elementary and secondary will attend school according to an established alternate day cycle as established in collaboration with local school boards and to support shared transportation. For example, the model for our local school board is outlined in the chart below and reflects an alternating day schedule, over a 10-day cycle where students attend three days one week and two days the next week with their assigned cohort.

Student learning and instruction would continue to be a priority focus, as is transitioning students back to the most regular routine as possible, operating within all required public health measures.

Proposed Adapted School Day Model K-12

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B

The following key considerations inform decision making about the proposed adapted school day model:

Cohorts

- Family/sibling groupings
- Limiting the number of student contacts per day and the size of student groupings
- Assignment of staff and limiting the number of teachers within a classroom and coming into a contact with a student cohort
- Transportation

Childcare

- Childcare operators may require additional shared spaces
- Before/after programs may need designated priority for daily cleaning

Model 3: At Home Learning with On-Going Enhanced Remote Delivery

In the case that the Minister of Education or Public Health officials provides an order to close schools as was the case in March 2020, at home learning with on-going enhanced remote delivery would be provided virtually. Student learning technology would be deployed as per our established procedure from Spring 2020 and synchronous learning would be the main learning delivery model. Professional learning support will be provided continuously to prepare for this scenario. An instructional schedule would be provided divisionally K-12, using Ministry guidance as well as our board's NPSC Learn @ Home Plan.

PPM 164: Requirements for Remote Learning

In all three models presented above, all families have the option to continue student learning at home, in an online format this September. On August 13, 2020, the Ministry of Education released PPM 164 Requirements for Remote Learning <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/164.html>.

This policy and program memorandum outlines the requirements that will be followed in order to provide remote and synchronous learning. Parents who choose to have learning for their child facilitated virtually for the 2020-2021 school year, will be contacted by their school principal to confirm the next steps for their child's learning. It is important to note that a team approach will be taken to facilitate remote learning and therefore their assigned teacher may differ from the teacher in their registered school.

In an effort to maintain the health and safety requirements outlined by the Ministry of Education, should a parent who initially chooses online learning wish to change to face-to-face learning for their child, this change may be delayed until key transition times in the year, which will be determined at a later date.

Guidance for NPSC Schools (Elementary and Secondary)

Our Catholic schools are required to take appropriate precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 inclusive of enhanced hygiene protocols. Each school's Joint Health and Safety representative will be included in the development and implementation of practices at the school level that align with the required practices and guiding principles outlined in this document. The following information reflects current Public Health practices and measures and the resulting required procedures and guiding principles that schools are expected to follow. Outlined below are considerations for school principals/vice-principals, staff, educational programming, and considerations for communication with parents.

Enhanced Public Health and Hygiene Protocols

The following section includes information on a number of enhanced public health and hygiene protocols developed, and related practices and guiding principles.

Self-Screening and Self-Isolation Requirements

- Staff members, parents, and children/students must not enter the school if they have [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- All staff and students must self-screen every day before attending school using the [Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#).
- A checklist will be provided to parents to perform daily screening of their children before arriving at school.
- Self-assessment tools will be made available to staff to ensure awareness of possible symptoms of COVID-19.
- Signs will be posted at entrances to the school to remind students, staff, parents/caregivers, and essential visitors of screening requirements.
- If a student or staff member is experiencing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#), they must stay home from school and should seek testing and appropriate medical attention.
- If a student has a pre-existing medical condition, parents are advised to talk to the family's primary healthcare provider before returning to school.
- Staff and students who have returned from international travel cannot attend school until the end of the self-quarantine period (14 days).

Protocol for Reporting Suspected or Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

- Parents and students must report any symptoms of COVID to their teacher and/or principal.
- If a staff or student has symptoms included on Ontario's self-assessment tool, they must immediately put on a medical grade mask, isolate and go home.
- Each school will designate an isolation room/area for the temporary placement of any student that becomes ill during the day. The supervising staff will keep a 2-metre distance from the ill child and both staff and child will wear a mask. Staff will wear other appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as necessary. The parent or guardian of the child who developed symptoms will be asked to come to pick up their child as soon as possible as well as any other children living at the same address. Similarly, staff members

presenting symptoms will be required to leave the school, along with any other staff or students living at the same address.

- Families with children presenting symptoms or staff who are presenting symptoms will be asked to have their child tested for COVID-19 or to self-isolate for 14 days. Information about how to access a testing centre is available on the [North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit website](#).
- If a student develops symptoms that could be caused by either COVID-19 or by a known pre-existing condition (e.g. allergies), the student should be tested for COVID-19 to confirm that it is not the source of their symptoms or self-isolate for 14 days before entering or returning to school.
- Should the results from a self-assessment indicate the need for testing, call your nearest [testing centre](#) to arrange for testing for COVID-19.
- Individuals must self-isolate at home until the results are received. Individuals can check their results on the [COVID-19 results website](#).
- If a person in the school community (staff or student) tests positive for COVID-19, they will be contacted by the health unit about their test result and given instructions. They will be isolated from school for a minimum of 14 days beginning from their symptom start date or test date, depending if they are symptomatic or asymptomatic.
- If a student or staff tests positive for COVID-19 at a testing centre, they are unable to return to school until verbal clearance has been provided by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit.
- Following the initial positive test of COVID-19, students and/or staff can return to school once they receive verbal clearance from the health unit.
- Schools will report suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the local health unit.

Recordkeeping

In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, contact tracing, facilitated by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit, is a critical process used to identify, educate and monitor individuals who have had close contact with someone who is infected with a virus. In order to support this process if required, schools will maintain current records, including the following:

- classes
- seating charts
- bus cohorts
- daily visitors who are approved to enter the school
- use of washrooms

Schools will maintain these records and the records will be readily available to public health for contact tracing purposes.

Group Gatherings

- For elementary and secondary, the confirmed conventional model for September 2020 includes the classroom as a cohort.
- In the event school board are directed to change to an adapted school-day model due to the changing circumstance of COVID-19, the maximum class size would be approximately 15 students plus instructional staff.
- Group gatherings indoors shall not exceed 50 people, as currently directed by public health.
- Outdoor gatherings shall not exceed 100 people, as currently directed by public health.
- Instructional spaces that are smaller than an average classroom will contain less students.

Physical Distancing

- Within schools, all students and staff maintain a 1-2 metre distance from each other at all times, as possible.
- Classes will remain in their classroom cohorts and maintain physical distance from other class cohorts.
- Contact within the school between class cohorts and staff will be minimized.
- Classrooms will be arranged to allow the most space as possible between students and to encourage physical distancing of 1-2 metres. It is important to note that in schools, physical distancing does not need to be maintained within each classroom cohort at all times, however individual classroom cohorts need to remain physically distanced from one another.
- Staff who are teaching or supporting more than one cohort will maintain a physical distance from the cohorts and will be required to wear a mask.
- Staff within schools will physically distance from each other.
- Hallway movement protocols have been developed to ensure students remain a safe distance apart while moving throughout the building.
- Students will enter and exit the building via designated entry and exit doors at the school.
- The daily timetable for students at elementary and secondary is projected to remain the same with some variations to instructional, recess and lunch blocks throughout the day. Parents will receive a communication from their child's specific school.
- Transportation will be provided to students who are eligible.
- If an adapted school day model will need to be implemented, the number of staff in contact with each cohort group will be limited.

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear masks indoors on school property. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students. Reasonable exceptions on the requirement to wear masks will apply.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged, but not required, to wear masks in indoor spaces.

- Blocks throughout the day, such as nutritional breaks, lunch and outdoor recess, will be used as opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks within their cohorts.
- Mask breaks for students will be incorporated throughout the day as long as 2-metre physical distancing is possible.
- Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shield) will be provided for all teachers and other school board staff.
- All school-based staff will be required to wear masks, with reasonable exceptions for medical conditions.
- School-based staff who are regularly in close contact with students will be provided with all appropriate PPE, based on a risk assessment by employee group.
- Additional PPE will be available within the school for students who exhibit signs of illness, such as coughing, including disposable masks, disposable gloves and face shields for an additional level of protection.
- The province of Ontario will continue to procure personal protective equipment for boards and guide requirements which will be communicated with our staff.
- If a staff member works with more than one class group, the staff member will wear a mask to limit cross-contamination.
- School staff that work in close proximity to students who have specialized needs and/or are medically fragile will have additional PPE that meet their needs (i.e. gloves, face shields, gowns).

Preventing the Spread of COVID

Health and Safety Hygiene Protocols for all Schools

- A positive culture of good hand hygiene will be modelled and promoted by staff and with all students in our schools.
- Student processes, routines and procedures for hand hygiene (i.e. upon entry, following recess, washroom breaks, before and after lunch) will be reviewed at each grade level.
- Staff and students will be provided with targeted, age-appropriate education in proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette guided by the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit.
- Age appropriate health unit signage will be posted in each classroom, outside of washrooms, at office reception areas and at hand sanitizing and handwashing stations.

Touch Point Cleaning

- Cleaning will take place in all high contact areas including desks, tables, railings, door handles and other surfaces throughout the school's high touch surfaces or equipment (e.g. pencil sharpeners, water fountain knobs and push buttons, doorknobs, faucet handles, toys, electronic devices, school bus handrails and seats).
- High touch surfaces in each school have been identified and rigorous cleaning protocols have been established. Cleaning of high contact areas will be a minimum of twice daily.
- The frequency of [environmental cleaning](#) has also been increased in washrooms, and a regular schedule to clean regularly and be disinfected is in place.

Hand Sanitizer

- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant will be provided to each school.
- Hand sanitizing stations will be placed at entry/exit points of the school, classrooms and high traffic areas, and will be refilled regularly.
- Hand sanitizer will be placed in all classrooms that do not have an available sink (water/soap) for hygiene purposes.

Hygiene Routines and Sharing of Materials

- Students and staff are required to perform hand hygiene when entering and exiting the school as well as before entering the classroom.
- Students will fill water bottles rather than drinking directly from the mouthpiece of a fountain.
- The number of common surfaces that need to be touched will be reduced (e.g. prop doors open, no-touch waste containers).
- Reduced or restricted access to non-essential shared equipment will be identified and post-play hand hygiene practices will be implemented.
- Sharing communal equipment/supplies will be discouraged, however, if equipment must be used by more than one student, disinfectant will be made available and equipment will be cleaned (e.g. toys, tablets, electronic devices, books, manipulatives, mats).
- Student supplies will be provided to minimize sharing (e.g. art supplies, pencils).
- Students belongings will be separated from others (e.g. in cubbies or separated areas) as best as possible within a class cohort.
- We ask parents to limit items to be carried between the child/youth setting and home and a list will be provided of recommended student materials. Sharing of materials between students will not be permitted.

Cleaning Products

- Our schools will use products that provide both the cleaning and disinfection action.
- Schools will only use cleaning and disinfectant products that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and will be used according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Staff Training

On September 1, 2020, staff will be provided with a full day of training on the health and safety protocols inclusive of all enhanced hygiene measures and required adaptations.

School Main Office and Reception Areas

Portable Plexiglass will be placed in high traffic areas where distancing may be problematic, such as at the front reception area of the main office and guidance reception areas. Where a distance of 2-metres can be maintained, plexiglass is not needed.

Isolation Room / Area

Each school will designate an isolation room/area. This room/area will be used for the temporary placement of any student that presents with COVID symptoms and becomes ill during the day. An isolation kit containing staff/student PPE for illnesses will be provided to each school containing: nitrile, vinyl, or synthetic gloves; face mask for staff member, face shield or safety goggles; box of tissues; hand sanitizer; disposable gowns/lab coat; and board approved disinfectant.

Returning to School: School Operations

Student Attendance

Student attendance will be taken for all students that arrive at school, and a record will be maintained when students are in areas other than their classroom. This will assist the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit to ensure accurate contact tracing should a positive case of COVID-19 be determined. Online attendance will be recorded separately from in-person attendance. Students will not be penalized academically should they choose not to attend in-person sessions. Student arrival and departure should be monitored to ensure physical distancing is maintained.

Conventional School Daily Timetables

All NPSC schools will adopt timetabling methods that emphasize cohorting of students as much as possible, in order to limit the number of direct and indirect student-to-student contacts.

Elementary

- Elementary school students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 will attend school five days per week, with 300 minutes of instruction per day, remaining in one cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch.
- Cohorted classes will stay together and with one teacher, where possible.
- Students may see changes in the timing of recesses, lunches, and bathroom breaks as they are staggered to support cohorting.
- Specialized teachers and itinerant teachers like French, music and preparation time teachers, will still be able to go into classrooms to provide the full breadth of programming for students. However, schools have endeavoured to limit the number of student contacts per day, while ensuring the rich provision of programming.
- Students will also be able to leave their classrooms to receive additional supports, but direct and indirect contacts in schools for students should be limited to approximately 50.
- Students will remain in their designated classroom cohort with their classroom teacher throughout the day. Student class cohorts may interact and learn together; however, mixing or combining of class cohorts will not be permitted at this time in order to limit direct and indirect student to student contacts.

Secondary

- In order to limit the number of student direct and indirect contacts to 100 or less, students will receive instruction through a quadmester model, where students take two credits at a time, spending the morning on one subject and the afternoon on a second subject, with four segments to the school year. Each segment of two in-person credit courses will be planned in approximate 9-week cycles. Further details on this model and student timetables will be provided by St. Joseph-Scollard Hall to secondary students and parents prior to September 8, 2020.
- It is important to note that this model will be planned for the first semester and the circumstance will be monitored and assessed for second semester with the guidance of the Ministry of Education and Public Health.

Entry and Exit Routines

- School entry and exit times for students may be staggered, and zoning multiple entry doors for classes and grades may be used to ensure physical distancing.
- Students will be required to wash their hands as they enter the school.

School Signage, Markings and Directional Flow

- In each school, signage on walls and floors will help students maintain a 2-metre distance from one another. Signage will be posted at entrances to classrooms, school entrances and exits, common areas, and meeting spaces such as the main office, principal or vice-principal offices, outside elevators, and in the resource room.
- Where practical, separation markers will be placed to signal one-way direction within the school. This will assist in maintaining 2-metre distances for everyone in the school.

Parents and Visitors to the School, Including Student Drop Off and Pick Ups

- In an effort to minimize student contact and access to the school during this period, parents and visitors will be able to access the school by appointment only with their principal. Each school will provide details and contact information.
- All visitors will be required to sign in and provide contact information.
- All visitors will also be required to self-screen, wash their hands upon entry to the school, maintain physical distancing and wear a medical mask while on school premises.
- Parent drop off and pick up areas will be clearly marked outside the front of the school.

Outdoor School Spaces: Playgrounds / Play Structures

- As a part of Stage 3 opening in our region, playgrounds are now accessible as of July 17, 2020.
- Physical distancing of at least 2-metres will still be enforced, except between individuals from the same household or social circles (school classes).
- Staff may choose to use pylons or other means to help students maintain 2-metre distances from one another in the yard.
- Students who use the playground equipment will be required to wash their hands before and after outdoor play and playground use.
- School play structures should be used by one cohort at a time and cleaned between use, where possible.

- Routine cleaning of surfaces on playgrounds, including high touch surfaces made of plastic or metal, requires soap and water but not disinfectant. Cleaning of wooden surfaces is not recommended

There will be a low threshold to close play structures if there are confirmed cases of COVID-19 in a school.

Recess

- Recess may be staggered at elementary based on the size of the outdoor space and the availability of supervisors.
- Where possible, areas will be designated outdoors for each cohort to minimize contact with other students from outside their class cohort.
- Principals will develop a schedule and routine that allows for students to maintain appropriate physical distancing while still having an opportunity to engage in healthy physical activities outdoors.

Washrooms

- Washrooms will be marked off to ensure physical distancing of 2-metres and routines will be set up for access.
- Mixing of cohorts needs to be limited as much as possible.
- The process for students to physically distance from those in different cohorts and hand hygiene will be reviewed.
- Based on the size of the washroom and the number of stalls, numbers will be limited in each washroom with a sign indicating the numbers of people permitted in the washroom at one time.
- Increased cleaning and disinfection of the washroom will be in place.
- Signage will be placed inside the washroom, reminding students of both physical distancing and proper hygiene.
- Principals will implement a shared tracking system for staff to record the time and location of student access to washrooms. This will assist with contact tracing if needed.

Lockers/Cubbies

Students may have controlled access to lockers/cubbies and other storage areas for personal items during COVID-19. If possible, it is advised that all materials stay with them in the classroom. Personal items being brought to school (for example: backpack, clothing, sun protection, water bottles, food) should be labeled. Each school will determine the storage of personal items in designated areas.

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 that need to open the door physically. A balance must be struck between the fire code to keep certain doors closed and open doors to minimize contact in high traffic areas.

Water Bottles

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

Lunch / Nutrition Breaks

- Students will be allowed to eat their lunch in their classroom with their cohort to decrease the contact that would have occurred in common areas such as the gymnasium.
- Students will be asked to wash their hands before eating.
- A no food sharing policy will be enforced.
- In larger schools such as the high school, a procedure will be established for designated cohort lunch areas within the school.

Learning Commons, Libraries, Wellness Hubs

- These areas may still be open to students within our schools; however, a procedure must be put in place to schedule students of the same class cohort for the interim and a process for the handling and returning of books. As an added precaution, it is recommended that all returned books are placed in an area for 24 hours before being returned to display areas.
- Students may access libraries to borrow books and access resources.
- Schedules must be created that will allow for 2-metre distancing by all students in the learning commons at the same time and cleaning procedures established between cohorts.
- Robotics will only be able to function without crossing cohorts or sharing resources or equipment. In the event materials must be shared, there must be a process developed to clean the equipment/material.

Student Nutrition Programs

- Student nutrition programs can continue with the provision of 2-metre distancing, and additional cleaning of the area on a daily basis.
- Snack trays will be prepared with individually wrapped portions 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.

School assemblies

- Traditional school assemblies or other large gatherings in schools will not be permitted at this time. We will reassess this circumstance and follow public health advice in this regard.
- In order to promote the continuation of student clubs and student voice, virtual options will be offered instead of in person gatherings at this time.

Sports Teams: Intramurals and Interschool Leagues

- Individual sports may continue with proper hygiene and physical distance measures in place as long as this does not impact cohorts that have been put in place as a health and safety measure.
- Team sports continue to be “on hold” in our local region until provincial organizations indicate that it is safe for team sports to resume.
- [Current guidance provided by Sick Kids Hospital](#) indicates all close contact sports be postponed until it is deemed safe to resume such activities (examples of close contact sports include activities that take place both outdoors and indoors such as wrestling, football, basketball, etc.).
- Schools can offer clubs and organized sports within class cohorts if physical distancing is possible and equipment and spaces are cleaned and disinfected between each use.

Fitness Rooms and Equipment

- Physical fitness has been shown to have a positive impact on both physical and mental well-being.
- Our secondary school may allow the use of their student conditioning facilities and will ensure that proper cleaning procedures are in place for all equipment that is use.
- Staff/students must agree to clean all equipment before and after use and maintain 2-metre distances from others that may be in the room simultaneously.

Extracurricular / After School Activities

As an interim measure, after school gatherings of clubs will not be able to meet in person until we receive direction from the province that these activities can resume. Students can collaborate virtually for clubs and after school activities.

Fire Drills

- Practice drills will be planned to continue in consultation with local municipality Fire Departments
- Classes will move throughout the building while maintaining 2-metres between cohorts (classes) of students in the 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 1-2 metre distance between cohorts of students to be maintained.

Lockdown Drills

Physical lockdown drills will not take place during COVID-19. A drill will take place that reviews the procedures in case of a real life-threatening situation, respecting physical distancing.

Before and After School Childcare

- Before and after school programming will be available and students in these programs would be part of two cohorts.
- Schools, childcare operators and authorized recreation providers in schools will collaborate to ensure that student lists and information are maintained and readily available to be provided to public health for contact tracing purposes in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

Transportation

- We have been working collaboratively with the Nipissing Parry Sound Student Transportation Services (NPSSTS) consortium inclusive of the four local area school boards to plan and prepare for a safe return to school. For the conventional model for September, eligible students will be provided transportation and further details will be forthcoming.
- Parents and guardians have been requested to complete the [NPSC School Planning survey](#) by August 11, 2020 to indicate their intention for their child to receive school bus transportation, pending eligibility. In order to ease pressure on transportation demand, the Ministry of Education, is "Encouraging active forms of travel or private transportation by parents and caregivers, where possible."
- Reducing Exposure: Prior to boarding the school bus, bus drivers, students, parents and staff must self-assess for any COVID symptoms and not board a school transportation if any symptoms are present. All students and drivers who experience symptoms will be required to self-isolate and stay home as per the school entry process. A student who develops symptoms while at school should not be permitted to return home on a school transportation and should be picked up by a parent/guardian or designated emergency contact.

Supporting Student Learning, Well-Being and Success

- We recognize that parents and students will be both excited and anxious about returning to school. To support in the transition from remote learning during the school closure period, to in person at school, communication will be sent home via your child's school principal on what school will look like for September 8, 2020, shared through EDSBY.
- Our school staff will provide resources and activities, prepared by our Student Support Services team, that recognizes the impact the school closure period may have had on our students using a strength-based resiliency approach to supporting the students' return to school. Our teams will continue to employ a holistic approach, with a focus on the whole student, who is created in the image of God.
- Student Support Services staff will provide age-appropriate Social Emotional Learning resources for each staff to focus on during the first week back to school through both in-person and distance learning activities. Targeted support will continue for those that require additional assistance throughout the year.
- Support will continue to be available to assist with the mental health needs of our students.

- 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. August Summer Institutes are being planned.
- Resources for a school-based approach to trauma will be shared at the September Professional Development days for staff to implement during the return to school.

Equity for All Students

School and system staff will continue to exercise a differentiated approach and supports for all students that require additional supports. We will continue to use a school-wide approach to understanding and supporting solutions to address the impact of the school closure period on some groups of students in our schools. We will continue to work together with our staff, parents and community parents to find creative solutions to ensure that our students flourish and reach their full potential.

Classroom Programming / Learning and Instruction

Curriculum Instruction and Assessment

- Beginning in September, students should be supported in transitioning to their next grade or course, acknowledging the prolonged absence of students from the classroom.
- Part of this support should include assessments in order to identify students' strengths and gaps in learning at key instructional times, to ensure students have fundamental building blocks in advance of new content.
- The primary purpose of instruction and assessment is to raise the skill level of all our learners in their achievement of overall curriculum expectations across all subjects, courses, and grades.
- In our conventional return to learning for September 2020, all areas of the Ontario Curriculum will be facilitated with a focus on students working towards achieving the overall expectations in the curriculum.
- Educators will continue to utilize and leverage the wide variety of educational resources, including the rich digital resources developed in our NPSC Education Portal as well as by many publishers and partners in education during the school closure period.
- Assessment practices will continue to be aligned to the Ministry's **Growing Success** document and provide students with ongoing and timely feedback throughout the learning process.
- We will continue to support staff to facilitate instruction and assessment in class, continuously build their skills in synchronous learning and opportunities to leverage our digital resources and board approved learning platforms: Google Apps for Education, EDSBY and Brightspace.

Kindergarten

- Although 2-metre distancing may not be as practical for our early learners, classroom rules that promote no physical touching will be planned.
- Learning activities will be designed for small groups, and furniture and playing areas should be used to help maintain physical separation.
- Plush toys will be removed and will be temporarily stored during the pandemic.

- Toys and manipulatives will be reduced where possible while still providing for students a wide variety of play-based learning.
- Students should have their own school supplies, and the sharing of school supplies should not be permitted.

Primary/Junior/Intermediate Classroom Organization

- Educators will rearrange their classroom so that 1-2 metres can be maintained between students where possible.
- Classroom spaces will be assessed with the consideration of moving unnecessary furniture to allow as much distancing as possible, and to allow teachers as much teaching space as possible.
- Desks should face forward rather than in circles or groupings.
- Students will not be permitted to share resources (i.e. books) between students during class.
- The teacher should maintain a table of items to be cleaned, and these should be wiped off by the following morning when returning to class (using provided disinfectant).
- Students will have their own school supplies, and the sharing of school supplies/resources should not be permitted.
- Parents will be provided with a letter and list of essential student items to bring to school.
- Supplies for instructional lessons should be provided to each student, and where it is not practical to give each student their own resources, then the shared equipment should be cleaned or disinfected between each use.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided in each classroom setting.
- Class gathering should not occur on shared carpet areas.
- Students should not sit on carpets unless they are able to maintain the same location and exercise physical distance.
- It is recommended that, for the interim, gathering carpets are rolled up and set aside.

Physical and Health Education

- In elementary and applicable secondary Health and Physical Education courses, efforts should be made to address the overall expectations of the Active Living and Movement Competence strands outside, whenever possible.
- Gymnasiums will only be used where physical distancing measures can be followed.
- Capacity in change rooms will be limited.
- Educators will plan physical activities that support physical distancing while also limiting the use of shared equipment.
- Shared equipment will be disinfected after each use and students will be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in physical activity and equipment use.
- Student safety and guidelines will be reviewed and adapted as needed during COVID-19.
- The following resources, [Physical & Health Education \(PHE\) Canada's resource](#) or the [Ontario Physical and Health Education Association \(Ophea\)](#), will continue to be used by our staff to inform the planning of physical education activities in alignment with current public health recommendations.

Science and the Arts

- Teaching and learning in these curriculum areas may continue with the educator putting in place curriculum modifications to ensure that physical distancing is maintained.
- The sharing of equipment is not normally permitted. Where equipment is needed for different classes, the equipment must be sanitized before each use.

Technology

- The Board will continue to offer professional learning opportunities for staff to ensure that they are well positioned to use digital tools effectively. At NPSC, we use EDSBY as our main communication tool, Google Classroom and Google Meet as part of the Google Suite of tools, and Brightspace in some classrooms. Prior to the start of the school year, the three professional activity days will be used to prepare for movement between in-person instruction and possible distance learning if needed in 2020-2021.
- Students who do not have a device at home will be prioritized for a school loaned device to support the continuity of learning and/or learning at home.
- To ensure equitable access, families requiring internet access will be provided an internet ready device.
- When devices such as a Chromebook are being scheduled for alternative use, it must be wiped down with a sanitizer wipe before changing users. Disinfectant and/or an isopropyl alcohol solution will work on electronic devices. Waiting 24-72 hours as a precaution is still advised.

Specialty Programs Grade 7 & 8 and Experiential Courses Grades 9-12

- There are some courses and programs that will require greater modifications than others given the goal of maintaining physical distance from one another, the need to minimize the number of students' contacts, the travel between schools, and the disinfection of any shared equipment.
- While our goal is to provide instruction in-person and provide students with authentic hands on experiential learning experiences, we recognize we may have some limitations at this time. Our Health and Safety teams are developing guidelines to assist staff in modifying activities such as science labs, construction technology, instrumental music, family studies, innovation, design and technology, physical education, hospitality courses, etc. Where safety cannot be addressed with in-person activities or in-person is not feasible, alternative virtual programming will be provided.

Music Programs Elementary and Secondary

- Most overall expectations for the Music strand can be met without the use of instruments in both the elementary and secondary Arts curriculum.
- A variety of delivery options will be considered to meet the music curriculum's overall expectations, which may include fully distanced learning, in-person teaching and instruction with lower-risk creative performance opportunities (e.g. in-school instruction in larger spaces, restricting the type of instruments in a group setting) or in-person teaching and instruction with no live performance.
- The safety of students and staff will require additional procedures for music classes, including the disinfection of instruments and classroom layout considerations. Students

should be assigned their own instruments. Guidelines and practices outlined in the [Ontario Educators' Association - Framework for the Return to Music Classes in 2020/21](#) will be followed. Instruments should be assigned to only one person and appropriate cleaning practices must be in place. A 1-2 metre radius should be maintained with appropriate physical distancing within the classroom space.

Cooperative Education (Secondary)

- Co-op placements will be offered virtually, where feasible.
- In-person community placements will be arranged in alignment with the direction and recommendations of the local health unit, the direction of the school board, the interests of the students, and with the safety and curriculum requirements of the [Cooperative Education curriculum](#).
- Cooperative education is a key component of Specialist High Skills Majors, the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, and Dual Credit Programs.

Supporting Students with Special Education Needs

- Return to school will present unique challenges to students with medical, developmental and/or behavioural complexities and their families. Students with specialized learning needs will continue to be provided individualized education plans (IEPs) and specialized services as applicable.
- If we are in an adapted return to school model where students attend in cohorts on a specific schedule, students with special needs will have the option of attending school every day.

System Classrooms

- Students in our Learning Assistance Center Programs and Learning Skills Programs will have the option of attending school every day in either an adapted or conventional model. Additional risk mitigation strategies will be in place to reduce infection risks to students and staff. These classrooms will represent their own cohort; however, the success and well-being of our students is a priority. Cohorting and mixing of cohorts will be considered and planned with the overall goal of minimizing the number of contacts in a school day and the continued provision of enhanced hygiene protocols.
- Physical classroom spaces will be assessed in conjunction with all classroom spaces to ensure physical distancing.
- Cohort considerations for support from Educational Assistants (EAs) for students with an IEP.
- Continued learn from home supports (i.e. using virtual After Schools Skills Development Program model) will be made available for those students/families who choose to continue to learn at home.

Students with Medical and Health Conditions

Most students with underlying medical conditions should be able to safely attend school provided that the appropriate enhanced safety measures are in place. However, it is recommended that parents/caregivers discuss this with the child's health-care providers so that they can make an informed decision based on individual circumstances. Students will continue to receive access to therapy and other services while in the school environment following established protocols. Should families choose for their children to receive instruction from home, a team approach will be used to support your child virtually (i.e. classroom teacher, classroom resource teacher, educational assistant), including the provision of virtual care of services and supports.

Specialized Personal Protective Equipment

It is recommended that students wear Non-Medical Masks (NMM) while in school. We recognize that some students, for example those with expressive communication difficulties (including those with articulation problems or neurologic issues), may be disproportionately adversely affected by having to wear a NMM at school. Students' needs will be evaluated individually, in collaboration with families, to determine the individual approach to wearing NMMs while in school.

Provision of Service by Community Partners

- In cases where therapists (both internal and external to the school board) are supporting a student, active communication between the school, parents and therapist(s) are encouraged to develop transition plans in order to provide seamless transition-to-school and service and support continuity.
- Students who require additional supports in the school environment require careful planning and health and safety measures in place in order to reduce infection and transmission risks to all.

Supporting Mental Health and Well-Being

- Our Student Support Services team will continue to support students in their transition from the school closure period at home to a return to school in an adapted, conventional, or remote model.
- There will be a continued focus for support from a relationship focused lens and provide support to educators in their preparation of receiving students in the fall.
- School Mental Health Ontario (<https://smho-smsso.ca>) resources will be reviewed prior to the beginning of the school year, which includes supports for system and school leaders, educators, support staff, students and families.
- Our Student Support Services team will be assigned to specific schools, which will be helpful if the need to enact contact tracing emerges.
- Each school will have a designated space for use by the Student Support Services team and we encourage the use of our Virtual Care platforms in order to provide continuity of service to students and families, where possible and permissible.

Conclusion

As we prepare to welcome back our students this fall, we remain grateful that you have entrusted us to provide a rich Catholic education. Our parent community can be assured that the safety and well-being of our students and staff remain at the heart of all decisions and in the development of all processes and protocols outlined in this framework. We understand our parent community will have a range of unique family situations and work circumstances that need to be supported and it is our goal to work with each of our families in a flexible manner in terms of options for the fall.

As we continue to work diligently with the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit and provincial and local partners to provide a thoughtful and responsive reopening plan, we understand that flexibility and creativity are required to achieve shared solutions during this unique period. Our School Principals and Board Communications Department will continue to communicate regularly with parents and students as we return to school in the fall. As a Board, we will continue to use EDSBY as our main communication platform as well as npsc.ca and social media for regular updates.

Resources / References

- [Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year](#)
- [Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#)
- [COVID-19 Reopening Schools](#)
- [Sick Kids: COVID-19 – Guidance for School Reopening](#)
- [COVID Symptoms Ministry of Health Document](#)
- [North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit - Coronavirus](#)
- Ottawa Catholic District School Board: Blueprint for Return to School: July 2020
- Calgary Catholic District School Board: Reopening Plan May 2020