



Return to School Plan September 2021

St. Francis of Assisi School's Return to School Plan September 2021 reflects the [HCDSB Return to School Plan 2021-2022](#) which was created based on direction from the Ministry of Education, and guidance in consultation with Halton Region Public Health recommendations.

Overall Goals

- Maintain healthy learning environment for students and staff
- Provide a quality Catholic education that is flexible and engaging
- Ensure students return to safe, welcoming and inclusive classrooms

Staggered Entry Grades 1-8

Tuesday, September 7 th	All in-person learners with surnames beginning with the letters A-K will come to school. Students in the ESC come to school.
Wednesday, September 8 th	All in-person learners with surnames beginning with the letters L-Z will come to school.
Thursday, September 9 th	ALL in-person learners will come to school.

Staggered Entry Kindergarten

Tuesday, September 7 th	Year One and new to the school Year Two interviews. No students in attendance.
Wednesday, September 8 th	Year One and new to the school Year Two interviews. No students in attendance.
Thursday, September 9 th	ALL Year Two students attend. Scheduled Year One students attend for the day.
Friday, September 10 th	ALL Year Two students attend. Scheduled Year One students attend for the day.
Monday, September 13 th	All Year One and Year Two students attend and continue daily attendance.



Daily Screening for COVID-19 Symptoms

Self-screening **must** be completed **each** day before a student attends school by using the [Ontario School and Child Care Screening Tool](#). If a student does not pass the self-screening, they are to remain home and follow the direction given on the screening tool. To ensure the safety of all students and staff, students are not permitted to enter the school building until the self-screening has been completed.

Confirmation of Screening

Confirmation of screening must be submitted daily to classroom teachers for the first two weeks of school (unless directed otherwise by the Ministry of Education). This process will occur through:

- I. Show “pass” confirmation on a personal device; OR
- II. Show printed copy of the screening tool indicating the current date and a “pass”; OR
- III. Complete Confirmation of Daily COVID-19 Student Screening Log, which students will bring back and forth to school each day. This will be provided by the school.

Positive COVID-19 Case and Contact Management

In the event a positive COVID-19 case is reported within our community, Halton Region Public Health will direct the school regarding next steps for impacted students and staff. Halton Region Public Health has responsibility in determining when an individual or cohorts are dismissed, when schools are closed and when individuals or cohorts can return to school. This year, vaccination status is a consideration in determining next steps for students and staff who have been exposed to COVID-19. The [Ontario School Screening Tool](#) also gives direction on next steps siblings and household contacts of a symptomatic or COVID-19 individual. More information can be found in the Halton Region Public Health [COVID-19 School and Childcare Information](#).

School Schedule

- To ensure cohorting and maximize on physical distancing space during recess times, we will continue to use two recess and lunch schedules.
- Classes have been assigned to one of the two schedules based on grade and/or location in the school to support supervision by school staff.

Masks

Grades K-8 students are required to wear non-medical masks at all times inside the school unless taking a mask break or actively eating/drinking under the supervision of a staff member.

- Students are not required to wear masks outside at recess.
- Students are required to wear masks when in the hallway during entry and exit – including recess.
- Students will be provided with a **zip-lock bag** to store their mask when not being worn.
- Hand hygiene routines prior to taking off or putting on masks and eating snacks and lunches. These routines include washing hands with soap and water, along with using hand sanitizer
- Please review [How to Safely Use a Non-Medical Mask or Face Covering](#)



Entrance and Exit Procedures

We are kindly asking that all families who can walk to school create this routine for our students. The footprint of our school is not designed to have numerous cars parking to drop off children. As a reminder, the supervised area to drop children off is on the sidewalk of Duncan Drive. Our school parking lot is closed to parents/guardians from 8:45am – 9:15am and 3:30pm – 4:00pm. Short term parking is available on Sinclair Avenue. We remind all families that children are to walk along the sidewalk to the front of the school, then to the school yard. Please do not have your child walk through the parking lot as we have numerous buses that drop off children each morning. Once your child has safely entered the school yard, please continue with your day and leave the parking lane so that additional families can utilize this space.

The following drop-off and pick-up protocols continue to be implemented this year to help minimize contacts and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our school community:

- Only one parent or guardian will be permitted on school property to drop off and pick up children.
- Parents and guardians will remain outside and will not be permitted to enter the school (unless there is an extenuating need, and prior approval has been obtained as per the Visitor Protocol).
- For grades 1-8 students, when your child arrives at school, they must have their mask on and proceed to the blue line that has been designated for their class (cohort). Staff members will assist with this process at the beginning of the year. Students must remain on their blue line until the school day begins, they may not walk around or play in the school yard. This procedure is in place to keep all student with their cohort once they arrive at school. Students will line up to enter our school, and we will be implementing a staggered entry into school to limit the number of students in our hallways at one time.
- We have established designated entry and exit doors for your child's class (cohort).
- Each kindergarten class will be provided with an individual gate for drop off and pick up. Kindergarten students will arrive with their mask on and enter the school immediately upon arrival in the morning.
- Parents and caregivers are asked to leave the school property as soon as they drop off their child(ren). No gathering or congregating will be permitted on school property to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- At the end of the day, students who are walking home or being picked up by a parent/guardian **must be met at the school entrance/exit on Duncan Drive.**

Lockers/Portable Coat Hooks

Lockers for grades 1-8 will be used this year and will be gradually introduced to students later in September.

Travel Within the School

In accordance with Halton Region Public Health recommendations, students and staff will practice physical distancing as much as possible. Signage is posted throughout the school to ensure we are maximizing physical distancing and best hygiene practices are maintained. Travel routes between classrooms and common areas will be clearly marked, with travel routines practiced and reinforced. Students will be provided with an individualized workspace with access to designated entrance and exit doors, washrooms, and outdoor spaces.



Daily Announcements

- Daily reminders of health and safety regarding COVID-19 will be included in announcements

Student Washrooms

- Students will be reminded to practice hand hygiene before and after washroom visits.
- Students will access washrooms one at a time.
- A reduced number of students will be allowed in the washroom at one time with distancing markers in the hallways and inside the washroom.

Snacks and Lunches

- Snacks and lunches will be eaten within classroom cohorts. Students are encouraged to bring snacks and lunches that are packed in reusable containers. Please ensure food items are peanut and tree-nut free.
- Water fountains will not be accessible to students. Each student is required to bring a labeled water bottle and will have access to a designated water bottle filling station.
- Under the Ministry of Education guidance, hot lunch programs can resume this year. Decisions regarding school specific hot lunch programs will occur later this fall.
- As we are continuing to limit visitors to our school, **lunch drop offs will not be permitted during the school day. This includes vendors such as Uber Eats, Skip the Dishes, etc.**

Recess Breaks

- Students will remain with their classroom cohort during all recess breaks.
- Recess breaks have been staggered to allow 6 cohorts outside per recess/lunch break.
- The school yard and field has been divided into zones using pavement markings.
- Each class cohort will be assigned a zone and mixing of cohorts between zones will not be permitted.
- Outdoor equipment has been provided to each class and may be used when the class is on the field.
- Use of basketball nets during recess will not be permitted.
- Staff will review a menu of acceptable recess play options that align with health and safety protocols with students.

Visitor Protocol

This school year we will continue to limit visitor access to our school in an effort to minimize contacts and help prevent the potential spread of COVID-19.

- All visitors, including parents and HCDSB staff who are not assigned to our school, will require approval and pre-screening before entering our building. Only visits that are deemed absolutely essential will be approved – e.g. visits by the Fire Marshal's office or by public health. Where possible, meetings or visits will be conducted virtually.
- Visitors who are granted approval will be required to complete an online screening form prior to arriving at our school. Once inside, all visitors will be required to wear masks.

Communication Between Home and School

- Teachers and parents are encouraged to communicate through email, and video or telephone calls in place of in-person meetings.
- D2L sites will continued to be used with weekly “at a glance” and additional information messages posted by staff.

Bus Transportation

Halton Transportation Services will operate buses at capacity with the following health and safety protocols in place:

- Student self-screening must be completed before boarding a bus in the morning.
- Masks must be worn at all times.
- Students will be assigned seats to support contact tracing. Siblings and class cohorts will be consideration when assigning seats.
- Courtesy seat requests have been paused to begin the 2021-2022 school year.

Student Absences

Please ensure that all student absences are reported to using School Messenger. More information can be found on our website [here](#).

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hygiene education and routines will be explicitly taught and reinforced regularly. Hand sanitizing stations will be set up in each classroom and in washrooms. All students and staff will be expected to wash hands and/or sanitize frequently. Breaks will be scheduled to allow students to wash their hands at appropriate times during the school day.

- Entering and exiting the classroom
- Before and after donning and doffing a mask
- Before and after eating food
- After using the washroom
- Before and after outdoor play
- Before and after physical education classes
- After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
- Before and after touching any shared objects
- Before and after touching a shared resource

Physical Distancing

Students will remain with their designated cohort (classmates) throughout the day. The cohort group will apply inside the school and in the school yard. Busing and the Before and After School Program will be a different cohort. In the classroom, students will have a designated workspace (desks or table) and will be distanced as much as possible.



Health and Wellness

The priority for return to school will focus on student and staff health and wellness.

- Our school uses a mechanical ventilation system to provide fresh air to the classrooms. This system will be controlled to maximize the amount of outdoor supply air while still maintaining thermal comfort.
- Classroom staff may opt to open windows at their own discretion.
- Each Kindergarten class has been provided with a HEPA air filter.
- Classes will utilize outdoor teaching opportunities twice per day, weather permitting.
- Physical Education classes will also be taught outdoors, weather permitting.
- Students are to bring essential items to school only. **No toys or sporting equipment** can be brought to school.
- Students who ride their bikes must dismount upon entering school property and lock up immediately to reduce congestion of students near the bicycle racks.

Electronic Devices

In accordance with [HCDSB Policy 1-43](#) and [Procedure VI-62](#), students are welcome to bring a personal laptop/Chromebook/tablet for use in their classroom under the supervision and direction of their teacher.

Cellular phones are not considered to be devices for learning in the classroom. Expectations for appropriate use of devices and digital citizenship will be reviewed with students.

Enhanced Cleaning

Daily cleaning protocols include disinfection of high-touch points in common areas throughout the building and increased cleaning in classrooms and washrooms. Enhanced nightly deep cleaning will also occur.

Emergency Procedures

- Visits to ensure school safety, such as inspections by the Fire Marshal's office or by public health, will continue to take place.
- Emergency evacuation procedures/practices will continue while maintaining 2-metres between students whenever possible (i.e., fire, lockdown, bomb threat).
- In the event of a real emergency, imminent safety is priority and physical distancing may not be possible.

Extracurricular Activities and Field Trips

- Field trips are paused as we await further direction on these activities.
- Interschool sports are paused as we await further direction on these activities.
- School based clubs will resume on a phased in approach throughout the school year, where possible.

For additional information:

- [HCDSB Return to School Plan 2021-2022](#)
- [COVID-19 School and Childcare Information](#)
- [COVID-19: Health, safety, and operational guidance for schools 2021-2022](#)
- [Ontario Management of COVID-19 in Schools](#)