

ST. MATTHEW RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN SEPTEMBER 2021



St. Matthew 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.

St. Matthew Overall Goals

- Maintain a healthy and safe learning environment for students and staff
- Ensure a robust academic program that is transferrable to other learning models, if required, and reflects safety and wellness protocols

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 will not be permitted to enter the school building until the self-screening has been completed.

Confirmation of Screening (NEW)

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 a student log that will be brought to school each day in the agenda. Alternately, older students who have smart phones can show their teacher the “green pass” from the Ontario School Screening Tool. Students will receive this log on the first day of school, therefore, to start the first day parents can write a note stating that their child has passed the screening or email the teacher. Please see here for our current [staff contact list](#).

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 [Recommendations for Schools 2021-2022](#) (Appendix B) document.

School Schedule

- To ensure cohorting and maximize on physical distancing space during recess times, St. Matthew’s will run two schedules throughout the day.
- Classes have been assigned to one of the two schedules based on their grade and location in the school to support supervision by school staff.
- Lunch for all students will take place from 11:45am – 12:45pm with outdoor time provided similarly as morning and afternoon recess.
- Classroom specific recess times will be communicated by classroom teachers.

Masks

Grades K-8 students are required to wear non-medical masks at all times inside the school building/portables 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.
- Students are to use a **zip-lock or paper bag**, labelled with their name, to store their mask when not being worn. Suggestions may include the use of a fanny pack for safe storage when outside.
- Hand hygiene routines prior to taking off or putting on masks during recess times will be as follows.:
 - Staff will walk students to their classroom zone at their designated recess time.
 - Staff will provide hand sanitizer to students when in their recess zone, prior to mask removal.
 - Staff will pick students up from their designated recess line up area at the end of recess, once again providing hand sanitizer prior to putting masks back on to enter the school building/portable.
 - Students are permitted, and encouraged, to have their own hand sanitizer on them for use during these times and throughout the day.



- Mask design: Keep it simple.
- Masks must be compliant with our school dress code (see student agendas) and not display any inappropriate logos, sayings, or pictures, including but not limited to, subject matter which refers to drug use, is suggestive or overtly sexual, or is violent.
- Please review [How to Safely Use a Non-Medical Mask or Face Covering](#)

Kiss and Ride

This year we will once again have our Kiss and Ride in the Kindergarten area of the school. Staff members will be supporting the safe use of this area. Staff will not be able to open doors for students. A gentle reminder that parents must remain in their cars and students will exit the vehicle on the right side and make their way to their entry doors. We will be monitoring this closely to ensure that all safety precautions are taking place.

Entrance and Exit Procedures

Upon arrival at school, students will immediately enter the building through their assigned entry/exit door. Students have been assigned specific doors that are closest to their classroom to reduce crowding and promote distancing. We ask that you support this process by developing drop off and pick up routines that align with the entry and exit points. To further health and safety on school premises, we ask the following:

- All adults accessing the school property wear a non-medical mask when distancing cannot be maintained (ie. drop off and pick up times)
- Parents/guardians are not permitted access to the school yard
- Do not leave your vehicle when using the Kiss and Ride
- Do not congregate at drop off/pick up locations around the school

We strongly encourage parents to walk their children to school or if you are driving, utilize the church parking or the Kiss N Ride as there is limited parking onsite. We recognize that these procedures will not be the most convenient, however, they have been developed to ensure the safest transitions in and out of the school building as possible. For drop off and pick up, it is critically important that everyone adheres to road signs and practices physical distancing.

Due to the extensive health and safety protocols that are in place, students must arrive on time and with all items needed for the school day. We ask that the practice of signing students out early (ie. to go home for lunch) be limited. All students who leave the school during the school day must be signed out by a parent/guardian and if returning to school within the same day, complete a second COVID self-screening before entering the building.

Please note that the process for late admittance to the school may be delayed due to health and safety protocols.

Entrance and Exit doors are as follows:

- Door #1(Front of School) – Grade 1(Morning Entrance) and Dismissal Door #7
- Door #3 – (Intermediate Back Door) Junior Intermediate Students (Grade 5-8)
- Door #7– (Primary Back Door) Primary Students (Grade 2 & 3 Students)
- Kindergarten Door #9 – Students will enter directly into their classrooms (Dismissal routine will be communicated by K teams to parents)
- Portable Classes will enter and exit the portable (Nixon Gr.4, Hough Gr.3/4, Fuca Gr.7, Goncalves Gr.5)

Lockers

- Students will have access to lockers for storing outerwear. All essential student items must come into the classroom to limit trips into the hallway.
- Lockers have been color coded with dot stickers using a repeating pattern of 5 colors
- Students will be assigned a locker color group by their classroom teacher.

- Students will access their lockers by color group to assist with physical distancing.
- Students are not permitted to dress or undress from their outerwear in the hallways.
- Student will only access their lockers under the direct supervision of a staff member.

Direct Entry (Once Students Enter the School)

- Once first days are completed, Students are to enter directly into the school beginning at 8:25am.
- Students are to be masked upon entry.
- Staff will be supervising in assigned hallways during entry.
- Students may access their lockers upon arrival to put away outwear and retrieve their indoor shoes once they have been assigned lockers (once required for wet/winter weather).
- Students will enter their classroom and practice hand hygiene.

Travel Within the School

In accordance with Halton Region Public Health recommendations, students and staff will practice physical distancing as much as possible. Signage will be 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 and will remain with their homeroom teacher throughout the day 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. To reduce movement in the classroom, we will have a boomerang lunch program (food not consumed, wrappers, containers will go home). In keeping with our healthy eating practices, students are encouraged to bring nutritious snacks and lunches that are packed in reusable containers. Please ensure food items are peanut and tree-nut free.
- Other specific food allergies in a classroom will be shared by the classroom teacher to families.
- 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.
- **Dropping off lunches/snacks/other items through the school day is highly discouraged**, therefore, please send your child with lunch and snacks at the beginning of the school day.

Recess Breaks

- Students will remain with their classroom cohort during all recess breaks.
- Recess breaks have been staggered to allow up to 9 class cohorts outside at a time.
- The school yard (pavement only) 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 allowed.
- Use of outdoor equipment will be permitted (Cohort equipment bags)
- Use of basketball nets during recess will be permitted in the appropriate zones

- Teachers will review a menu of acceptable recess play options that align with health and safety protocols with students.
- Teachers will review how to travel to and from zones if going bathroom (using the blue and white marking on the pavement)

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.
- Only students will be writing in their individual agendas while at school.

Before and After School Program (BASP)

Screen you child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms:

- Our BASP will continue use classrooms in the school that are shared with our day school classes.
- BASP providers will be responsible for disinfecting before and after the core school day.
- Procedures will be established to ensure attendance, contact tracing and communication between BASP, School Administration and the Manager of DECEs and Child Care.

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](#).

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 their face
- 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. Direct entry in the morning and staggered recesses will ensure students can physical distance as much as possible. Students will be assigned a designated zone on the pavement with their cohort for recess time. 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 be focussed 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. Additional ventilation is not required however, classroom staff may opt to open windows at their own discretion. Classes will utilize outdoor teaching opportunities as much as possible. Physical Education classes will also be taught outdoors, weather permitting.

Student “Tool Kit” and Belongings

To reduce the use of shared materials among students, families are welcomed and encouraged to send their children with items to fill their “Tool Kit”.

These items include:

- Pencil case
- Pencils/Pens (depending on age group)
- Eraser
- Crayons/Pencil Crayons (depending on age group)
- Ruler
- Sharpener
- Personal Hand Sanitizer (optional)
- Other items as suggested by classroom teacher
- Storage for mask (pouch, ziplock)

Please contact the office if your child(ren) requires any specific items.

Students are to bring essential items to school only. Students who ride their bikes must dismount upon entering school property and lock up immediately to reduce congestion of students.

Electronic Devices

In accordance with [HCDSB Policy 1-43](#) and [Procedure VI-62](#), students are welcomed and encouraged to bring an electronic device for use in their classroom under the supervision and direction of their teacher. Expectations for appropriate use of devices and digital citizenship will be reviewed with students. Family support of these expectations at home is greatly appreciated.

School Visitors

As a school community we pride ourselves in creating a welcoming environment. Due to COVID-19, access to the school will be limited to HCDSB employees and service providers only. Access to the school by any other member of the community must be pre-approved by the school administration in accordance with HCDSB Visitor Protocol.

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 Marshall's office or by public health, will continue to take place.
- Emergency evacuation procedures/practices will continue while maintaining 2-metres between students and cohorts 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.

Virtual Chapel

As a Catholic school community, our faith is integral to all that we do. While we know that the 2021-2022 school year will continue to feel different than pre-pandemic school years, as always, we will begin the new year with a sense of hope and optimism that is founded in our Faith.

As we transition into the new school year, we will be very intentional about creating and promoting opportunities to celebrate our Catholic faith, both in person, and virtually.

We are excited to welcome families and staff to visit our interactive [HCDSB Virtual Chapel](#), where you will find a number of resources, including prayers, sacrament information, daily readings, an online rosary website available in various languages, a spot to leave your prayer intentions, and more. You are invited to explore this virtual space, as well as other Catholic faith resources that are available on our Return to School Website [here](#).

For additional information:

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