

Lunchtime Ward 11 Forum – Updated School Reopening Plans - PRIMARY

Q&A CHAT QUESTIONS answered

- Registraton, Class Placement, Switching, Daycare
- Health & Safety & Facilities
- Elementary Programming
- Virtual School
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Q&A CHAT QUESTIONS: Registration, Class placement, Switching, Daycare

Q: We need more details from the school, in order to decide. What will be the final deadline to register if we do not register online? **The deadline for registration was August 29. For any families that have not responded, you will receive a phone call. To learn more about the registration process, click here: <https://tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Registration>.**

Q: Will we learn our child's teacher/classroom/room etc in advance? **Once schools have received the results of the registration, they will work to adjust classroom organization. They will communicate to all families prior to the first day of school.**

Q: What will mandated before and after school care look like now? We've been waiting since applying in November to find out if there will be a spot for our child who is starting at JK and still are without answers. How does COVID change this and is this normal to not have after and before care come September? Is their any obligation for these services to be provided or are they really best effort? **Before and After care is operating. The organizers of the program will communicate with families directly. If you have not heard anything to date, please connect directly with the Director of the Before and After Care program.**

Switches

Q: In reference to extended absence, Covid or non, it was noted that a switch will be offered to online learning. Is this mandatory? If so can the student then be switched back to in-person? Would online and in-person be run concurrently covering the curriculum to make the move smoothly so that the student doesn't miss out or duplicate? **There will be designated times during the year (approximately 3) when students will be able to transition from in-school to virtual and vice versa. The first will most likely be around Thanksgiving. There is no guarantee that the curriculum areas will be run concurrently as this would be difficult. However, the transition time will be at regular reporting intervals so that there is less of a challenge for any student moving from one to the other.**

Q: [] stated 'Students who are in virtual school will remain in the virtual school if a second wave were to hit. the students in bricks and mortar would pivot to remote learning with their in-school teachers. Will there still be a re-entry point to join at their home school teacher/classmates at the planned 'natural break' timeframe? Thank you. **Please see the answer above. For a list of times for transition breaks, please click here:** <https://tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Learning-and-Instruction/Elementary> (scroll down for chart)

Q: If we decide last minute to change from in person to remote learning can we do so? Just have lots of anxiety over school...**We need to finalize our numbers in order to create appropriate classes. However, if there is a need for a change before school has begun, we will look at each situation individually.**

Q: What happens if everyone chooses to begin class in person, but then decide to leave if things don't feel safe? So many are feeling this way...**The indication from our initial survey is that 75-80% of students will be learning in person and the remaining virtually.**

Q: [] what happens if we register for in class. And then on day one do not show up ... how long till we can then do remote?? **The only time you can switch to remote is during the natural transition times, which will be communicated to all families...with the first being in and around Thanksgiving. See above.**

Q: What is the tdsb plan if 30% of kids say they are going and then don't show up... **This type of hypothetical situation is difficult to answer. TDSB has given a lot of thought to a variety of situations and will adjust to each new situation. Plans for the virtual school will be in place and will alter based on need with the hiring of teachers etc.**

Q: If we decide to pull our kids from the in-class model, and opt for virtual, what will the transition time be like? Is it easier to move from the virtual model to in-class? Just trying to see what the lesser of two evils is. **Please see response to question above.**

Q: If my child is currently assigned to a certain physical classroom, but they opt for online learning, when my child goes back to classroom learning, will they still be in the originally assigned physical classroom? Thx. **Class Lists are being completely redone from the spring. If you opt for virtual to begin, you will not be included in the class list creation in school, only for the virtual school. If you begin in school and then a student moves to virtual at a transition point and then return to in-school, every effort will be made to return the child to the same classroom. Unfortunately, due to the caps and restrictions, there is no guarantee.**

Q&A CHAT QUESTIONS: Health & Safety & Facilities

Screening, follow-up

Q: Who will be doing the on-site screening of students before they enter the building? **School staff will be doing the on-site screening. The exact staff are still to be determined.**

Q: Will there be a clear list of symptoms that the school screens for and send kids home? Similarly, will children who cannot safely wear a mask be sent home? **TPH (Toronto Public Health) has identified the symptoms that we need to look for and all staff will be engaged in health and safety professional learning during the first week in September. Students who can't wear a mask due to medical reasons will not be sent home, accommodations will be made for those students in the school.**

Q: Kid1 in School A, Kid2 in School B, if kid1 class has a case of Covid and that class is asked to self-isolate, does other kid and whole family have to self-isolate as well? **Toronto Public Health will guide us.**

Q: What is the policy around a parent or a family member who has covid, will their child be allowed to go to school? **Again, we take our lead from Toronto Public Health.**

Q: Will parents be informed immediately as soon as there is a suspected or confirmed case? What is the plan? **There is a specific outbreak protocol that all staff are being trained in. Along with that, we communicate immediately with TPH. Families of individual children and the impacted class will be notified as soon as we are given the go ahead from TPH.**

Q: Why hasn't the TDSB developed their own guidelines about how information will be communicated if there is a case of Covid at a school? Parents want to be informed. **TDSB works in collaboration with TPH and the Ministry of Health, but have certainly created a Board specific plan. Toronto Public Health advises the Board who needs to be informed about positive cases.**

Q: Parents need to be told how covid outbreaks in schools will be handled to make an informed decision about in class or remote learning. **There is a provincial document that has been released about protocols. We are currently finalizing ours, based on this and upon guidance from Toronto Public Health. Toronto Public Health advises the Board about who needs to be informed about positive cases. Here is the Provincial document:**

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/operational-guidance-covid-19-management-schools>

Tests

Q: where can you get covid checks for toddlers? **Best to contact Toronto Public Health directly for locations. Only selected locations serve children.**

Q: Will a negative test be required for Children who have been ill to confirm they are ok to come back to school? **It is slightly complicated. There are the return to school guidelines:**

While an individual suspected to have COVID-19 is waiting for test results they must be in isolation and cannot attend school in person. The individual can attend school virtually if they feel well enough to participate.

Individuals who have had a COVID-19 test because of symptoms, but who test negative should not return to school until at least 24 hours after their symptoms have resolved.

Individuals who have traveled out of the country should isolate for 14 days.

Where a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, the local PHU will be in contact with the school to provide further direction on returning to school.

Barriers to return to school, such as requirement of medical notes or proof of negative tests, should be avoided.

If an ill individual does not have COVID-19

For an ill individual who has a known alternative diagnosis provided by a health care provider, return to school can occur when symptoms are resolved for at least 24 hours.

Q: Will all students in a class with a confirmed case of covid be required to be tested and get a negative result before returning to school? What about students that test positive that have siblings in the same school? Will siblings and all their classmates be required to be tested?

Toronto Public Health advises the Board what the consequences of a positive test are for classes, schools, or the Board.

Q: Will COVID testing be done at the school on the child? How will these be handled with school and parents? **At this time, no testing will be performed at school. If this changes, parents would be notified.**

Q: Do you need to be quarantined for 14 days after you have recovered from a non-Covid illness, like common cold? **No, but we take all direction from TPH.**

Q: what is the number of positive cases that have to be confirmed at a school before the school is closed? **We take our direction from Toronto Public Health, it is not up to local schools or school Boards.**

Q: At what point is a class or school put into isolation? 1 case per class? 2 cases? **Again, we are guided by TPH.**

Q: Does TPH have set guidelines that have been determined for a positive case in a school? **Yes**

Q: When will the Toronto Public Health give the policy regarding isolation policy if COVID positive case/cases is/are found in school? **Toronto Public Health advises the Board what the consequences of a positive test are for classes, schools, or the Board**

Masks

Q: Please expand on the use of masks. All staff must wear masks. Shields are also required for staff who are within 2m of student for 15 minutes or more. The Ministry of Education made masks mandatory for grades 4-12. The TDSB Trustees approved a motion to have all students including JK-Grade 3 wearing masks. When students are in-school, they will be wearing masks at all times other than when they are eating in their classrooms. When student go outside, they are allowed to remove their masks.

Q: Mandatory masks for Jk-3 = has TDSB done research of mask movement while speaking? My kids mask shift while speaking below nose. They then shift it back. This will likely be happening all day long. Touching and reposition masks creating more saliva transfer. Students will be educated through videos and supported by staff how to wear masks as well as how to put on and take off masks.

Q: How often will kids be getting a mask break? Staff will provide regular breaks throughout the day by taking kids outside where masks don't need to be worn.

Q: How are teachers going to ensure that younger kids keep masks on? Can young kids wear face shields instead? Teachers will be provided training during the first week in September to support mask wearing. Younger students must also wear masks and not just shields, as the level of protection is reduced with just a shield.

Q: there seems to be a lot of concern about JK kids losing masks, or touching their face when masks fall off. Why did TDSB decide to change this practice from province and recommendations of sick kids. I understand the city of toronto has a bylaw but that is in a different context The TDSB, in consultation with TPH, made the conscious decision to have all students wearing masks. The TDSB did the appropriate research by speaking to a variety of health authorities all and we were advised was the right decision in the City of Toronto.

Lunch

Q: Why are kids being encouraged to stay for lunch when for the most part they will not be 2m apart in the classroom and they will have to remove their masks? Students who are eating lunch together are part of the same cohort. They will be with each other each day. When not eating during the lunch period, they will be asked to put their masks back on. Arrangements will be made to keep the students as far apart as possible during the lunch hour in their classrooms. It is a recommendation to have kids stay for lunch. A parent has the final say and can choose to have their child come home for lunch instead.

Q: Are students going to have lunch in their classrooms? If yes, what measures are going to be taken to prevent food allergens being spread in the classroom? **Eating in classrooms is no different than a regular school year when students eat in a school cafeteria. Appropriate measures are in place for the safety and security of all students and any potential allergies.**

Q: What is the plan for supervision at lunch time specifically? Are we exposing lunch supervisors to a large number of u- masked children while they are eating? **Students will be eating in classrooms and both the classroom teacher and lunchroom supervisors will be supervising. To the best extent possible, lunchroom supervisors will be staying with the same cohorts on a daily basis.**

High risk

Q: So if Kindergarten cohorts in TPH high risk areas are capped at 15, no high risk schools will have RECEs assigned? Only OCTs? DECE's? **The schools in high risk areas will have a classroom teacher and 15 students. The DECE's will be shared among 2 classrooms of 15.**

Q: What happens with class sizes in non-TPH priority schools if there is an increase in risk in the geographic area of that school? **We take our direction from TPH. If caps need to be changed in specific areas, the TDSB will work directly with TPH to identify and take necessary steps.**

Busing/transport

Q: We have heard that there is no reduction on student numbers on the busses. Last year, our bus was 3 students in one row and it was shared between 2 schools. Is it for sure that there won't be any reduction for busses even for the ones that are too crowded? **That is correct. There will be measures in place for on the buses like wearing masks and pre-screening before getting on the bus.**

Q: Is it ok if we register for bus and bike to school while the weather is still good? **Yes**

Q: is there a commitment from TTC on extra buses at specific times? **TDSB has spoken to the TTC, and buses as in other years are increased during before and after school times. Once the TTC sees what the uptake is like, they may consider extra buses on certain routes if needed. Please note measures are in place like masks required on TTC.**

Q: Will the kids using TTC getting TTC tickets or be allowed to use buses at no cost until high school? **Bus tickets have not changed. There is also no charge for students under 12 years of age.**

Facilities

Q: Are there plans for plexiglass dividers to be installed in any classroom spaces? If not, would parent associations be able to fundraise for this sort of thing or will this not be allowed? **There will be no plexiglass partitions put up in classrooms and school councils are not permitted to purchase for the school.**

Q: Will playground structures be open for play during recess/lunch periods? Will this be limited between cohorts or will cohorts be mingling? Or will it be school-specific? **Play structures will not be open at schools until further notice.**

Q: Have schools purchased or started preparing outdoor classroom areas and is there any expectation or guideline from the board about what outdoor classrooms will look like? **Outdoor classrooms are a local decision. Each school will handle it differently, but will make provisions for students to get outside as often as possible during good weather.**

Q: have any of the schools opted to use other spaces provided by the city (ie community centers, libraries science center) when classes are physically small in size? **Where schools are in need of additional space due to class size caps, first they look internally such as gymnasiums, cafeterias, staff rooms etc. Next, they will look at schools in the direct area that may have additional space. Finally, the TDSB has been investigating space in the community at local establishments where needed.**

Q: Will teachers be required to keep windows open during the day? Even when the weather gets colder? **Air flow in the school will be consistent with windows open. Unless it is extreme cold and deemed dangerous, windows will be open.**

Q: What about ventilation in portables? **All portables have been checked and the appropriate measures have been taken.**

Q: What happens in the winter when windows can't be left open will air filtration units be put in? **The federal government recently provided additional funds to each Public Board. Part of these funds were to go toward HVAC systems. The TDSB is currently trying to see how these funds can be used to positively impact schools.**

Q: Any extra consideration for schools with no open windows? My son's school doesn't have open windows in classrooms. **Yes, the Board has been into every school and have provided appropriate system in spaces that require additional ventilation measures.**

Midtown

Q: Given the recent safety concerns in our area, what measures are going to be taken to ensure there are no hazardous materials, like needles, on the school ground? **All school communities impacted by the homeless shelters in the area will be receiving a letter the week of August 31 with specific detail that the city is working on with TDSB to provide appropriate safety measures.**

Q: Now that you mentioned parks, Hodgson, Eglinton and Northern are all close by to the "temporary" shelter, is there additional security in place for these kids? Most kids walk to/from school and people have found used needles in the ground both at these schools and parks nearby **Yes, additional measures will be in place, as will be outlined in letters sent to school communities.**

Q: Will school grounds been monitored and controlled pre and post school?? **Yes, the letters communities will be receiving will outline the measures that will be taken.**

Q&A CHAT QUESTIONS: Elementary Programming

Q: New start times were announced last year. Are those new start times going ahead? Or will be start times be the same as last year? **Yes, the new start times will be in place.**

Q: For kindergarten can they be separated into 2 groups within each class? Half the class plays outside with the ECE and the other half works inside and then switches? Is there a possibility of reaching out to parents to see if there are enough parents that are willing to do half day kindergarten? **Kindergarten students across the system will be part of a full-day program, not half-day. The kindergarten teachers will work together with ECE's to create safe spaces in the classroom and also utilize the outdoor space.**

Q: Would we have the option to do a half-day JK (e.g. send from 9-11:30am) to lower the risk of potential exposure and concerns around wearing a mask all day? **Individual situations can be discussed with individual school principals.**

Q: JK question: can first time students start for half days for the first week to help them adjust to their new environment? **This is an individual family decision that can be discussed with the local school principal.**

Q: With regard to FDK and Grade 1, how will teachers be able to deliver their programs with the very limited toys and manipulative material available to them? **There will be enough materials**

in place for these students and there are specific measures in place for appropriate cleaning between use. Each cohort will have their own materials and resources.

Q: What about the specialized teachers who go from class to class and are exposed to 150 or so students? **The students will stay in their class cohorts, teachers who teach specialized programs will go into classes to deliver program and will be wearing appropriate masks and face shields.**

Q: Would there still be gym classes? **Yes...as much as possible, outside.**

Q: For the wellbeing of students, physical exercises are really helpful. If all the sports teams are cancelled, would there be anything to keep the kids active? **Phys Ed classes, daily physical activity and outdoor opportunities will be provided.**

Q: Can non-digital remote learning be provided for the regular stream children? Especially for kindergarten or primary students? **The TDSB is currently working on plans for students who have difficulty working remotely and would benefit from non-digitized materials.**

Q: could schools decide to do some of the subjects only remotely and the remainder in-class, based on teacher readiness and skill? **No, schools will offer in-school all courses just as the virtual school will offer on-line courses.**

Q: If the regular school kids goes back to online due to a second wave, will they be similar to the virtual school in terms of synchronous learning? **The expectations for the virtual school are that 50% of the day is taught live. This would be the same expectation if all schools have to pivot to remote learning if there is a second wave of Covid-19. Children would stay with their in-school teacher, only now it would be delivered remotely.**

Q: If a second wave happens, will the synchronous teaching hours for the regular school students will be the same as the virtual school when they go online with their home school teachers? **Yes**

Q&A CHAT QUESTIONS: Virtual School

Q: Could you please share the TDSB URL that outlines the specifics re: virtual learning?
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Learning-and-Instruction/Elementary>

Q: What is the daily schedule of online schooling? What times of the day are students required to be in front of the computer? **Please see the url above for information regarding elementary virtual schools.**

Q: Virtual Learning - who will be the cohort, teacher, principal? Will we no longer be part of our school community? **Staff of the virtual school will be made up of principal, teachers and other staff who are not able to return to school due to their own medical restrictions. In addition, teachers will be redeployed from central positions and new staff will be hired.**

An effort will be made to cohort students from the same school who choose virtual learning into the same virtual cohort where possible, but is not guaranteed. You will still have ties to your home schools – children would still graduate with cohort from the bricks and mortar school, for example, and their student record will be kept at the home school.

Q: Learning POD - With respect to TDSB students who are in the same *grade* can they be placed in the same virtual class? **Every attempt will be made to cohort students from same schools together, but we are not able to take requests for PODS to be grouped together or for friends to be grouped together.**

Q: are virtual classes "straight" classes or "split" classes **It will depend on the numbers of students who choose virtual school and what grades they are in.**

Q: What will be the remote learning class size for grade 7-8 gifted? **The number is expected to be 35 as per class size caps in virtual schools.**

Q: Q, any plan to reduce the virtual leaning cap less than 35? from Grade 4? **No, not at this time.**

Q: what will be the screen time for remote for SK/JK? Screen time is not supposed to be too much for this age group. **Please see the elementary outline that can be found on the TDSB website. The expectation is approximately 40% of the day. Teachers will work to provide students a multitude of opportunities to do a variety of things including breaks where appropriate. To learn more, click here: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Return-to-School/Learning-and-Instruction/Elementary>**

Q: what type of learning resource available for the virtual learning? **In elementary, teachers and students will be using two different platforms for digital use...Brightspace and Google Classroom.**

Q: Will elementary virtual school has drama/music/gym courses taught by special teacher? **Who teaches exact courses are still to be determined based on the number of students who choose virtual school.**

Q: would devices be provided by virtual school or home school? **Requests for devices can be made to the home school.**

Q: Why aren't the students who have school devices who are returning to schools returning those devices? Does the Board know who has each device? **The Board has a detailed account of every student who has a TDSB device. With the uncertainty as to whether a second wave of Covid may or may not come, the decision has been made for students to keep devices so that we would not have to engage in another massive distribution process that would take time and therefore make it more difficult to pivot quickly.**

Q: What is the difference b/t "Guided Instruction" and "Live Virtual"? Is this described somewhere on TDSB website? **Live virtual is in front of a classroom teacher. Guided is asynchronous (not-live) learning where students are provided work to do on their own and opportunities for students to meet online with their teachers will be provided.**

Q: Will the online lessons be recorded so absentees and kids who need a review can refer to that? **This is still something that is being discussed and no final decision has been made.**

Q: But gifted is an ISP program for identified, special educational needs. Can there not be a consolidated, congregated gifted program created virtually with a class size of 35? **There will be a gifted class for those students that choose virtual learning.**

Q: What about remote option for specialized programs like CyberArts or Tech? **At the elementary level, there will be no specialized programs provided at this time.**

Q: How will remote learning support students with IEP's - i.e. will there be consideration to how many students with IEPs are assigned to remote teachers so they can effectively be supported? **Support will be provided by both teachers and support staff to students with IEP's. Their level of support will not change and their IEP's will be updated on a regular basis.**

Q: If we are not able to supervise online learning for young children, can we elect to not attend 100% of online classes, as long as our children are completing their assignments and demonstrate that they can manage the curriculum content? **Attendance will be taken and student who sign up for the virtual school are expected to be part of all online teaching and learning.**

Q: Can we go 100% asynchronous learning? If our children are able to successfully complete the curriculum when assessed, would that be sufficient? **Please see answer above.**

Q: Is non-digital learning independent? In other words, will attendance in synchronous and asynchronous online classroom be mandatory? **Yes, if part of the virtual school.**

Q: Have details re: "non-digital" virtual learning been published? If so, could you please provide a URL. Thank you. **Please see url provided above.**

Q: how/where can we find out more information about paper version of remote learning?
thank you. The Board is currently working on non-digital resources. If a student is unable to be in-school or take part in the virtual school, there will be an opportunity for non-digital resources. If there are non-digital resources provided, this is the learning opportunity parents have chosen for their child.

Q: Is the remote training for teachers being provided mandatory and is time being provided for teachers to adequately prepare their online classrooms as well as their in-person classrooms?
Yes, three days have been provided for all staff to do appropriate, mandatory training in a number of areas so that they are prepared for school opening on Sept. 15.

CHAT Questions also answered in Forum/Presentation

Q: With increased stay at home when ill diligence, how are schools and parents to manage the inevitable colds, runny noses, sniffles and other symptoms? Won't there be increased absences and attendance disruption? There will be disruption, however teachers will continue to provide work for any students who are at home. If the time is extended, parents will, during the designated times, be provided an opportunity to pivot to virtual learning.

Q: what about children that have a runny nose due to allergies? what is the protocol there? documentation from physician that they have allergies? If a child has allergies and parents are worried that students will be challenged by their school as to their wellness to be in school, appropriate documentation should be shared with the school administration.

Q: How will you manage allergies in the class if all kids eating in the class? Can kid go home for lunch The recommendation is for students to stay in school for lunch however if a parent wants their child to go home, the school will not say no. All applicable measures will be in place to address any allergy issues in the classroom.

Q: Has there been any consideration of the possibility that children will not be able to tolerate the nasal swab for COVID-19 testing (particularly younger children)? Is there a possibility of moving to the saliva test? Or mandatory absence for 14 days? The TDSB takes its direction from Toronto Public Health. Please know that the Board of trustees has asked the province to greenlight some pilot programs for saliva testing but this has not, as of yet, been granted.

Q: If we opt for remote learning for our gifted son, will the class be a gifted class? I know you're saying that they're hoping to get a specialty gifted teacher but wondering about the class cohort. Thanks **Yes, the expectation is that gifted classes will be available for virtual learning, and gifted classrooms would be taught by a qualified special education teacher.**

Q: In hugely populated areas, how would crowding concerns at school entry/exit points and yards be addressed? As school gates are very close to each other and there is huge crowd during entry/exit times. **As each school layout is different, this will be a local decision that will be communicated to all parents prior to the start of school.**

Q: Please tell more about the ISP students planned support, any 1-on-1 teaching online? **If students in ISP classes go virtual, the appropriate accommodations will be made for student that will include direct teaching.**

Q: Can you please Advise the plan for rotary middle schools such as Hodgson, where core subjects such as math and science are taught by subject specialist teachers? Will this still be the case? **Middle schools are currently working on their organizational model and will be able to share additional information with the community prior to school starting. The specialist approach in middle schools will not work in the same way and there may be more teachers teaching generalist subjects to reduce the amount of interaction and to maintain cohorts.**

Q: since parents are asked to make decisions with insufficient info, would be great if TDSB shows flexibility at least 1st month instead of having to wait until semester end **The expectation is for the first pivot to be during Thanksgiving. This will give families the first month and a half to decide if it meets their child and family needs. Dates were provided above through a link.**

Q: What about classrooms in the school basement that have poor ventilation even though they have windows. **All schools have been investigated thoroughly and any changes required have been made to schools. Testing will be happening more consistently and filters will be changed on a more regular basis.**

Q: Is there a report that can show what ventilation. reporting/checks have been done on our local school? **The TDSB is working on putting this type of information on local school websites for transparency.**

Q: Was there a direction from the TPH that thermometer scans should NOT be conducted for each person entering the school? **Yes, we were told that temperature scans are unreliable in determining signs of Covid.**

Q: City run childcare's and programs do temp checks. It's worked the last 6 months to limit spread. Interesting that city is choosing to do this, if not effective why do they do it? **We take our direction from TPH.**

Q: Will teachers and staff be temp checked? **No, that is not an expectation from TPH.**

Q: can you speak about mental health and well being. has the Board hired more social workers? **The Board has developed an extensive Mental Health and Wellness plan that includes additional staff being hired.**