

March 10, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians and Caregivers:

Changes to COVID-19 requirements at schools effective March 21, 2022

The 2021-2022 school year has brought several adjustments and changes at schools. Together we navigated many responses to the pandemic, while ensuring students and staff were safe and learning in-person, as much as possible.

As you are likely aware, yesterday the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Province of Ontario lifted many of the pandemic restrictions that have been in place. As a public education system, HPEDSB is required to follow the directives of provincial and local health officials, in addition to those of the Minister of Education.

We are looking forward to the return of a number of opportunities for students and schools on March 21, 2022 following March Break, while maintaining protective measures, including continued free access to rapid tests and masks, ventilation improvements and daily self-screening.

The following requirements will be lifted in all HPEDSB spaces on March 21, 2022:

- Cohorting and distancing
- Restrictions to shared spaces and cross-grade programs
- Restrictions for large gatherings
- Mandatory masks and eye protection for students and staff at schools, board offices and on student transportation
- Collection of proof of vaccination for visitors
- Daily confirmation of screening in order to attend school

If your child(ren) becomes a close contact with a positive case, they must follow [Ministry of Health guidelines](#) for contact management. They include wearing a mask for a period of time and avoiding tasks that need masks removed, such as playing a high-contact sport, or playing a wind instrument.

Mask wearing will be a choice for everyone, including HPEDSB staff. Please discuss with your child(ren) that this is a personal choice and help them to understand and respect the choice of others to wear or not wear a mask.

Prior to going to school each day, your child(ren) should continue to [self-screen](#) and stay home if they have symptoms of illness. Schools will continue to encourage and expect good [hand hygiene](#) and practise [cough and sneeze etiquette](#).

If you travel over March Break, please follow [federal travel requirements](#), which currently include masking for 14 days after return, recording contacts and daily monitoring for symptoms.

These newly-announced changes are significant in light of the precautions that have been in place over the past two years. It will take some time to adjust and adapt, as we return to more normal learning environments in our schools.

We're here to help! Supports for students are available at schools through child and youth workers, social service workers or social workers. Please contact your child's teacher or principal if you would like to access support.

As we navigate this transition, please respect and honour the decisions that individuals and families in our school communities will make. We appreciate your support as we continue learning together.

All the best for a safe and enjoyable March Break.

Sincerely,



Katherine MacIver
Director of Education