

ROCKWOOD CENTENNIAL PUBLIC SCHOOL  
157 Pasmore Street, Rockwood, Ontario N0B 2K0  
(PHONE) 519-856-955 519-856-9563 (FAX)

O. Cutz, Principal

M. Rice, Office Co-ordinator



Friday, September 25th 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for entrusting us with the schooling of your children this year. It takes a lot of faith in the education system and courage on the part of parents and students to partake in in-person learning in the context of a global pandemic. It's also important to recognize the dedication and vigilance of the RCPS staff. Our staff are working diligently and doing everything in their power to effectively implement school level solutions, which adhere to the health & safety policies developed by the school board and the local public health. Below are some pertinent details organized by themes to paint an overall picture of how we are addressing safety, learning and school culture at RCPS.

#### **COVID 19 School Screening Tool:**

We strongly encourage parents to use the online screening tool every morning to help inform you around sending your child to school should you suspect illness or any possible exposure. The following link is also found on the top right hand corner of the school home website page. Here is the link for your convenience <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>.

#### **School Organization:**

In early September and once again in mid September, our school was reorganized based on the number of students registered for in-person learning (appx 300) versus the number of students registered in the remote school (appx 50). As a result, our school organization was reduced by two classes and two staff members. We did not receive any additional staff or new classes. Below is a basic outline of our school organization. Click on this link to see our full staff list <https://www.ugdsb.ca/rockwood/staff/>

FDK > Mrs. Darling and Mrs. DeLuca (ECE) > class size 15

Gr 1/2A > Mrs. Ross-Urwin > class size 18

Gr 2/3B > Mrs. Caverly > class size 20

Gr 4/5A > Mrs. Winter (LTO) > class size 24

Gr 5/6B > Mrs. Armstrong-Cameron > class size 26

Gr 6/7C > Mrs. Benstead > class size 26

Gr 6/7FI > Mdlle Fang > class size 23

Gr 7A > Mrs. McCabe > class size 27

Gr 7B > Mr. Ladner > class size 27

Gr 8A > Mrs. Betts > class size 24 (\*smallest room)

Gr 8B > Mme Chaves > class size 25

Gr 8C > Mrs. Noel > class size 26

MID > Mrs. Wells > class size 15

### **Morning Entry & Dismissal:**

Students have been doing an excellent job wearing their masks as they come on school property as well as going directly to their class home base where they social distance from their classmates and are at a good distance from the other classes. At the bell, teachers join their classes to give each student hand sanitizer and lead them to their classroom in a sequence which prevents different classes from getting close to one another. At dismissal time, students gather with their teachers at their home bases with their masks on. Classes are released one at a time one at time to ensure social distancing. Students are to wear their masks while on school property. **We ask parents to wait outside the school grounds and wait by the kiss and ride, sidewalks, or nearby parking areas.** We also encourage parents to role model the wearing of a mask as students walking by might get within 2m of their personal space.

### **Bussing:**

Students are in assigned seating and wearing masks at all times. In the mornings, bus students walk in a socially distanced line to their home base on the field. At the end of the day, bus students line up behind their bus sign in a social distanced line and wear their masks while waiting. Student volunteers take attendance with staff nearby to help.

### **Hallways, lockers and hooks:**

Much like grocery stores, we have signage, coloured tape and arrows on the floors to help students keep a social distance as they move through the halls. At this point in time, hooks and lockers cannot be used as they would cause students to congregate too closely. We are working on a system and awaiting permission to be able to use hooks and lockers when students will be wearing coats and boots and the need for storage will be important.

### **Washrooms & classroom sinks:**

All washrooms are on a robust enhanced cleaning schedule which is linked with the washroom schedules set up for the classrooms. All classrooms have access to their own sink to enable handwashing schedules in addition to frequent use of hand sanitizer. We have moved certain classes to different rooms to be able to

utilize all available washrooms. The FDK, Gr 1\2, Gr 2\3, MID classes all have their own washrooms. Our Junior class has set up a washroom schedule and a system to enable “emergency” washroom visits. Our Intermediate classes have set up a one girl/one boy at a time system where students can use the washroom as needed where they wait at socially distanced squares in the halls by the washrooms. The cooperation has been excellent and students have been highly responsible when it comes to hand hygiene and washroom use throughout the day. We continue to improve the convenience and accessibility to the washrooms for the students and will communicate those changes as they come as we know this is a challenging aspect of the safety protocols.

### **Classrooms:**

Classrooms have been emptied as much as possible and available furniture (desks or tables) have been set up to maximize social distancing. Signage on the walls and on the floors has also helped with keeping students at a distance as they move through the classrooms. Windows are opened and the school HVAC has been engineered to maximize the most effective ventilation. **The trend we are seeing is that the older and larger the students (grade 6 and up) the more difficult it is to maintain 2m distance between students in the classrooms.** Our mitigation is to have students face forward at their desks and wear their masks at all times (except when eating - see section below on this challenge). Class size and staffing numbers are the root of this challenge and those numbers are directed by the school board. ***Please note that this is something we (staff and principal) cannot change at the school level and I assure you that we are doing our best to continue to develop the safest and most practical solutions to challenges associated with large class sizes.***

### **Recess:**

We have a flipped recess this year. Half the students are outside while the other half eat inside. Students exit and enter as a class via a socially distanced entry/exit schedule. Staff assist with hand sanitization upon exit and entry. Students stay with their class during recess in specific play zones which have been painted out. The zones rotate each day to allow students to have equal access to all areas of the field throughout the week. Students can use classroom sports and play equipment with their classmates. Those items are sanitized after use. We recognize that students miss their friends in other classes, however, we ask that parents remind their children how important it is not to throw or pass objects/balls with friends in other play zones. Some students may very well be in a social bubble with a student in another class, however, they are not in a bubble with the other 25 or so students and we all must do our part to reduce the risk of spread of COVID 19.

### **Eating Times:**

Regardless of class size, we have asked students to not talk, yell or shout while eating as students must remove their masks to eat. If students talk or shout without a mask in an enclosed classroom then the risk of sprayed airborne particles throughout the classroom airspace would be increased significantly. In the larger classes with the older students the risk would be even higher, therefore it is imperative to have students cooperate and assist with this inconvenient yet proactive measure. We fully recognize that this precaution is challenging for the social nature of children. We do feel so bad for them! The reality is that our current best solution is to ask students to be quiet for 5 to 10 minutes while eating. They can look forward to talking with

their friends once their masks are back on. Teachers can occasionally take their classes outside to eat during instructional time where social distancing is much easier. A reminder that students are required to bring a refillable water bottle to be filled at the filling stations or classroom sinks (exact same water) as the drinking fountains are closed. Additionally, students are required to bring their lunch debris back home (banana peels, yogurt containers). It's recommended to send a plastic bag to keep their debris in and keep in their lunch box/bag for the return home. Unfortunately, there is a risk associated with students touching saliva laden food debris in garbage cans.

**\*\*AMENDMENT FOR GRADES 7A, 7B, 8A, 8B, 8C:**

***Due to the large size of these students and the large class sizes, additional funding for extra cleaning and supervision were secured through the support of our Superintendent. At lunch times, these classes will be separated in half and spread to different rooms by cohort. All of the students in these classes will be able to eat at a social distance of 2m or more with their masks off. Students will be able to safely chat at a distance. We still ask that students put their masks back on when they are done eating to maintain the highest degree of safety indoors.***

**Outdoor Learning:**

As much as possible, students are learning outdoors during instructional time. Teachers can sign up to book one of seven zones on the field or choose to go to the nearby park or conservation area. This is highly recommended by Public Health.

**Cohorts of up to 50 & Student Teachers:**

This is language you may have heard about and may not be sure how that applies to our students. Students in different classes can be joined in a larger cohort of direct and indirect contacts of up to 50 students. There are two scenarios where this is occurring in our school for the benefit of learning and social opportunities. Our Grade 1\2 and 2\3 classes total 38, therefore they can come together in a play zone or large space at a social distance and interact. The grade 7s in 6\7C (26) and 6\7FI (23) get an additional music class like the other Gr 7 classes each week by combining those 7s together in the music room. The total indirect contact is 49 and the direct contact between those Gr 7s is 22. These arrangements are all to standard according to the board's health and safety protocols. These students are fortunate to enjoy this opportunity and we will look for other ways to have students cohort safely in the future beyond our Virtual Assemblies. As permitted by the board, we are able to host student teachers as part of our contribution to preparing the teachers of the future. We have two student teachers this year (with Mrs. Benstead and Mme Chaves) and we will benefit from the extra support they can provide in the classroom.

**Chromebooks, Google Classroom and BYOD:**

We are encouraging students from grades 6 and up to bring their own computer to school (Bring Your Own Device - BYOD). This will help mitigate the increasing need for computers in the classrooms which has so many benefits to learning and safety. Additionally, in the event of a school closure, all classes will be ready to

pivot to remote learning via the Google Classroom platform. **Once you receive and join the “invitation” to receive Google Summaries you will be notified weekly of your child’s learning. Be sure to provide your preferred email address to your child’s teacher. If you do not accept the invitation you will not receive a summary.** Anything parents can do to support computers in the classroom will help us be ready in the event of a pivot to remote learning.

### **Terry Fox/Orange Shirt, Open House & Fundraising:**

As stated previously, all fundraising will be on hold until further notice. Classes will recognize Terry Fox Day and Orange Shirt Day (Recognition of Residential School Impact on First Nations Communities) on Wednesday, September 30th on a class level since we cannot congregate as a school. Donations can be made directly to the Terry Fox Foundation at [www.terryfox.org](http://www.terryfox.org). The donation to a school link will walk you through donating through RCPS. Recognitions will be made on the announcements as well. Staff is currently figuring out how to proceed with a Virtual Open House in the coming weeks. More details to come shortly.

### **School Council**

All parents are welcome to attend our Virtual School Council meeting on Tuesday, September 29th from 6:00-7:30PM via Google Meet. If interested, please contact our School Council Chair, Lynn Clack at [lynn@chessoffice.com](mailto:lynn@chessoffice.com). A Google Meet link will be shared to those who contact Lynn directly. The beginning of each year is the time to put your name forth for executive roles on council. If you would like to Chair, Co-Chair, become secretary, or treasurer please email [olivier.cutz@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:olivier.cutz@ugdsb.on.ca) to submit your name.

On a final note, I’d like to extend my appreciation for the hard work our students are doing on a personal, academic and safety level to make in-person learning successful. We hope that parents can understand that although there are inconveniences and discomforts around procedures, rules and the way we are teaching in a pandemic context that we all have the duty to respect and balance the social, emotional and educational needs of a wide span of student demographic. We appreciate everyone’s flexibility, empathy and cooperation during these challenging times.

Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at [olivier.cutz@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:olivier.cutz@ugdsb.on.ca) .

Sincerely,

Olivier Cutz

(Principal)