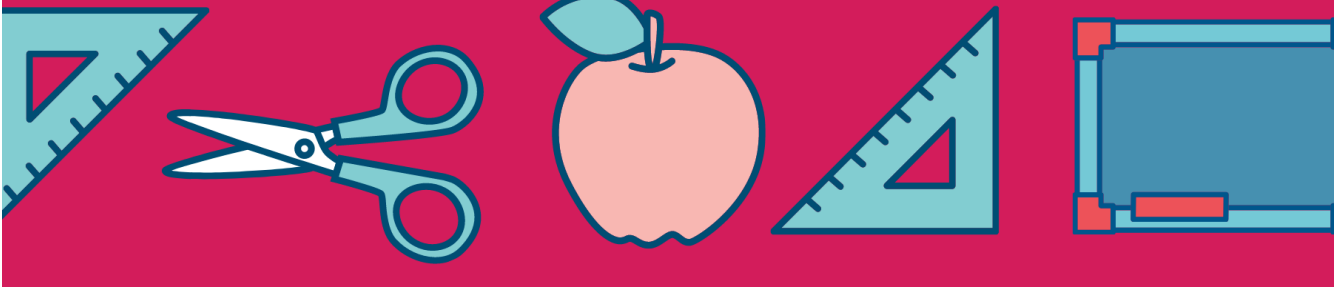


# 2021-22 SCHOOL OPERATIONS

Guidebook for UGDSB Students and Families

2021-22 SCHOOL OPERATIONS

# STUDENT/FAMILY GUIDE



**Upper Grand District School Board**

August 2021

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## Introduction

The Upper Grand District School Board looks forward to welcoming and welcoming back students, staff and families this September.

On August 3, 2021, the provincial government and Ministry of Education released a guidance document for 2021-22 school operations.

The information below contains information from the provincial guidance document as well as specifics to the UGDSB. Please note: All schools will continue to follow all Public Health health and safety protocols.

**The information contained in this document will be updated as new information is provided by the Ministry and public health officials.**

## In-Person Learning

UGDSB schools will reopen in September to in-person learning.

In-person teachers will continue to maintain a virtual learning environment (i.e. Google Classroom) as part of their classroom program. This will also support a transition to remote learning should the need arise, and support individual students required to isolate for a limited period of time.

Students may be placed into small groups with students from other cohorts (e.g. specialized class placements, withdrawal of students for small-group support). Students from different cohorts may use common spaces on a rotational basis or at the same time, depending on the room and activity (e.g. libraries/learning commons, hubs, resource rooms, separate music room, cafeterias where applicable). Members of different classes can interact outdoors with distancing encouraged or inside with distancing and masking. Procedures on indoor masking may vary depending upon the activity. Additional masking details are provided in this document and will also be communicated to schools.

School staff are permitted to go into multiple classrooms (e.g. educational assistants, specialized teachers and other staff) to provide the full breadth of programming for students. Staff can also go to multiple schools (e.g., itinerant staff, occasional staff, staff assigned to more than one school).

## Elementary Schools

Elementary students will attend school full-time, five days a week, following a regular school schedule. Cohorted classes will stay together with one teacher, where possible.

## Secondary Schools

Secondary students will attend school in person, five days a week, and will take two courses per day. To begin the school year, school schedules will be divided into quadesters. The quadester model may change later in the year as the COVID-19 situation evolves and depending on provincial direction. The daily schedule is below.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:00 - 11:30 AM	Period 1 Class in school - 150 minutes (Cohort) Students receive instruction from classroom teacher.				
11:30 to 12:30 PM	Lunch for staff and students				
12:30 to 3:00 PM	Period 2 Class in school - 150 minutes (Cohort) Students receive instruction from classroom teacher.				

## Remote Learning

The UGDSB offered a fully remote learning option to elementary and secondary students for the 2021-22 school year. Registration for the remote learning option is now closed.

As movement between learning modes can cause disruptions for many students and classrooms, students who enrolled in the elementary remote learning option are required to remain in remote learning for the entire school year. Students who enrolled in the secondary remote learning option are required to remain in remote learning for the entire semester.

Students who registered for remote learning will be provided with 300 minutes of learning opportunities daily, through a combination of synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. Attendance will be taken daily. Classes will be taught by dedicated remote learning teachers at scheduled times during the school day.

## Remote Learning in Elementary

For elementary students, remote learning will only be delivered via Google Classroom. All teachers providing lessons for a given class will create a subject specific tab within the Classroom. Special Education, Specialist, French teachers and Early Childhood Educators (for kindergarten) will also have access to the Google Classroom for each class they support/teach. All curriculum areas will be taught, evaluated and reported on. All teachers providing lessons for a class will collaborate to create one Monday-Friday timetable for students to follow indicating live whole group and live small group learning sessions. This timetable will be sent to parents/students in advance of being implemented. This will allow parents time to plan for their children to attend all remote learning lessons and will support student routines.

## Remote Learning in Secondary

For secondary students, remote learning will only be delivered via Google Classroom and/or BrightSpace. Courses will cover all areas of the curriculum and all overall expectations will be evaluated and reported on. Students will be expected to attend class virtually on a daily basis according to a set schedule indicating live whole group, live small group learning sessions and asynchronous/independent learning. This schedule will be sent to parents/students in advance of being implemented.

## Protective Strategies

Schools will employ multiple protective strategies to support healthier and safer environments for students and staff. Each of the measures listed below provide some benefit in reducing spread; however, it is the combination and consistent application of these layers that is most effective for reducing disease spread in schools.

## Screening

Screening for COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposures is vital to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

- Parents/guardians will be asked to perform a **daily** screening of their child(ren) for COVID-19 BEFORE leaving for school.
- Staff must screen for COVID-19 **daily** BEFORE leaving for work.
- Staff, students and families can use the provincial screening tool for daily screening: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

All staff and students who are experiencing symptoms identified in the screening tool that are

consistent with COVID-19 must not attend school and should follow the guidance provided in the screening tool, which may include seeking appropriate medical attention as required, and/or getting tested for COVID-19.

## On-Site Confirmation of Screening

The Ministry may direct school boards and schools to perform daily on-site confirmation of self-screening, such as during a period of potential higher transmission (for example, after a holiday period). Should this occur, students, staff, and visitors will need to provide daily confirmation or proof that they have self-screened.

## Student Masks

Following a Board of Trustees motion passed in August 2020, all students in the UGDSB (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12+) are required to wear properly fitted non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes, as well as on school vehicles. Masks may be temporarily removed indoors for the following activities, with a minimum distance of two metres maintained between cohorts and as much distancing as possible within a cohort to:

- engage in low-contact physical activity
- consume food or drink

Students are not required to wear masks outdoors, but distancing between individuals will be encouraged as much as possible.

Students are expected to bring their own masks to wear on student transportation and at school. Masks will also be made available by schools for students if needed.

Continue to refer to the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) and [Public Health Ontario](#) for guidance on appropriate mask types and usage. School boards may choose to implement additional masking measures based on the advice of local circumstances and public health.

## Exemptions

The school board is required to have a process in place related to student mask exemptions. Parents/guardians/caregivers seeking a mask exemption for a student must contact their school principal directly. School principals will have a process for assessing exemption requests. Parents will be required to have a conversation with their school principal to discuss their particular circumstances, submit an application, and if the application is approved, parents will be required

to sign an exemption declaration.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Staff**

The board will continue to provide school staff with required PPE, including medical masks (surgical/procedural), eye protection and other PPE based on their specific role/job functions (for example, gloves, gowns).

Where necessary for faces to be seen for lip reading to support students who are deaf or hard of hearing, masks with clear sections are available.

## **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are important protective strategies. Schools will train students on appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, including the use of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR), and reinforce its use. Students will also be given breaks to wash their hands at appropriate times during the school day.

Hand hygiene must be conducted by anyone entering the school and incorporated into the daily schedule at regular intervals during the day, above and beyond what is usually recommended (for example, before eating food, after using the washroom).

Staff and students will be provided with targeted, age-appropriate education in proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) with a minimum 60% alcohol concentration will be available throughout the school and/or plain liquid soap in dispensers, sinks and paper towels in dispensers.

## **Distancing and Congregating**

Schools are to promote as much distancing as possible between students, between students and staff, and between staff members. Physical distancing measures will be layered with other public health measures such as masking, screening, hand hygiene, bus and classroom cohorting, and enhanced cleaning.

Schools are encouraged to remove unnecessary furniture and place desks with as much distancing as possible, and to allow teachers with as much teaching space as possible. Desks will face forward rather than in circles or groupings.



Student movement during transition times are to be staggered where possible, to limit student congregation in the hallways.

## Cleaning and Disinfection Standards and Protocols

The school board has developed a program for cleaning and disinfecting schools that includes twice daily cleaning and disinfecting of high touch surfaces. High touch surfaces include, but are not limited to, washrooms, eating areas, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, push buttons, handrails, etc. The board will use only cleaning and disinfecting products that have a drug identification number (DIN).

## Ventilation

The school board will continue to optimize air quality in classrooms and learning environments through improving ventilation and/or filtration. Ventilation is one layer of the protective strategies that will be utilized to support healthy and safe learning environments for students and staff. Additional measures such as masking, physical distancing and hand hygiene must also be followed.

## Best Practices

The UGDSB will follow best practices with regards to ventilation and air quality, as detailed below.

For buildings/rooms that rely on natural ventilation/no HVAC system, best practices include:

- Opening windows for short times at intermittent intervals, if safe to do so
- Assessing exhaust systems
- Placing standalone air cleaner/High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter unit(s) in the room/space without mechanical ventilation
- Ensure that standalone air cleaner/HEPA filter units are cleaned and maintained, following manufacturer's instructions

For buildings/rooms that rely on mechanical ventilation/HVAC systems, best practices include:

- Regularly maintain systems (per Ministry checklists)
- Optimize for respiratory particle removal
- Use the highest rated Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) filter that can be accommodated by the system.
- Regularly inspect filters to make sure they are installed and fit correctly

- Regularly replace filters; consider increasing frequency of filter changes to maintain overall performance
- Check that sufficient airflow can be maintained based on HVAC design criteria
- Check and monitor measures with the goal of optimization (e.g., air exchange rates, outdoor air intake, temperature, humidity)
- Assess exhaust systems
- Keeping systems running longer hours (e.g., two hours prior to occupant entry with consideration to school and childcare start-times and two hours post occupancy with similar considerations)
- Consider placing standalone air cleaner/HEPA filter unit(s) in the room/space (required in spaces as detailed below in 'Distribution of HEPA Units' section)

## All UGDSB Schools

The school board will continue its work optimizing air quality in classrooms and learning environments through improving ventilation and filtration. Upgrades to ventilation and filtration systems began in the 2020-21 school year and will continue for the 2021-22 school year.

All schools are encouraged to support outdoor education where possible and open windows where this augments ventilation for classrooms and learning environments.

All UGDSB schools have full or partial mechanical ventilation, with the vast majority of schools having full mechanical ventilation. \*Full mechanical ventilation means that all areas of the school that students would occupy are fully mechanically ventilated. Partial mechanical ventilation means that some areas of the building have mechanical ventilation (e.g. newer parts in a building) whereas other areas in the school do not have mechanical ventilation (e.g. older parts of a building).

The following schools have partial mechanical ventilation:

- Elementary: Central PS, Eramosa PS, Kenilworth PS, Victory PS
- Secondary: CCVI, GCVI, John F. Ross CVI, Norwell DSS, Orangeville DSS

The following schools have full mechanical ventilation with the exception of the area listed in brackets:

- Elementary: Brant Avenue PS (staffroom), Ross R. MacKay PS (office area)
- Secondary: CDDHS (fitness area), CHSS (greenhouse area)

## **All other schools in the UGDSB have full mechanical ventilation.**

Prior to the start of the school year, the board will assess all school ventilation systems to ensure they are in good working order and will meet the Ministry requirements for full and partial mechanical ventilation. The board will also implement measures over and above Ministry requirements (see below).

### **Full Mechanical Ventilation**

Following the Ministry guidance, for schools with full mechanical ventilation the UGDSB will:

- use the highest-grade filters, including Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) 13 filters where possible
- undertake frequent filter changes through the school year
- operate ventilation systems for two hours or more before and after school occupancy
- calibrate Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems to maximize air flow, and increase fresh air intake where possible

### **Partial Mechanical Ventilation**

In the learning areas of schools without mechanical ventilation, the UGDSB will place standalone High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filtration units in all classrooms/learning spaces without mechanical ventilation. These units ensure particle filtration of air. These units are sized for the classroom or learning space that is being used. In larger classrooms and learning space, more than one HEPA unit may be placed.

### **Standalone HEPA Filtration Units**

The Ministry requires that school boards place standalone HEPA units in:

- All occupied learning environments in schools or parts of schools without mechanical ventilation; and
- Kindergarten classrooms in schools with mechanical ventilation.

### **Distribution of HEPA Units**

Partially Ventilated Schools - as required by the Ministry, units will be placed in rooms with no mechanical ventilation as follows:

- 1 HEPA unit per classroom (including portable)

- 1 HEPA unit per specialized classroom (e.g., music rooms, art rooms, labs, etc.)
- 2 HEPA units per kindergarten room
- 2 HEPA units per childcare room
- 4 HEPA units per gym (based on average size of gym - 2 for a small elementary gym)
- 2 HEPA units per library (based on average size of library)
- 4 HEPA units per cafeteria
- 1 HEPA unit per administrative space (e.g., main office area)

As required by the Ministry, in schools with full mechanical ventilation units will be placed as follows:

- 1 HEPA unit per kindergarten room
- 1 HEPA unit per portable with poor mechanical ventilation

### Additional UGDSB Measures

The UGDSB has procured more than 1,000 HEPA filtration units to date that will be deployed per Ministry guidelines. In addition to meeting the requirements above, the UGDSB is going beyond current Ministry recommendations by including standalone HEPA filtration units in all Grades 1-8 classrooms, as well as classrooms that run our life skills (Developmentally Delayed) classes (elementary and secondary).

### Introduction of Standardized School Ventilation Measures Report

For the 2021-22 school year, the Ministry is launching a standardized ventilation report. School boards will be required to communicate school-level ventilation measures centrally on their school board website. This will enhance transparency for school communities, including students, parents and staff, and provide consistent communication across the province. The information may include whether: ventilation has been inspected, measures in place in each school (such as use of higher grade filters, frequency of filter changes, HVAC systems are running longer, standalone HEPA filter units installed, windows are being opened, etc.).

The school board will post this information on the board website prior to Sept. 3, 2021.

### Measuring Ventilation

As an additional measure beyond the provincial requirements for ventilation, the UGDSB will be conducting carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) testing in schools. This process was started in the 2020-21

school year and will be continued in the 2021-22 school year. In order to ensure that the ventilation system is working properly and to find out where we may have to supplement air quality by providing filtration equipment (e.g. HEPA filtration units), the UGDSB is choosing to actively measure the CO2 levels in classrooms while they are occupied.

The CO2 level in a classroom is an indicator for the amount of fresh air being brought into the classroom by the ventilation system or via natural ventilation. The UGDSB process involves board staff going to all school sites and classrooms at regular intervals throughout the school year, and taking a measure of the CO2 levels when students and staff are present. While staff are present on site, they will also inspect classroom windows and screens to ensure they can be used as natural ventilation. Staff will also check that ventilation grills are not obstructed and can therefore work effectively.

Where issues are identified, the board will implement strategies to either address the issue or to implement mitigating measures. In situations where work cannot be completed right away, the board will install standalone filtration units.

Some schools have built-in CO2 monitoring systems, whereas other schools do not. Therefore the UGDSB will actively measure CO2 at all school sites so that all schools are treated equally, regardless of their access to built-in monitoring systems.

Please note that CO2 levels can serve as a proxy measure for overall ventilation but is not a measure of COVID-19 transmission risk.

## September Start Up for HVAC Systems

In addition to the UGDSB measures detailed above, and in preparation for the start of classes, the UGDSB will:

- Operate mechanical systems in occupied mode for a period of one week prior to students returning under normal operating hours.
- Assess air intakes and exhaust discharge outlets to prevent/limit re-entry of exhaust air.
- Review and update existing standards for frequency of filter replacement and type of filters to be utilized.
- Trend and monitor carbon dioxide (CO2) on an ongoing basis.
- Review and update, if required, scheduled maintenance protocols.
- Adjust start time of HVAC systems to two hours prior to occupant and two hours post occupancy with similar considerations.

- Review air distribution conditions of existing spaces.

## Federal and Provincial Funding - School Based Projects

In the 2020-21 school year, school boards received funding to support COVID-related upgrades, including ventilation projects, scheduled to be completed by December 2021 or later.

The UGDSB received funding for 44 projects related to ventilation in this program.

20 school projects involve work including rooftop HVAC unit upgrades, ventilation upgrades and BAS system upgrades (schools are listed below). These projects are designed, tendered and under construction. Board staff anticipates completion of all 20 projects by December 31, 2021.

### Rooftop Ventilation Unit Upgrades:

- Gateway Drive PS
- June Avenue PS
- Maryborough PS
- Salem PS
- Westwood PS
- Priory Park PS
- Alma PS
- Centre Peel PS
- Willow Road PS
- Parkinson Centennial PS
- Princess Elizabeth PS
- Victoria Cross PS

### Control System Upgrades:

- John McCrae PS
- Ken Danby PS
- Sir Isaac Brock PS

### Ventilation Upgrades:

- Victory PS
- Central PS
- Ross R. MacKay PS
- Norwell DSS

- College Heights SS

24 projects were submitted for duct sealing and upgrades to portable ventilation units. 19 of these projects are portable upgrades, which are proceeding and are anticipated to be completed by school start-up. Five of these projects were submitted for duct and ventilation inspections and are expected to be completed by December 2021.

### Portable HVAC Upgrades:

These projects are underway at 19 sites across the board, and are listed below. All are scheduled to be inspected and minor repairs completed by August 30, with any remaining repairs being completed in September.

The scope of the work included:

- Disconnecting blowers, as well as cleaning and reinstalling
- Cleaning grilles if required
- Removing washable filter, installing a new filter frame and upgrading filters as soon as possible
- Setting up fresh air minimum intake to 20% fresh air and ensuring proper damper operation
- Ensuring proper operations and measuring the airflow from system

School	Number of Portables
Centre Dufferin DHS	1
College Heights SS	5
Credit Meadows ES	1
Erin DHS (Multi-Use Facility)	1
Glenbrook ES	1
Island Lake PS	1
Jean Little PS	2
John McCrae PS	3
Ken Danby PS	1
Kenilworth PS	1

Maryborough PS	1
Mitchell Woods PS	1
Mono-Amaranth PS	1
Montgomery Village PS	3
Salem PS	1
Sir Isaac Brock PS	1
Waverley Drive PS	1
Wellington Heights SS	1
Westside SS	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

### Duct and Ventilation Inspections:

This work will take place at five secondary sites: College Heights SS, Centennial CVI, John F. Ross CVI, Norwell DSS and Orangeville DSS.

The scope of the work includes:

- Verifying and measuring flows of supply return and exhaust in specific zones of the school
- Locating any potential flow issues and diagnose potential causes including leaks and blockages
- Repairing issues and documenting repairs
- Documenting any other issues and priorities the concern for future repair, including a detailed list of issues and deficiencies

### Other Ventilation Funding Allocations

- In August 2020, the provincial government announced \$50 million in funding for ventilation in Ontario schools. The UGDSB was allocated \$845,000 of that funding. The board used this funding primarily for the purchase of standalone HEPA filtration units, which were deployed to schools.
- The Ministry of Education will be providing a Dashboard design that school boards will be using to report on the ventilation work completed by each school board. Additional funding information will be provided upon release and completion of the Dashboard.



## Management of COVID-19 in Schools

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health will continue to be responsible for managing positive COVID-19 cases and symptoms in schools; the UGDSB will continue to follow the direction of WDGPH.

**New this year:** Public Health has stated that the requirements for self-isolation and testing will be different for individuals who are fully vaccinated compared to those who are unvaccinated or partially vaccinated. Please note that Public Health will be the only organization with information on the vaccination status of students. The board/schools will not have access to that information.

For more information on Public Health's process for COVID-19 case management, visit their website:

<https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/your-health/covid-19-information-schools-parents-and-teachers/schools>

## Vaccinations and Privacy

Staff will continue to follow direction from Public Health in terms of what medical/health information related to colleagues, students or their families can be shared. Due to individual privacy, staff/parents will have to understand that personal information can not be shared, including the vaccination status of staff and students. The board's Human Resources department will communicate further with staff regarding provincial vaccination policies that are applicable and as the information becomes available.

## School Day Operations

### School Arrival, Departure, and Signage

Schools will continue to follow school arrival and departure procedures that support physical distancing where possible. Approaches may include:

- maximizing the use of entrances and exits to support the start and end of school days
- designating routes for students to get to and from classrooms
- visual cues (e.g. signs/posters on walls), to guide appropriate distances in lines/queues and at other times (e.g., "one-way routes" in hallways)

Hand sanitizer will continue to be available in school entrances/exits and in classrooms.

### **Elementary School Greeters**

To start the year, UGDSB will continue to have greeters at elementary schools to assist students arriving at school with masking, hand sanitizer and physical distancing.

### **Locking Doors**

Schools should continue to follow their school-based processes from 2020-21 with regard to locking doors to manage the flow of people into the building.

### **Recess and Outdoor Breaks**

Students do not need to stay within their cohort during outdoor recess or breaks, but distancing should be encouraged between cohorts as much as possible.

Shared materials are permitted outdoors, with appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

### **Inclement Weather Days**

The school board will continue to follow an inclement weather plan, which will include pivoting to remote learning on inclement weather days.

### **Shared Materials**

The transmission risk associated with sharing objects is low and use is permitted. Shared materials are important for learning and some examples include toys for imaginative play in kindergarten, manipulatives for math, computers and other technology, books, art supplies, physical education equipment and shared outdoor equipment. The focus should be on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection, particularly when regular cleaning of shared objects is not feasible.

### **Shared Spaces**

Different cohorts are permitted to use common spaces within the school at different times during the day. (e.g., homerooms, computer/technology labs). The use of learning commons

space is permitted for group and individual use (e.g. drop-in study time, etc.). When different cohorts interact in shared indoor spaces at the same time (e.g. learning commons, cafeterias), in addition to masking, as much distancing as possible should be maintained between cohorts. The use of lockers and cubbies is permitted.

## Cafeteria Use and Lunch Protocols

UGDSB students may eat together:

- outdoors, with distancing encouraged.
- indoors, with a minimum distance of two metres maintained between cohorts and as much distancing as possible within a cohort.
  - If indoors, students will be required to eat with their cohort, in assigned areas.

Larger schools should attempt to limit the number of students and cohorts eating lunch in proximity to each other (examples include eating outdoors or in alternative spaces).

Use of high school cafeterias is permitted as follows:

- Capacity limits for cafeterias must be established to enable two metres distancing between cohorts, and as much distancing as possible within cohorts.
- External food providers will not be operating in cafeterias to start the school year. The board will reassess this requirement on an ongoing basis.

Students are encouraged to eat outdoors, weather permitting.

Each student is encouraged to bring their own drink bottle that is labeled, kept with them during the day, and not shared.

## Food Programs

The Ministry has stated that nutrition/third party food programs and food events (such as a pizza day) are permitted to operate, provided that food handlers use adequate food handling and safety practices. To start the school year, only the food programs listed below are permitted to operate. Food program protocols will be reassessed as the school year progresses.

### Student Nutrition Programs (Food & Friends and Food4Kids)

These programs will start the year off working according to their modified programs from

2020-2021. Food & Friends will be providing funds to schools for food purchases, and will provide home delivery to families with children and youth supported by the Children's Foundation through the Food & Friends Program (through the Food & Friends @Home Program).

Food4Kids will start the year providing gift cards to their families. Both programs will be reviewed in the fall, regarding allowing volunteers to enter schools to support these programs.

## Field Trips

The Ministry has indicated that field trips can happen for the 2021-2022 school year. Please review the information below carefully for field trips in the UGDSB. Field trips criteria will be re-evaluated as the year progresses.

- No international or interprovincial trips will be permitted.
- Elementary: In elementary schools, no field trips will be booked until further notice, with the exception of walking trips in the local school community. As per usual practice, permission forms need to be completed for these walking trips and health and safety protocols followed.
- Secondary: In secondary schools, no field trips will be booked until further notice, with the exception of ½ day trips in the local community. Given the importance of instruction time in a quadmester model, any trip must be directly related to the curriculum (for example, ½ day Outdoor Education trips to the local conservation area or ½ day Physical Education trips to the local curling club).

## Assemblies and Other School Events

The Ministry is allowing assemblies for the 2021-2022 school year; however, please see the points below about assemblies and other school events in the UGDSB. Assemblies and other school event criteria will be re-evaluated as the year progresses.

- To start the school year, assemblies and school events must be held virtually, not in-person.
- Even when/if restrictions change, virtual assemblies and events are encouraged.
- School open houses and meet the teacher events planned for the fall will be held virtually.

## Parent and Visitor Access

To start the 2021-22 school year, schools will be focused on reopening schools, getting students

back in school and establishing routines with students. Therefore, only **essential visitors**, including board staff and third party student support providers (e.g. Kerry's Place, ErinoakKids, LHIN, CMHA, F&CS, KidsAbility, Family Transitions Place, OT, PT) will be permitted in UGDSB schools.

The UGDSB will re-evaluate this protocol as the school year progresses.

All essential visitors are required to self-screen and wear a medical mask (for example, surgical/procedural) while on school premises. A medical mask will be provided by the school if needed.

All essential visitors must continue to follow the board's established process of signing in upon arrival and confirming they have completed their daily COVID-19 screening.

All other parents and visitors will not be permitted inside schools during the pandemic, except in case of emergency. At entry and dismissal times, parents are to remain outside the school and adhere to physical distancing protocols. Parent meetings with teachers and principals will take place virtually in the initial stages of reopening.

## Student Transportation

The student transportation consortium that services our school board and other boards in our region (STWDSTS) is receiving its direction on COVID-19 safety protocols directly from provincial officials and local Public Health. The school board remains in close contact with the transportation consortium. For more information, visit the STWDSTS website at <https://stwdsts.ca>.

As one part of the board's health and safety protocols, all UGDSB students (Junior Kindergarten to Grade 12+) will continue to be required to wear masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes, **as well as on school vehicles**. This protocol was established by a Board of Trustees motion in August 2020 and will continue to be followed.

School vehicles can operate at full capacity. Vehicles for elementary students will have reduced capacity where possible. The seat directly behind the driver in school buses will remain empty to maintain physical distancing between the driver and students. Where school vehicles are able to operate at less than full capacity, students will be seated in a manner that maximizes physical distancing. Windows will also be opened when feasible to increase ventilation.

Students should be assigned seats by school administration and a record of the seating plan

should be kept to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student or driver contracting COVID-19. Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort should be seated together where possible.

School vehicles should follow an enhanced cleaning protocol of disinfecting high-touch surfaces (for example, handrails, seatbacks) at least twice daily.

## Mental Health

Student mental health and well-being will be considered a top priority, as good mental health is fundamental to a student's ability to learn and to succeed at school and in life. UGDSB will continue to take guidance from [School Mental Health Ontario](#), the Ministry of Education's student mental health implementation partner.

UGDSB will continue to collaborate with our child and youth mental health agencies to support strong connections for students requiring more intensive support. This will ensure the best use of mental health resources and supports are made across the broader provincial integrated system of care.

## Specific Academic Programs and Requirements

### Cooperative Education

For students enrolled in cooperative education courses, in-person community placements can be arranged, as aligned with provincial requirements under the Reopening Ontario Act, the direction and recommendations of the local health unit, the direction of the school board, and with the safety and curriculum requirements of the Cooperative Education curriculum. If in-person placements are not possible, students should be offered virtual placements. In the event that public health guidance or direction changes during a placement and the student cannot complete their co-op placement in-person or virtually, educators should work with the student to modify their co-op learning plans that allow the student to achieve the curriculum expectations and earn the credit(s).

### Music Classes

Singing and the use of wind instruments will be permitted only when the following conditions can be met:

- Singing is permitted indoors, however at the recommendation of Public Health **masking is required while singing**. As much physical distancing should be maintained between students while singing.
- Staff are encouraged to take students outdoors for singing, when possible. Masking is not required for singing outdoors.
- Use of wind instruments is permitted indoors within a class if a minimum distance of two metres can be maintained. As much distance as possible should be encouraged and use of large, well-ventilated spaces should be prioritized.
- Use of wind instruments is permitted outdoors with distancing encouraged.
- Sharing of wind instruments must include proper sanitization between users.
- Procedures for hand sanitization must also be completed between the sharing of any instrument.

## Health and Physical Education Classes

In elementary and secondary health and physical education courses, the use of gymnasiums, swimming pools, change rooms, weight rooms, indoor physical education equipment and shared outdoor equipment are permitted, with distancing measures in place.

The provincial guidance has different requirements for high-contact vs low-contact activities. High-contact activities include activities with close physical contact, where 2 metres of distancing cannot be maintained, and/or activities with high physical exertion, heavy breathing etc.

Protocols for indoor activities:

- High-contact and low-contact activities are permitted indoors.
- At the recommendation of Public Health, **high-contact activities indoors require masking**. The activity will only be permitted if it can be done safely with a mask on.
- Masking is encouraged but not required indoors for low-contact physical activities if a minimum distance of two metres can be maintained.
- Windows should be opened when feasible to increase ventilation.

Protocols for outdoor activities:

- High-contact and low-contact activities are permitted outdoors.
- Masking is not required when playing high or low contact activities outdoors.

## **EQAO**

For the 2021-22 school year, regular EQAO assessments for grades 3 and 6 will resume in the new digital format for math, reading and writing. Students in Grade 9 math will write the Grade 9 math digital adaptive assessment and the results of the assessment may count towards up to 10% of the student's final mark. EQAO assessments are required to be done in-person at the school. Students learning remotely can choose to participate in the EQAO assessments in-person at the discretion of the school board as long as all applicable health and safety measures can be met.

## **Literacy and Community Involvement Graduation Requirements**

The literacy graduation requirement is waived for students graduating in the 2021-22 school year and will be restored for students graduating in the 2022-23 school year. Students in grades 10 and 11 and non-graduating students, including those who are learning remotely, are required to work towards the literacy graduation requirement, through participation in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), adjudication or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC).

The graduation requirement for community involvement activities has been reduced from 40 to a minimum of 20 hours for students graduating in the 2021-22 school year. Temporary changes are to reduce barriers students may face to earn their community involvement hours and provide greater flexibility in how students earn their hours will continue for the 2021-22 school year. The requirement of 40 hours will be restored in 2022-23 and students working toward their OSSD should be supported to meet these requirements in time for their graduating year.

## **Extra-Curricular Activities and Community Use of Schools**

### **Extra-Curricular Activities (Clubs, Sports Teams, Bands)**

Clubs, activities, sport teams, bands and extra-curriculars are permitted. Students participating in extra-curricular activities may interact outdoors with physical distancing encouraged, and indoors with masking and appropriate physical distancing.

### **Inter-School Sport Activities**

While the Ministry has indicated that inter-school sports can happen for the 2021-2022 school year, we ask that schools not make plans for the start of the school year. Inter-school sports



criteria will be re-evaluated as the year progresses and we anticipate receiving more direction and information about inter-school sports later in the school year. More information will be provided to schools once that direction is received.

## **Before and After School Programs**

Before and after school program staff will continue to follow Ministry and Public Health guidance and collaborate with schools to ensure that student lists and information are maintained and readily available to public health for contact tracing purposes. This is in accordance with applicable legislation, including the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

If parents have questions about Before and After School Programs or Child Care programs they are to contact the Operators directly. The board website includes additional information and contacts: [Before and/or After School Program](#)

## **Community Use of Schools**

Community use of schools in the UGDSB will be permitted provided activities are aligned with Public Health guidance and direction.

The UGDSB will work with Public Health to develop a plan for community access to school property and facilities. Any visitors to a school are required to self-screen and to wear a mask while on school premises. At the advice of the local public health unit, the school board may be asked to restrict community access.

Schools and community groups will collaborate to ensure that student/visitor lists and information are maintained and readily available to be provided to public health for contact tracing purposes in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#).

Further information about UGDSB Community Use of Schools will be provided on the dedicated section of the board's website and updates will be pending new information from Public Health and/or the Ministry.