

DDSB Return to School FAQ – As of February 5, 2021

Learning Models

Q. What do the learning models look like for elementary and secondary students learning in-person?

A. Elementary students who have opted for in-person learning will attend school five days per week, with students grouped together in a cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Students will still receive 300 minutes of face-to-face educator instruction. Enhanced health and safety protocols will be in place (i.e. enhanced cleaning, handwashing breaks, students eating lunch in their classroom, etc.) and the full range of the elementary curriculum will be provided. The school day will be very similar to what families and students are used to, with the exception of potential changes around bell times and staggered times for entry, exit and recess. The Board of Trustees passed a motion on August 12 to exceed the Ministry of Education's guidance on physical distancing of students to ensure that all classes allow for the distancing of students, at a minimum of one metre. While the Ministry of Education has made wearing a mask mandatory for students in Grades 1 to 12, the DDSB will be actively encouraging all students to wear a mask, unless they have a medical need. Specific programs will be developed to teach all students the importance of wearing a mask.

Bell times for elementary students learning in-person may vary. To find out what the start and dismissal times are at your child's school, please visit the school's website.

Secondary students who have opted for in-person learning will learn with a hybrid model that combines in-person and remote learning. Students will be placed in cohorts of approximately 15 students, will attend every other day and on alternate Fridays. This will be delivered in a "quadmester" format which involves a four-semester school year with each quadmester. This limits the number of contacts students have in a day and provides the opportunity to earn two credits at a time. Each quadmester is approximately 45 days of instruction (9.5 weeks). Students will be required to wear masks while in school and enhanced health and safety protocols will be implemented. Each day, students are assigned to a subject-specific online support period staffed by a teacher to provide assistance with independent work. The DDSB will be reviewing programming for students with a high level of special education needs who may require daily attendance and instruction at the secondary level.

Bell times for secondary students learning in-person may vary. To find out what the start and dismissal times are at your child's school, please contact the school directly.

Q. What will happen if schools are required to close again?

A. If the Ministry of Education directs that schools close, your child(ren)'s learning will continue virtually in the same class that they are in right now until students can return back to in-person learning.

Q. I do not receive e-mails currently. How can I receive updates about my child(ren)'s education?

A. In order to receive direct updates about your child(ren)'s education, you must have a valid e-mail registered with us. Please contact your child(ren)'s school to make this request. We will need to verify your identity for legal/privacy reasons.

Q. How can I subscribe to receive news from my child's home school?

A. Here are the steps required for families to receive news such as school newsletters directly from your home school:

- 1 – On any school's homepage click **MORE NEWS** in the School News Section.
- 2 – Click the **SUBSCRIBE** button.
- 3 – Check off all the boxes for what you would like to subscribe to on the school website. If you just want the School News (Newsletters), just check **School News**.

Once completed, the school website will send an email to all subscribers when News items have been posted. For further assistance, please reach out to staff at your home school.

Q. Will secondary schools be doing remote learning on alternating days via Google Classroom or some other programs?

A. Yes, students will be equipped to do Distance Learning on the days that they are not participating in online learning in class.

Q. Will students be able to take one in-person and one online course at the same time?

A. In order to effectively staff our schools, students are not able to have timetables composed of partial in-person instruction and partial remote learning.

Q. Will students be able to change courses in both the online and in-person cohorts before the quadmester begins?

A. The changing of courses at the beginning of the school year is always dependent on class size and availability. This process will continue throughout the school year. Please contact the Guidance department at your school to inform them of your request to change courses.

Q. What are the start and end dates of each secondary quadmester? / Will there be exams?

A. You can view the start and end dates of each quadmester for regular and modified school year calendars here:

- [Secondary Regular, Full Year Calendar Format: Term Dates and Cohorting Days](#)
- [Secondary Modified Schools, Full Year Calendar Format: Term Dates and Cohorting Days](#)

There will be no final exams for secondary school courses for the 2020-2021 school year.

Q. What platform will be used to deliver online learning and what is required of parents to support students from home during their courses?

A. Online learning will be delivered through existing platforms including Google Classroom, Google Meet, D2L Brightspace. Parents or guardians will be required to support their child(ren) learning from home as needed. Parents should expect to provide more support for kindergarten or primary-aged children as their independent skills are not usually as developed as that of older students.

Q. If I decide that I need to remove my child temporarily for safety concerns, or they exhibit any symptoms and shouldn't be sent back until all symptoms are gone, what happens?

A. We recognize that this situation is going to be a new normal for an extended period of time and that it is likely that attendance may not be as regular for a variety of factors. Our focus for child(ren) who are learning in-person and may not be able to attend is that we will provide them work as we do now when children are ill. In cases where an entire class is required to isolate at home, we would then pivot to online learning for the entire class for the required amount of time.

Q. How will Gifted and French Immersion programs be offered both online and in-person? If so, will there be any course/curriculum differences?

A. For any questions about the DDSB@Home French Immersion program please contact ddsbathomeFI@ddsb.ca.

We are committed to providing a learning environment for students with an IEP who are currently placed in the Gifted Program. Classes are being offered for Grade 4-8 students in the Gifted Program through DDSB@Home. The Grade 4-8 Gifted Campus has been joined with the regular stream Grade 7-8 Campus, and they can be reached via the following email: ddsbathome78@ddsb.ca. Students who are Intellectually Gifted and in regular class placements, will continue to receive accommodations programmed by their teachers whether online or in-person.

DDSB@Home Elementary and Secondary Virtual Schools

There is a separate FAQ that has been created for the DDSB@Home Elementary and Secondary Virtual Schools. You can access the FAQs by visiting [DDSB@Home Elementary FAQ](#) and [DDSB@Home Secondary FAQ](#).

Q. Can my child(ren) learn through DDSB@Home?

A. Families were provided the choice to decide what type of learning they want their child(ren) to engage in: virtual learning at home through DDSB@Home or in-person learning at their home school. Families received a standalone e-mail on July 31 and a reminder e-mail on August 6 with information on how to make this choice before the August 12 deadline. The DDSB called families who do not have an e-mail registered in our system.

Following the deadline, we have accommodated requests up to November 2 for secondary and January 11, 2021 for elementary students to move from in-person learning to the DDSB@Home virtual school. **Please see the elementary and secondary “Students Switching Between DDSB@Home and In-Person Learning” sections below for more information.**

Q. Will my child(ren) be in the same DDSB@Home class as their regular school?

A. We have aimed to have students from the same school be grouped together in their DDSB@Home classes but can not guarantee that this will take place.

Q. My child(ren) attend DDSB@Home, do I need to still report their absence on the days they are not present in the virtual school?

A. Yes. Students in the DDSB@Home programs will follow the same process for reporting an absence as students learning in-person. Parents/Guardians, please see the [Report an Absence](#) page of our website for instructions.

Elementary Students Switching Between DDSB@Home and In-Person Learning

****UPDATED** Q. How do switch my child(ren) to OR from DDSB@Home and in-person learning?**

A. The waitlist for transfers to/from DDSB@Home Elementary is now closed. Parents/guardians should approach the school administration to discuss any concerns they may have and have a conversation about their child’s participation in school. Transfers may only be granted for exceptional reasons and only if space is available in the virtual school and/or in-person school.

We initially set a deadline for families to choose between in-person and virtual learning on August 12, 2020 and established additional deadlines since then to respond to transfer requests. We have accommodated all requests, including requests to transfer back to in-person learning up to January 11, 2021, which was the final deadline to request a transfer. Switching to virtual learning while offering an in-person option requires temporarily transferring teachers currently assigned and teaching in-person to the DDSB@Home virtual school. Many factors are considered including class sizes and the number of students wishing to transfer in order to avoid further disruptions to learning and classroom organization.

Secondary Students Switching Between DDSB@Home and In-Person Learning

Q. How do I switch my child(ren) to OR from DDSB@Home and in-person learning?

A. The waitlist for transfers to/from DDSB@Home Secondary is now closed.

Due the current lack of available class placements for students wishing to transfer, those looking for other options should contact your current school’s administration to have a

discussion about learning options for your child. Specific requests may be considered on a case-by-case basis with a valid reason and if space is available in the virtual school and/or in-person school. If a transfer is accepted, the courses available to your child will likely be different.

Please note that secondary students are currently learning in-person for approximately 25% of their time in classes of approximately 15 students, with the remainder of class taking place virtually.

Although it may appear simple to be able to transfer students, it is a very complex process as teachers also need to be transferred. This has the potential to impact course selections for students transferring and would likely result in a very different timetable for them. It also has an impact on current classes and could result in significant timetable changes for all students. Courses are determined by enrollment and as enrollments shift, then so do available courses. At the secondary level, with the compulsory requirements, we are ensuring that changes do not impact students being able to access courses required for graduation.

Q. What will my child(ren) be doing if they are enrolled for in-person but not attending?

A. For students not attending in-person, they should continue to attend their scheduled virtual classes and follow the instructions of the teacher in terms of completing assigned coursework. The virtual component currently represents 75% of the time allocated in a student's schedule. Teachers will also be providing additional support for those students, where possible.

Q. What will my child(ren) be doing if they are enrolled in DDSB@Home and hoping to transfer to in-person?

A. Your child(ren) should continue in their DDSB@Home class until we can accommodate a transfer.

Q. Will there be changes to my timetable?

A. For students transferring, there may be changes to your timetable and course selection depending on class availability. A guidance counselor will connect with you prior to the transfer to ensure that you are enrolled in courses.

For students remaining at their in-person school, it is possible there may be changes to course selections depending on how many students shift to the virtual school, but we will do our best to limit this as much as possible.

Enhanced Health and Safety Procedures

Q. How will students and staff maintain clean hands throughout the school day?

- Hand hygiene supplies will be available and easily accessible in schools and hand sanitizer will be placed at the entrance to each school

- Soap and paper towels will be provided in every classroom with a handwashing sink. Classrooms without a handwashing sink will be provided with alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- A schedule to regularly clean hands will be incorporated into daily routines (e.g. upon entering the school, before lunch and recess breaks, after using bathroom, returning from playing outside and after sneezing/coughing)

Students will be educated on proper cough and sneeze etiquette and to avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth.

Q. How will student washroom use be staffed/organized/cleaned to promote healthy and safety?

A. Washrooms will be cleaned on a regular basis throughout the day. Washroom breaks will be staggered and scheduled according to classes to provide washroom access. Washrooms for students would be designated according to the location of classrooms.

Q. Will children be able to go home for lunch?

A. Children with the permission of their parents/guardians can always go home for lunch.

Q. In elementary, where will lunch be held, how will it be staffed, how many students will eat together, and what procedures are in place to promote health and safety during lunch times?

A. Cafeterias will not be open for use. Lunches at the elementary level will be taking place in each classroom with students in their cohort. They will be supervised by lunchroom supervisors and teaching staff. Students will clean their hands before and after eating. Empty food containers are to be taken back home and not left at school. Students are encouraged to bring their own lunch from home and food sharing will not be permitted.

Q. How are schools addressing/improving the air quality within the building and portables?

A. The DDSB has received additional funding from the Ministry of Education to optimize air quality in schools. In addition, the DDSB employs a variety of strategies to improve air quality within schools. Some strategies include:

- Fresh air is brought into the buildings several times an hour, for a full exchange of fresh air. In the cooler weather, the fresh air is heated prior to entering the occupied areas of the building.
- Filters used in all mechanical systems have been upgraded from MERV 7 to MERV 13.
- Portable units are being installed in spaces where enhanced ventilation is required – this varies between schools across the district due to age/equipment/type of building. A total of 138 units have been purchased to date.
- Although opening windows are not required, as the mechanical systems draw fresh air into the buildings several times an hour, windows can be opened (where they are able to) if it was a preference within individual classrooms.

- We consistently upgrade systems through HVAC upgrade projects within the Board. Between 2015 and 2020, there have been 181 projects related to ventilation at a cost of \$30,195,171. Projects completed range from energy controls, partial ventilation upgrades in older sections of schools, ventilation duct work upgrades through to complete new systems.
- It is important to note that a number of older schools without robust mechanical ventilation, have been replaced by new buildings equipped with state-of-the-art mechanical ventilation systems through accommodation reviews.

Q. What measures are being put in place to support safety in common areas?

A. The DDSB has developed strategies that support general safety in common areas. Here are several examples:

- Directional arrows, posters, and other signage will be present throughout the schools to provide guidance for appropriate distances in a variety of situations such as hallway lineups
- Entry into the school will be staggered to avoid congestion in hallways and corridors
- Pick-up and drop-off of students will happen outside the school, unless other arrangements have been made based on need
- School parking lots and “Kiss and Rides” will be closed off with pylons to all non-bus traffic during the arrival and departure of buses
- Weather permitting, schools will use outdoor space whenever possible for various activities such as breaks and regular classroom activities
- Child(ren) are to carry their belongings with them. We will make further determinations as the winter months approach on winter clothing.

Assemblies and other large gatherings will be postponed for the foreseeable future, until further notification.

Q. What will the DDSB do where the classrooms cannot accommodate the social distancing recommendations from the Ministry?

A. The Board of Trustees passed a motion on August 12 to exceed the Ministry of Education’s guidance on physical distancing of students by:

- a) Ensuring all classes allow for the distancing of students, at a minimum of one metre as recommended in the guidance documents relied upon by the government for other aspects of its reopening plan;
- b) Authorizing the Director of Education to implement any and all measures that the Director may deem necessary and appropriate to best ensure a minimum of one-metre spacing for students, including but not limited to measures such as reorganizing classes, providing portable classrooms, using common areas as classroom space, redeploying

staff, hiring additional school staff, and such other measures as the Director may deem appropriate.

Principals and facilities staff have now re-organized and set up classrooms to provide a minimum of 1-meter distancing between students in elementary classrooms.

Q. What is the DDSB doing to clean schools?

A. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices by DDSB custodial staff have been established, reviewed, and approved by the Durham Region Health Department. Here's some of what we're doing:

- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day throughout the school building
- Schools will undergo extra cleaning and disinfection at the end of each school day
- Soft surfaces that cannot be easily cleaned and disinfected have been removed from classrooms (e.g. plush/absorbent items, upholstered furnishings)

Q. For students with allergies, will alcohol-free sanitizers and cleansers be used?

A. For classrooms without a handwashing sink, students who are allergic to alcohol-based hand sanitizers will be provided accommodations to use handwashing sinks outside of their classroom.

Q. What if I need to drop something off for my child during the school day or talk to my child's teacher? How do I do those things with the new safety provisions?

A. Visits to the school and child care centres will be by appointment only. Wherever possible, telephone meetings with parents/guardians will be held. If you need to get in touch with someone at the school, please call or email your child's school. Unscheduled visitors and family members of child(ren) may not be able to enter the location.

Q. Are parents able to personally drop off students at school?

A. Parents will be able to drop off children but will not be able to enter the school building in the interest and safety of all. Drop off times may differ than those in the past depending on school bells times. All schools parking lots and kiss n rides will be closed at least 15 minutes prior to bell time to allow school buses to load and unload students. This will also enhance pedestrian safety around the school sites.

Q. Are parents/guardians required to wear masks while outdoors on school property?

A. Yes. Parents/guardians are required to wear a mask while outdoors on school property, including during pick-up and drop-off.

Q. Are volunteers allowed to help in the schools?

A. With our ongoing focus on pandemic-related health and safety, volunteers will not be able to enter our schools at this time to work directly with students or within classrooms. We recognize that some volunteers support important programs like our nutrition programs. We encourage parents/community members to continue to volunteer and support through School Community Councils, which will meet virtually. We look forward to inviting our volunteers back into our schools when it is safe to do so.

Q. Will staff, students, and visitors be screened before entering a school? How will that work?

A. Staff, students, and visitors must not come to school if they have symptoms/feel sick, or if they have come in close contact with someone with a suspected or positive case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, including within their household.

Student Screening: The Government of Ontario has developed a new and easy School Self-Assessment Tool to help you determine every morning if your child should be going to school. Please complete this self-assessment every morning. We remind families that child(ren) must stay at home if they are sick. Here's a link to the self-screening: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>.

When secondary students arrive at school, school staff will be confirming with each student that they have completed the mandatory self screening before school starts or when the student arrives. If a student has not completed the screening, they will be directed to do so on their device. Paper copies will also be available for the student to complete.

If the student does not pass the screening before coming to school, they must stay at home and follow the directions outlined in the self-screening tool in order to keep everyone safe.

If the student comes to school and does not pass the screening, they will be required to go to the health room and parents/guardians will be notified that the student needs to return home.

Staff Screening: Staff will fill out a self-assessment tool to ensure awareness of possible symptoms of COVID-19.

Signs will be posted at entrances to the school to remind students, staff, parents/guardians, and essential visitors with information on health and safety policies. Teachers and other staff members will be provided with information on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in children so that appropriate action can be taken if children develop symptoms during the day.

****UPDATED** Q. Will students be required to wear a mask in school?**

A. While the Ministry of Education has made wearing a mask mandatory for students in Grades 1 to 12 (as of January 2021), the DDSB will be actively encouraging all students to wear a mask, unless they have a medical need. Specific programs will be developed to teach all students the importance of wearing a mask. All students on bus transportation are required to wear a mask to board the bus.

Q. What are the Board’s plans to enforce the wearing of masks?

A. Our expectation is that all staff ensure the safety of students within the school. This would be treated as other situations where students are putting the safety of others at risk.

Q. Will masks be provided to students?

A. Yes. Non-medical masks will be made available for students. We encourage students to bring reusable masks from home to wear at school.

Q. What forms of masking are acceptable for students?

A. A non-medical mask (such as a cloth mask) or a medical mask (such as a surgical mask) are acceptable to wear. Face shields can be used in addition to wearing a mask.

Q. Will students participate in music, physical education classes and organized sports teams?

A. Subject teachers will work with departments to implement adjustments to meet health and safety requirements. Delivery of curriculum may look very different in some areas. Physical education and music will be part of the school experience.

Due to the health and safety restrictions at this time organized sports teams and sporting events are not permitted. Large gatherings and assemblies will not occur until provincial direction is given.

The status of 2021 winter and spring OFSAA championships will be determined at a later date.

Q. Will my child be able to use their locker?

A. At this time, student lockers will not be available until further notice. Students are to keep their belongings with them at their desk and are encouraged to only bring the materials they will need for learning.

Q. Will Durham Region Health Department be coming into schools to administer vaccinations, vision screening or oral health as they have in past years?

A. The Durham Region Health Department will not re-enter schools for vision screening, immunization programs, or oral health due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Ontario Ministry of Health announced that vaccines normally offered in school to Grade 7 and 8 students will instead be delivered at community clinics and doctors' offices in parts of Ontario. For more information, please visit the Durham Region Health Department website: <https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/immunizations-and-vaccines.aspx> or call 905-666-6242.

Q. Will school photos be taking place?

A. Any decision to allow school photos will take place in 2021 and we will provide more information at that time.

Class Placements

Q. If siblings are both attending in-person schooling, can they be placed in the same cohort for the same in-person school days?

A. Unless otherwise requested, every effort will be made to place siblings in the same cohort to support both busing and family organization.

Q. Where multiple families are forming online learning bubbles, can those students be placed into the same online classes? / Can parents/guardians request that children be placed together in the same online class?

A. Efforts are being made to accommodate requests like this for the Elementary and Secondary DDSB@Home Programs. However, due to the number of variables including class sizes, we may not be able to accommodate all requests.

COVID-19 Symptoms and Contact Tracing

Q. How will schools conduct contact tracing?

A. Daily records of attendance of all persons within the school building will be kept up to date and available to Durham Region Health Department to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak. School staff will also keep detailed records of seating charts, contact information, and lists for each classroom's transportation and childcare. Students will remain in contact with only their classmates, teacher, and other educational support staff assigned to the classroom for as much of the school day as possible.

Q. What happens if a student gets sick during the school day?

A. Updated guidance from the Ministry of Education has been provided to school boards on August 26, 2020 in [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#).

A detailed protocol has been established in DDSB schools if students become ill during the school day.

- Students or staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms will immediately be separated from others.
- Staff and parents will be directed to consult their health provider and should be provided with information about COVID-19 testing locations.
- Staff and/or students who test positive may not return to school until they are cleared by the Durham Region Public Health Department.
- Staff and/or students who test negative can return to school once they are symptom-free for 24 hours.
- DDSB schools will immediately report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the Durham Region Health Department and the Board.

- DDSB schools will participate in contact tracing through keeping records of classes, transported students, and visitors to schools.

Q. What happens if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school?

A. If a COVID-19 positive case is identified in a school, the Durham Region Health Department will provide further instructions on who else in the school may need testing and/or monitoring/isolation. Staff/children who are being managed by the Durham Region Health Department (e.g. confirmed cases of COVID-19, household contacts of cases, etc.) must follow their instructions on when they can return to school.

We will be posting information on the school and DDSB website, along with notifying staff and parents/guardians if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school so that the school community can be aware.

Q. How will families be notified if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school?

A. Schools and the DDSB are committed to informing families and school staff if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school. Please visit the COVID Advisory webpage for information and updates <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/our-schools/covid-advisory.aspx>.

Program/Course Structure and Curriculum

We will be offering many of the same classes, but due to COVID-19 we are modifying how some courses are delivered to protect the health and safety of students. These involve courses in areas such as the arts, cooperative education, health and physical education, science and technological education. You can learn more about the approach that educators will be taking by reviewing [Guiding Principles for All Subject Specific Areas](#).

Q. How will the curriculum, course workload, class size, one-on-one assistance, and applied demonstrations (eg. Science labs, music, etc.) in online learning be structured in comparison to in-person teaching?

A. All aspects of the curriculum will be covered in both in-person and online learning. Demonstrations will take place virtually where possible or digitally.

Q. Will hands-on courses in areas like technological education (woodworking, auto body, metalworking, etc.) be provided in an online format?

A. As many courses as possible will be offered to students based on collective student interest and qualifications of teachers. Similar to other provincial online course platforms, some specialty hands-on courses may not be available in the virtual classroom.

Q. Will sufficient electives be provided in both online and in-person cohorts for students to complete all current programs?

A. As many courses as possible will be offered to students based on collective student interest and qualifications of teachers. Similar to other provincial online course platforms, some specialty hands-on and other specialty courses may not be available in the virtual classroom.

Q. How will peer-to-peer tutoring work for in-person and online learning?

A. Students will be able to engage with each other in their learning through online course platforms Google Classroom, Google Meet and D2L Brightspace.

Q. For online courses, will all classes be recorded and made available for review by parents and students later? For parents working during the day or assisting multiple children with at home learning, simultaneously assisting live classes may be difficult.

A. These classes are live, virtual and interactive with various students and will not be provided in a recorded format due to privacy concerns.

Q. Will supplies be provided for online courses that may require materials such as art, music, etc.?

A. Where possible, educators will focus on aspects of the curriculum that do not require course-specific materials. Course educators will communicate with families and students if any specific materials are required and child(ren) will be provided materials that are determined as necessary for the program.

Q. Will cooperative education/work education placements be taking place?

A. Work experiences may resume as long as the risk of infection is mitigated by all participants. When on work placements students will follow industry requirements for the field of study. In-person classes will follow standard cohorting guidelines.

Q. Will secondary students be required to fulfill community service/volunteering hours? If so, how will this be done safely?

A. The Ministry of Education has directed school boards that secondary students are still required to complete the 40 hours of community service. Community service hours can be completed through an online format.

Q. Are secondary schools going to be holding commencement ceremonies?

A. In the fall secondary schools organized commencement events for the 2020 graduates, but the type of event varied from school to school. Future events will also be planned with health and safety in mind. Events may be virtual, in-person (outdoor with appropriate distancing strategies) or a blend. Please contact your school for more details.

Q. Will secondary students still take the OSSLT?

A. The literacy graduation requirement will be waived for all students graduating during the 2020-21 school year. There will be a pilot test this spring for students who are not graduating this year. We will share more information with families once we receive it.

Q. Will there be EQAO assessments this year?

A. In June 2020, the Ontario Minister of Education announced that there will be no Grade 3 or 6 EQAO assessments in the 2020–2021 school year.

The first administration period for the Grade 9 Assessment of Mathematics field test for students completing in-person Grade 9 academic and applied courses will be November 2020. EQAO will work with individual school boards so that students can take the field test upon completion of their mathematics course. Monthly administrations for students completing in-person courses will take place thereafter until June 2021.

Kindergarten/Elementary Students Specific

Q. How will in-person kindergarten be structured to ensure physical distancing between students?

A. Learning opportunities throughout the day will be set up to encourage a one metre distancing between children where possible. Educators will continue to use the indoor and outdoor learning environments throughout the day to promote physical distancing between children.

Q. Will play based learning be included, given that toys and other high touch objects won't be used?

A. Yes, play-based learning will continue to be a fundamental aspect of the Kindergarten program. Educators will continue to use materials that promote play-based learning that can be easily cleaned where possible. Hand washing will also be encouraged when children transition between learning opportunities.

Q. What will the online-kindergarten course structure and daily content look like?

A. The online kindergarten program will be structured with real-time and flex-time opportunities that are age appropriate and place a focus on the four frames: demonstrating math and literacy behaviours, belonging and contributing, self-regulation and well-being, and problem-solving and innovating. Students will have daily real-time interaction with the Kindergarten Educator Team to support their learning and development and may be divided into shorter periods throughout the school day.

Technology Needs

Q. My child requires a Chromebook for learning, how can I receive one?

A. Parents of students enrolled in DDSB@Home in Grade K-6 that do not currently have a DDSB device assigned to them, can request a device by contacting their DDSB@Home campus. A request will be submitted to IT Services who in turn will contact the parent/guardian via email to book an appointment for curbside pick-up at the Education Centre. Please note that a DDSB device is not required as any web-enabled device can be used to access DDSB@Home lessons and resources.

Q. My child is having technical issues with their Chromebook. Who can I contact to fix the issues?

A. Students learning in-person should report their device damage to their teacher. From there, schools will troubleshoot or submit an IT Incident as per the standard process.

DDSB@Home students and parents can access troubleshooting tips by visiting [DDSB@Home Elementary](#) or [DDSB@Home Secondary](#) websites. If the problem persists, students should report their device damage to their teacher. From there, schools will submit an IT Incident as per the standard process. The family will be contacted via email to book an appointment for a curbside swap at the Education Centre.

Q. Do I need to use a DDSB Chromebook to access virtual learning?

A. No, **any web enabled device** can be used to access the learning that educators are providing to your child(ren). A DDSB Chromebook is not a requirement.

Q. How can I change my child(ren)'s password?

A. Students learning in-person should contact their teacher for password assistance. DDSB@Home students (under the age of 16) can reset their own password using the parent email address listed in PowerSchool. The reset tool can be accessed by clicking the 'Can't access your account?' link on the Microsoft login page.

Q. For students with poor internet access, what assistance will be available to provide sufficient access to online materials and classes?

A. We are providing mobile hotspots to families who require them for their child(ren) to participate in learning through the DDSB@Home Program. Parents/guardians of DDSB@Home students should contact their DDSB@Home campus who will create a request for a Student Internet Device (Mifi or Phone with hotspot) to be mailed to the home. A maximum of one hotspot will be provided per family.

Q. How can I receive updates and communications from DDSB about my child(ren)?

A. In order to receive direct updates about your child(ren)'s education, you must have a valid email registered with us. Please contact your child(ren)'s home school to make this request. We will need to verify your identity for legal/privacy reasons.

Q. If students are out of the country (for vacation/travel) will students be able to access online courses remotely and will they be able to use their Chromebooks abroad?

A. As long as students have access to wifi and are able to sign in for live classes, they will be able to register in the DDSB@Home Program. Students are required to be Ontario residents to access our schools without fees. For international students, fees are applied and a separate registration process is required.

Well-Being

Q. Where can I find information and help for mental health and well-being?

A. Starting a new school year can be challenging for many students, especially with so many changes happening in school and in the outside world. The DDSB's Inclusive Student Services team has also developed a set of resources on our website that you can visit at [Family and Community COVID-19 Supports](#).

Special Education

Q. Will medically fragile, IEP, and special needs students be able to participate in in-person or online learning 5 days a week?

A. All elementary students have access to learning 5 days a week whether in person or online. Secondary students who are reviewed into special education programs will have access to learning 5 days a week in their selected format of learning (in-person or online). Special education class teams (students, teacher, educational assistants and other support staff) will remain together in support of student learning whether family choice is in-person or online learning. This will allow for a greater flexibility for students with significant health vulnerabilities which are related to their educational accommodation needs.

School staff and Inclusive Student Services will collaborate with families to plan programming, accommodations and supports. For more information, please view the Inclusive Student Services Special Education and Mental Health Supports FAQ: <https://www.ddsb.ca/en/whats-happening/resources/Documents/Return-to-School/ISS-Supports-FAQs.pdf>.

Q. If I choose virtual learning through DDSB@Home for my child with special needs who is currently in a small class placement, will I lose that spot when I decide it is safe to return?

A. Students in special education programs for the 2020-2021 will receive educational programming affiliated with their program placement whether in school or through remote learning.

However, if a student registers with an alternative provider, for example a private school, that is a transfer in enrolment and the placement in the program would be offered to another family.

Q. For students who are hearing or vision impaired, what measures are being taken to ensure they can fully participate in course activities?

A. Accommodations may include, based on individual student needs, use of closed captioning, cleaning protocols for tactile materials and some provision of clear masks to educators to support non-verbal communication such as lip reading.

School staff and Inclusive Student Services (e.g., Hearing Resource Team and Vision Resource Team) will collaborate with families to plan programming, accommodations and supports.

Q. Will the DDSB@Home Program have special education supports such as SERTs and Educational Assistants?

A. Special education supports such as SERTs and Educational Assistants will be provided in the DDSB@Home Program.

Child Care

Q. Will before and after school care programs be provided? If so, how will students be separated so as not to cross between cohorts?

A. All DDSB Licensed Child Care centres will be able to operate at full capacity effective September 1, 2020 using group ratios as defined in the Child Care and Early Years Act. Extended Day Programs will continue to operate in shared space with increased cleaning in between cohorts. Child Care staff will supervise students in a designated location as the space is cleaned between cohorts. Where possible, we have moved before- and after- school child care in unloaded classrooms for exclusive use. Please check with your child care provider for more information about their re-opening details.

Q. Will considerations be made to group children who may require after school care, and or may require taking the bus home?

A. It may not be possible to group students in this way. However, schools have considered this information as cohorts are organized by schools.

Transportation

Q. My child(ren) take the bus to school. How will busing work with the new enhanced safety protocols?

A. The DDSB is working with [Durham Student Transportation Services \(DSTS\)](https://www.dsts.on.ca) to ensure the cleaning and disinfection of school buses meets expectations outlined by the Durham Region Health Department and Ministry of Health. For more information, please read the DSTS COVID-19 information page and FAQ at: <https://www.dsts.on.ca/covid-19> & <https://www.dsts.on.ca/document/dsts-faq-final>

DSTS can be reached by e-mail at: concerns@dsts.on.ca

Q. I missed the deadline for the DSTS survey/I never received the DSTS survey and my child takes the bus. What do I do?

A. Please reach out to DSTS directly with your questions and concerns. They can be reached by email: concerns@dsts.on.ca or by phone: 905-666-6979.

DDSB Offices and Community Use of Schools

Q. Will I be able to book school space through a Community Use of Schools Permit?

A. Our priority is providing a safe learning environment for our students. For that reason, we will not be issuing any permits for community use of schools so that we can focus on deep cleaning schools daily.