

DDSB Return to School FAQ: As of December 2022

***Please note: These FAQs may continue to change as information/updates are received from the Ministry of Education and Durham Region Health Department.**

Learning Models

Q. Can I switch my child between DDSB@Home virtual school and in-person school?

In March 2022, families were able to select a learning preference through the Parent Portal for the 2022-2023 school year. This decision is for the entire year as once schools are staffed, it is unlikely that changes can be made as we will not be re-staffing and re-organizing schools throughout the year. If you have concerns about your child's current learning preference, please contact the administration at the school your child is currently attending.

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. Students will receive 300 minutes of face-to-face educator instruction, and the full range of the elementary curriculum will be provided. Full-day in-person learning five days per week in a regular semester schedule will be in place for secondary students who selected in-person learning for the 2022-23 school year. Schools are a mask friendly environment and students, visitors, families, and staff are strongly recommended to wear masks while at school and/or on the bus. Enhanced health and safety protocols continue to be in place.

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 remotely in the same class that they are in 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. If I have trouble accessing the Parent Portal, my child's OEN, Chromebook issues etc. during the school year, who should I contact for assistance?

A. School staff are able to help you with the Parent Portal, Google Classroom, and Chromebooks and provide information about: passwords, login information, access codes, equipment, obtaining a Chromebook, power cords, phone number and email updates, name change, absences, address change, OEN's, report cards, etc. Please reach out to the school secretary for assistance with any of the above issues. Contact information for schools may be found on our [website](#). Parents/guardians are also encouraged to read our [Parent Portal FAQ](#) for support.

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. Where can I find School Year Calendars?

A. You can view the approved 2022-23 school year calendars on the [DDSB website](#).

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. For children who are learning in-person and are unable to attend school, we will provide school work for them to complete. This follows our regular practice when children are ill.

DDSB@Home Elementary and Secondary Virtual Schools

Please visit the [Elementary@Home](#) and [Secondary@Home](#) websites for additional information, updates and FAQs.

Q. If my child(ren) are new to DDSB (new to Durham Region or starting JK) how can I choose virtual learning for them in the registration process?

A. Elementary students who are entering Junior Kindergarten or are new to DDSB and secondary students who are new to DDSB can select DDSB@Home Elementary or DDSB@Home Secondary from the drop down menu on the [New Student Registration form](#).

Q. What platform will be used to deliver online learning in DDSB@Home 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 those of older students.

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.

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

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

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

Q. What procedures are in place to promote health and safety during lunch times?

A. Secondary cafeterias will be open for use and students will be free to leave school during the lunch hour.

Lunches at the elementary level will be supervised by lunchroom supervisors and teaching staff. Students are encouraged to clean their hands before and after eating and to bring their own lunch from home.

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

A. A big part of health and safety in schools is air quality. Please review our Ventilation Measures page for updated information about [air quality](#) projects and investments, as well as school-specific information.

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. The following highlights indicate some of our protocols:

- 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. Will rapid antigen testing be available to staff and/or students?

A. To support school boards with an ongoing supply of tests, the Ministry has shared that they will continue to distribute rapid antigen test (RAT) kits to school boards. Rapid

antigen tests will be provided to staff/students upon their request, and/or upon return from an unplanned absence.

Q. Will there be regular asymptomatic testing available for students?

A. The Ministry of Education organized asymptomatic testing program will not be resuming for the 2022-23 school year. [Find out more information on COVID-19 testing.](#)

Q. Are there any PCR testing options available for my family?

A. A full list of eligible individuals can be found on the [Government of Ontario website](#) as well as information about testing sites.

Q. Will I know if my child's teacher is vaccinated?

A. We do not have the legislated right to share information specific to individuals.

Q. Where can I book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment for myself or my children?

A. You can book a vaccine appointment by visiting [durhamvaccinebooking.ca](#) or call 1-888-444-5113.

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

A. Although the masking requirement has been removed in schools, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health has indicated it is strongly recommended to wear a mask in public settings. Schools are a mask friendly environment and students, visitors, families, and staff are strongly recommended to wear masks while at school and/or on the bus. **We will continue to have masks available for students who choose to still wear them.**

Q. Are there circumstances when wearing a mask in school is required?

A. Yes, currently, there are certain circumstances where the Ministry of Health requires masking while attending school ([Ministry of Health: Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#)).

- If returning to school after a 5-day isolation period (COVID positive result), masks are required to be worn for days 6-10.
- Asymptomatic household contacts that pass the screening and can attend school or work are required to wear a mask for 10 days after last exposure to the COVID positive household member.
- Under [current federal travel requirements](#), upon return from international travel, individuals who are **NOT** fully vaccinated must wear a mask at all times when in public spaces (including schools and child cares) for 14 days.

Exemptions for this masking requirement include individuals who need to remove their mask for security or safety reasons; children under the age of 2; and children aged 2 to 5 who are unable to tolerate wearing a mask. Note: Fully vaccinated travelers are no longer required to wear a mask when in public settings for 14 days after arrival in Canada.

Q. Are volunteers allowed to help in the schools?

A. Yes, volunteers are allowed to help in schools. Please call or email your child's school to inform them of your intent to volunteer.

Q. Will staff, students, and visitors be screened before entering a school?

A. We recommend that staff, students, and families continue to complete the [daily self-screening](#). The school screening tool provides accurate guidance on whether your child should attend school. If your child is sick, please ensure that they stay home to protect everyone at school.

Q. What are the public health requirements when returning to Ontario after domestic travel or to Canada after international travel?

A. [Quarantine and Public Health Requirements When Arriving to Ontario:](#)

You do not have to quarantine when you enter Ontario from another Canadian province, territory or region unless you have symptoms of COVID-19.

When you arrive in Ontario, you must:

- follow all provincial public health measures and rules.
- continue to monitor yourself for symptoms of COVID-19.
- wear a mask or face covering [if required](#).

[Quarantine and Public Health Requirements When Arriving to Canada:](#)

Unless you qualify as a fully vaccinated traveller, there are strict requirements you must follow even if you are exempt from quarantine.

For 14 days upon your return you must:

- wear a mask at all times when in public spaces.
- maintain a list of all close contacts for your first 14 days in Canada.
- monitor yourself for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Q. How long does my child need to stay home before coming back to school, if they recently travelled outside of Canada?

A. Please review the Government of Canada [checklist of testing and quarantine requirements](#) before returning to school.

- Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated children 5 through 11 years old are exempt from the 14-day quarantine, however they need to wear a mask in public settings (including school) for 14 days after arrival to Canada.
- Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated youth 12 to 17 years of age must complete the 14-day quarantine, even when they are accompanied by travellers who qualify as a fully vaccinated traveller.
- Fully vaccinated children are exempt from quarantine, without any limitations on their activities.

Q. Are parents/guardians allowed in schools to watch their children's sporting events?

A. Visitors to sporting events and extracurriculars are permitted. We look forward to having families back in the stands, but please do not attend if you are sick. Please reach out to your child's school for further information.

Q. Are school assemblies permitted to take place in-person?

A. Yes, school assemblies are permitted to take place in-person but may take place virtually at the discretion of school staff.

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

A. Yes, the use of lockers/cubbies is permitted.

COVID-19 Symptoms Protocol

Note: Information on this section is subject to change based on updates to provincial guidance on case, contact and outbreak management in schools.

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

A. A detailed protocol has been established in DDSB schools if students become ill during the school day (subject to change by the Ministry of Education).

Students or staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms will immediately be separated from others. Each school will continue to have a dedicated space that will serve as a location to manage individuals that may become ill while attending school. The isolation area will

be equipped with a Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Kit. Those who develop symptoms during the school day will be asked to arrange a way home as soon as possible. Siblings of a student exhibiting symptoms must follow the instructions for isolation requirements that are outlined in the [Ontario School Screening](#) tool. Staff and/or students with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 are presumed positive and should follow [DRHD isolation and/or self-monitoring guidelines](#).

Q. How are COVID-19 cases in schools reported?

A. The [COVID-19 Advisory](#) section will continue to be posted on the DDSB website and will provide a status update on self-reported confirmed cases involving a staff member or student in a school setting. The COVID-19 advisory section will also include absenteeism data due to illness, in addition to any notices of a classroom, cohort or school closure.

Schools will continue to notify school communities (staff and parents/guardians) at the end of each school day if there are self-reported positive COVID-19 test results in a class.

Q. How do I report my child's absence and record the reason for their absence?

A. There are a few methods you can use to report your child's absence from school.

- Calling 1-844-350-2646
- [Online](#)
- On your smartphone through the SchoolMessenger app

Please refer to the [Report an Absence](#) page of our website for a list of student absence codes.

Q. What are the quarantine requirements for students and staff?

A. Please refer to the Durham Region Health Department [Case and Contact Information Hub](#) and use the [school screening tool](#) for guidance on when students and staff can return to school if they have been identified as a positive case or close contact.

Program/Course Structure and Curriculum

Q. Will field trips be taking place?

A. Schools have resumed field trips. Overnight trips are permitted, however no international travel for field trips is permitted. Please contact your child's school for further information.

Q. For online courses, will all classes be recorded and made available for review by parents and students later?

A. These classes are live and interactive. Classes cannot be provided in a recorded format due to privacy concerns.

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.

Q. Will students participate in extra-curricular activities?

A. Extra-curricular activities including school clubs, non-sport activities, intramural and inter-school sports may resume.

Q. Will secondary students be required to fulfill community service/volunteering hours?

A. The community involvement graduation requirement of 40 hours has been restored for the 2022-23 school year. More information about [Community Involvement Hours](#) can be found on the DDSB website.

Q. Will secondary students still take the OSSLT?

A. Yes, the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) graduation requirement will be restored for students graduating in the 2022-23 school year.

Q. Will there be EQAO assessments this year?

A. EQAO assessments resumed in the 2021–2022 school year. At this time, we have not received information regarding EQAO requirements for the 2022-2023 school year, however we anticipate they will continue to take place. We will share more information when it becomes available. Please visit <https://www.eqao.com/> for additional information and updates.

Q. How can I view my children's grades and report cards?

A. You can view your children's grades by logging into the [Parent Portal](#) and navigating to the **Grades and Attendance** section in the left panel. Typically parents/guardians can also access report cards in this section when they become available at specific times during the school year. If you have trouble accessing this information please contact your children's school office for assistance.

Q. How can I request a copy of my student transcript?

A. Through the school year, transcript requests are processed through the student's most recently attended school or the secondary school they graduated from. Contact the Guidance Department of the school you last attended to request a transcript. All secondary schools keep student transcripts for 55 years. Contact information for all DDSB schools is available in the school directory: <https://schooldirectory.ddsb.ca/>

If the secondary school you last attended is now permanently closed, please visit our [website](#) to find out which current DDSB secondary school keeps those records.

Beginning the second week of July through to the end of August, you may request a transcript online at: <https://transcriptrequests.ddsb.ca/>.

Kindergarten/Elementary Students Specific

Q. How old does my child need to be to register for Kindergarten?

A. Your child must meet the following age requirements to enter Kindergarten:

- To register for Junior Kindergarten, your child must be 4 years old by December 31 in the current year.
- To register for Senior Kindergarten, your child must be 5 years old by December 31 in the current year.

Q. How do I register my child for Kindergarten?

A. To register a child in Kindergarten:

1. Use the [school locator tool](#) to find schools designated as the home school in your area.
2. Create a [parent account](#) or log in to your existing account.
3. Once your parent account has been created, please be sure to select the correct school year.

For more information on this process, please visit the [DDSB website](#).

Q. What is being done in Kindergarten classrooms to protect students?

A. Students in Kindergarten can wear masks/face coverings if they/their parent/guardian so chooses. Kindergarten classrooms also have a portable HEPA air purification unit.

Q. Will play-based learning be included, given that the use of toys and other high touch objects may be limited?

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. Hand washing will also be encouraged when children transition between learning opportunities.

Q. What will the DDSB@Home 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 activities and lessons may be divided into shorter periods throughout the school day.

Technology Needs

Q. My child requires a Chromebook for learning in DDSB@Home, 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 pick-up. 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. How can I change my child(ren)'s password?

A. Students learning in-person should contact their teacher for password assistance.

Student passwords can be changed or recovered through the self-serve password tool. Instructions can be found on the [Digital Learning page](#) of the DDSB website. If the self-serve option is not working for you, please contact your teacher for password assistance.

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

A. Where possible, 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 hot spot will be provided per family.

Registration

Q. How do I register a new student?

A. To register a new student in a DDSB school:

1. Use the [school locator](#) to find schools in your area boundaries.
2. Complete the new student [online registration](#).
3. Wait for the school to contact you for an appointment (you will need to provide supporting documents at this time).
4. Go to the meeting with the required supporting documents and complete registration.

For confirmation regarding your child's home school designation, contact our Property and Planning Department via e-mail at: Planning.Department@ddsb.ca or by phone 905-666-6421 or 1-800-339-6913 ext. 6421.

You can register in another language by using one of the translated language forms below:

- [Arabic](#)
- [Dari](#)
- [Farsi](#) (Persian)
- [Gujarati](#)
- [Hindi](#)
- [Chinese](#) simplified (Mandarin)
- [Spanish](#)
- [Tamil](#)
- [Urdu](#)

To register with one of the forms above, print, complete and return the form to your child's school via email.

Q. My children already attend a DDSB school, how do I confirm their registration?

A. Returning students verify their registration information annually. We inform parents in the summer that this needs to be done.

To register a returning student in a DDSB school:

1. Go to the [Parent Portal](#).
2. Login.
3. Select the "**Returning Student Registration**" button.
4. Complete the registration.

***Q. My child is a DDSB student moving from one DDSB school to another. How can I transfer their student information to the new school?**

A. The best place to start is by speaking with office staff at your children's current school. They can help you navigate the process of transferring schools within the Board. School contact information can be found here: <https://schooldirectory.ddsbc.ca/>.

Q. My child attends a DDSB school but we are moving outside of DDSB to another school board. How do I de-enrol them from DDSB?

A. Reach out to the DDSB school your child most recently attended to confirm de-enrollment. They will be the best persons to assist you. School contact information can be found here: <https://schooldirectory.ddsbc.ca/>.

Q. How do I register an international student (non Canadian resident)?

A. To apply to school as an international student, complete the [International Student Application package](#). If you require assistance with the package contact the International Education Department by phone at 905-666-5500 ext. 5497 or by email at InternationalEd@ddsbc.ca.

Q. I want to take my children out of DDSB and provide home schooling for them. How do I do that?

A. Parents/guardians can start the process by contacting the Superintendent's office for the school(s) their children currently attend and informing them of their intent to home school. If you are not sure how to reach your school's area Superintendent's office, staff at the school will be able to provide that information to you. The home schooling procedure and associated forms can be found on the [DDSB website](#).

Q. How can I transfer my child from our designated home school to a DDSB school outside of our boundary?

A. All students must be registered at their designated home school. To discuss the options available to you if you are wanting to transfer to an ‘out of area’ (not your designated home school) school, please begin your request with your child’s current school. School level staff will be the best persons to assist you with your child’s education. Review the [Permission to Enrol Procedure](#) (school other than designated home school).

It is important to understand the following criteria with respect to a request for out of area students:

- Out of area status is based on space availability and this process is reviewed each year. It is not recommended as a stable environment for students as they may be asked to return to their home school after the first week of classes if the space is needed for someone within the boundaries.
- All students moving from Grade 8 to Grade 9 must attend their home school.
- Any consideration for any variance to the point above, must fall into an “extenuating circumstance” category (ie. police conditions; medical reason, supported by a doctor letter).
- Transportation is not provided for out of area students.

Q. How do I register my children for summer school?

A. You can register for summer school (elementary and secondary school) through the Durham Continuing Education website. Learn more about [summer school programs](#).

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](#). You can also visit the [Well-Being and Mental Health webpage](#) for a list of services offered to students and families and to connect with our Mental Health team directly.

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 will 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, teachers, educational assistants and other support staff) will remain together in support of student learning, no matter which learning option their family has selected. We understand the need for 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](#).

Q. If I have chosen 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 will receive educational programming affiliated with their program placement whether in school or through remote learning.

However, if a student registers with an alternate provider, for example a private school, that is a transfer of 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.

Child Care

Q. Will before and after school care programs be provided?

A. All DDSB Licensed Child Care centres are operating at full capacity using group ratios as defined in the Child Care and Early Years Act. Please check with your child care provider for more information.

Transportation

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

A. The DDSB is working with [Durham Student Transportation Services \(DSTS\)](#) to ensure the cleaning and disinfection of school buses meets expectations outlined by the Durham Region Health Department and Ministry of Health. Buses will operate at full capacity and enhanced cleaning practices will continue including the high touch point cleaning twice daily. For more information, please reach out to DSTS by e-mail at: concerns@dsts.on.ca.

****UPDATED**** Q. What happens if my child's bus is cancelled due to inclement weather?

A. In the event that transportation services are cancelled due to inclement weather, both elementary and secondary schools located within the affected cancellation zone(s) will remain open.

In very rare situations, if a decision is made to close schools:

- Elementary schools located in the affected zone(s) would be closed.
- Secondary schools located in the affected zone(s) would switch to a virtual learning day for all students.

How will I be notified if transportation services are cancelled and/or schools are closed?

Families will be notified as soon as possible (no later than 7:00 a.m.) through a posting on the DDSB website, social media and where possible, through local radio stations and media outlets.

What zone am I in?

You can review the inclement weather zone maps by visiting the [DSTS website](#).

DDSB Offices and Community Use of Schools

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

A. Community use of schools has resumed in many schools, subject to availability. For inquiries, email CommunityUseOfSchools@ddsb.ca.