

August 25, 2021

Wakefield School: Return to School Protocol



Dear Parents:

Firstly, we hope that you have enjoyed this beautiful summer and have filled yourselves up with visits and hugs from the special people in your lives. Thank you again for all of the positive support, kind words and patience through last year- we all appreciated it!

Again this year, we are dealing with a COVID reality at school and information is being updated regularly. This document is based on the latest information from the Ministry and Public Health guidelines: <https://www.quebec.ca/en/education/back-to-school-2021>

Elementary students will be returning to school to full time, in person learning, with continued enhanced health and safety measures in place and a return to a normal school environment as much as possible. This is an operational guide that respects all of the guidelines and mandates put forward by Public Health, the Minister of Education and the WQSB. It will be adjusted as necessary to reflect the latest Ministry and Public Health guidelines.

This document will provide information about COVID health protocols and what school will look like this year. **Please carefully read through the document and discuss relevant aspects with your child at home before starting school.**

PROGRESSIVE START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR:

Again this year, we will welcome our students in a staggered entry over the first few days so that we can ensure that safety measures and routines are reviewed.

For kindergarten groups, K4 and K5 classes, the schedule was mailed to parents individually last week with your meeting times and child's schedule.

For the rest of the school population, Grades 1-6, the schedule is as follows:

- **Monday, August 30: Cycle 2 & 3 students (grades 3-6)**
- **Tuesday, August 31: Cycle 1 students (grades 1&2)**
- **Wednesday, September 1: all grades are at school**

Parents are welcome to accompany their children into the school yard for the first 20 minutes of the morning, to meet teachers, so long as they are wearing masks. After this time, teachers will escort the students inside. Parents are not permitted in the building at this time.

Please note we will be following our school calendar as published- holidays and PD days.

DAILY HEALTH CHECK:

It is important that you check in with your child each morning to ensure that they are not exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms before sending them to school. Please contact the school if they develop

symptoms at home. We will take the temperature if any students or staff are not feeling well at school using a non-touch thermometer.

Any students or staff who present with COVID-19 symptoms during the school day will be sent home immediately. It is important that you pick up your child as soon as you are contacted for everyone's safety.

It is important that your child's emergency medical forms are completed and returned to the school and updated if necessary.

PROTOCOLS TO FOLLOW IF COVID-19 IS SUSPECTED OR DETECTED:

At this time, we are waiting for an update on the protocols for a suspected or positive case in the school. We will send this to parents as soon as it is made available to us.

Public Health Resources

A good reference source is the COVID-19 Self-care Guide (<https://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/msss/en/document-002492>), which will provide instructions on what to do. Information about the steps to follow, including how to determine if you need to take a test, is also available at Québec.ca (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/>).

Lastly, the COVID-19 Self-assessment tool is very helpful when determining next steps with your child's symptoms: <https://covid19.quebec.ca/surveys/cdd2/introduction?language=en-ca>

The School Day

Currently, we are organizing the school in such a way to safely return as a group of 300+ people in one building while following the guidelines established by Public Health and the Ministry of Education, but also to be able to move to another level of restriction, such as bubbles, if need be. For now, there are no restrictions with mixing groups or class bubbles, however we will proceed cautiously and prudently, especially indoors, to maintain a level of safety and comfort. We are planning for the flexibility to adjust in a more open or closed way, depending on our regional situation with COVID cases.

ARRIVAL TO SCHOOL:

We will return to our usual way of starting the school day:

DAYCARE: if your child is registered for AM daycare, they can be dropped off at 7:30 am at the front door. They will be in the multi-purpose room until 7:45am and then will be outside in the yard with a daycare educator.

BUS: buses will arrive at different times between 7:45am-8:05am. The students will unload one bus at a time and proceed through the gate and into the school yard. Please note the protocols for the bus in the Transportation section below.

WALKERS: students are encouraged to arrive at the 8:05am bell time. They can come to the school yard or through the front door if it is after 8:05am.

DROP OFFS: we are expecting a lot of parents to be dropping off in the mornings; parking will be a challenge. Where possible, please drop your child off at the 8:05am bell time rather than prior to the start of school so that we can stagger the number of students coming in.

All students who are being dropped off by parents after 8:05am should enter either through the front door. Parents will no longer be signing these students in at the office. There will be tape marking 2m distances at the front and side entrances of the school should there be a line up and we ask that you do not linger at the school when you drop off your child. Please wear a mask. All other exterior doors will be locked.

All students and staff must sanitize their hands upon entry to the school- stations will be set up.

TRANSPORTATION:

All students will have an assigned seat designated; students are not permitted to change seats at any time. Siblings will be sitting together. Students in Grades 1 through 6 are required to wear a mask on the bus. Busses will be disinfected after each run. Bus drivers will also be wearing PPE (masks, goggles and gloves). Students will be expected to sanitize their hands upon the entry and exit of the bus. If your child is unable to follow the rules on the bus, their transportation may be suspended. You will be able to access your child’s Transportation information through the Mozaik Parent Portal by August 25th.

DESIGNATED DOORS:

In order to relieve congestion and reduce contact, each hallway of classes will be using an assigned door throughout the school day to transition from indoors to the playground:

Kindergarten Hallway	Exit at the end of the Kindergarten hallway
Grades 1 & 2 Hallway	Front door
Grades 3 & 4 Hallway	Exit at the end of the Grade 3-4 hallway
Grades 5 & 6 Hallway	Main playground door

Class Bubbles/ Distancing Measures

There are no bubbles or distancing measures in place for students, but we need to be prepared to make the switch to this if the guidelines change. The staff are still recommended to keep 2m distance from the students and from other adults. We will minimize the contact between groups throughout the day when possible.

The most effective ways of reducing our risk at school is to focus on three key habits: wearing a mask, keeping a 2m distance, and proper and frequent hand washing.

Staff will be encouraged to engage in teaching and learning activities outside when possible.

Common Areas

For now, our common rooms will be open, including the gym, resource rooms and multi-purpose room. Although students from other classes can mix, we will schedule only one group at a time in these areas as much as possible. Students will not require a mask during PE class.

Personal Materials/ Sharing

We will be cautious of students sharing materials. Students should come to school with their own school supplies and limit the items coming from home besides their backpack, lunch kit and water bottle each day.

Please be sure that all school supplies are labelled with your child's name. Agendas will be used to communicate school news and between parents and teachers, but any messages for the office needs to be sent by email or by phone. We will limit the amount of items going between home and school. Please ensure that your child is not bringing any toys, outdoor gear or extras from home. Extra clothes and indoor shoes should be left at school.

Masks

Grade 1- 6 students: Procedural masks are mandatory for all students in Grades 1 through 6 in all indoor areas of the school as well as on the school bus. They do not need to wear masks during PE class or outdoors, however your child can choose to wear their mask during these times. The school will provide medical masks, but parents can also provide their own of a medical grade.

Staff: Medical masks are mandatory for all staff unless they are alone in a room or can maintain a 2m distance.

Kindergarten students: Masks are not mandatory. Should you want your child to wear a mask at school, please be sure to train your child on the proper use of masks at home.

Handwashing /Sanitizing

As we did last year, we will ask students to wash hands or use hand sanitizer at school often. The soaps and hand sanitizers that we are using are appropriate for their age and proper cleaning. Each classroom is equipped with a sink, soap and paper towel dispensers. If they have dry skin from the products, you can send your child with lotion that stays at school.

Lockers/ Cubbies

Students will be assigned a cubby or locker for their belongings. They will not share these spaces with others.

Washrooms

Washrooms will be disinfected completely several times throughout the day, as per Public Health guidelines and we will minimize the number of students using it at one time.

Water Fountains

As part of our health and safety measures, the water fountains will be closed for drinking from; however, they can fill their bottles.

We encourage students to bring water from home to start each day. Please remember to label your child’s water bottle. They cannot share their bottles. Please make sure that your child has enough water for their whole day.

Office/ Attendance Procedures

We ask that parents do not come by the office unannounced at any point during the day. If you need something from us, please contact us first and we will let you know how we will proceed. Most exchanges will happen by us meeting you out front of the building wearing a mask. If you need to report your child’s absence or any end of day changes, please contact the office by email wakefield@wqsb.qc.ca or phone 819-459-2373. To reduce contact, we will not allow students to use the phone and we will not be using the agendas to communicate changes in routines. Please advise of any end of day changes to the office by 1:30pm by phone or email; otherwise we cannot guarantee the message is received and your child will go to their expected place. As with last year, much of our communication will be via email.

Staggered Schedule

Please note the changes in our daily schedule in order to accommodate additional recesses to reduce numbers of students in the school yard at one time and to ensure we can move to bubbles if need be. Here is the adjusted schedule:

JUNIOR SCHEDULE (K4, K5, Grades 1 & 2)	SENIOR SCHEDULE (Grades 3 – 6)
8:05-8:10am – HOMEROOM 8:10-9:00am – 1 st PERIOD 9:00-9:30am – 2 nd PERIOD 9:30-9:50am – AM RECESS 9:50 -10:10am – 2 nd PERIOD 10:10-11:00am – 3 rd PERIOD 11:00-11:50am - 4 th PERIOD 11:50 – 12:15pm – LUNCH- EAT IN CLASS 12:15-12:40pm- LUNCH RECESS OUTSIDE 12:40 –1:00pm – PM RECESS 1:00- 1:50pm – 5 th PERIOD 1:50– 2:40pm – 6 th PERIOD 2:40 – 2:50 – STAGGERED DISMISSAL	8:05-8:10am – HOMEROOM 8:10-9:00am – 1 st PERIOD 9:00 – 9:50am – 2 nd PERIOD 9:50 – 10:10am – AM RECESS 10:10-11:00am – 3 rd PERIOD 11:00-11:50am - 4 th PERIOD 11:50 – 12:15pm – LUNCH RECESS OUTSIDE 12:15-12:40pm- LUNCH- EAT IN CLASS 12:40- 1:30pm – 5 th PERIOD 1:30 –1:50pm – PM RECESS 1:50 – 2:40pm – 6 th PERIOD 2:40 – 2:50 – STAGGERED DISMISSAL

RECESS / LUNCH:

For now, students are able to mix with others and play anywhere in the yard when they are outside. However, we are staggering recesses so that only half of the school is outside at once to reduce contact and to be prepared should we have to introduce class bubbles again at any point.

Hand washing and desk washing will happen before and after they eat throughout the day. Daycare staff will be supervising the classrooms at lunch while students eat, and please be sure to send your child with adequate food and water for their day. We are a nut-free school.

The students will use their designated door to enter and exit the school to avoid congestion.

END OF DAY DISMISSAL:

DAYCARE: those students in daycare will meet daycare staff in the gym. Staff will take attendance and then proceed with daycare routines as usual once the school has been cleared of all students.

PICK UPS: Parents can pick up their child in two areas: Students in Grades 3-6 will be dismissed out the MPR door and students in Kindergarten – Grade 2 will be waiting at the garden out front. Parents, please wait in one of these areas to be dismissed from the adult. Please respect social distancing measures and wear a mask. We also love dogs, but do not want any on property when you are picking up your child please. **Expect to wait** to pick up your child. Do not park in the bus lane out front. Please do not linger out front.

WALKERS: students will assemble in the gym and be dismissed by a teacher once they are checked off the list.

BUS: Students will be escorted out to their buses by their teachers. They will sit in their assigned seat for their drive home.

KOOL KIDS DAYCARE:

Daycare will be following all of the same protocols as during the school day. Daycare will be open until 6pm as usual. Because parents will not be allowed to enter the building, swipe cards will not be issued for now. **In order to qualify for the daycare subsidy, your child must be registered with daycare no later than September 30th.**

Daycare will continue with their schedule of outdoor time as much as possible. They will enforce hand washing and cleaning of areas and materials. Groups will be determined once we have numbers from registrations, but they will be formed combining as few students as possible from different classes. They will be using the multi-purpose room, gym, and library areas. Medical masks are required to be worn by students in Grades 1-6 when they are indoors.

For picking up your child from daycare, please come to the front door. A daycare staff member will be assigned to watch at the front door for parents and will walkie-talkie to send your child to the front door to you. Parents will not be permitted in the school.

CLEANING SURFACES:

We will be following the Public Health directives with respect to cleaning. We will be reinforcing the idea of collective responsibility for keeping our space clean through the day, so that our caretakers have adequate time to disinfect all areas thoroughly every day.

The school will be routinely cleaned and disinfected throughout the day, then thoroughly done each night when everyone has left the building.

Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) System:

Research has shown that the particle size of the Covid-19 virus is around 0.1 µm (micrometer). The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) currently recommends using filters that are efficient at capturing 85% of the particles in 1 µm to 3 µm size range.

Wakefield School is a fully mechanically ventilated building, and the filters are being changed to reach the ASHREA recommendations. The mechanical ventilation proceeds to up to 6 complete changes of air by classroom every hour and throughout the school, mixing with fresh air. Our system is only 6 years old so it is up to date other than changing the filters for smaller particles.

We will maintain good classroom ventilation by keeping windows open when possible for direct fresh air even though our ventilation system is of a high standard.

ACCESS TO THE BUILDING:

We will have very limited visitors in the building who must check in with the office for reporting their health status. No gatherings are permitted at this time.

Meetings will continue to be in virtual format.

Parents are asked not to congregate outside the school – entrances, exits, playgrounds etc. and are asked to maintain physical distancing at all times on school property while picking-up/dropping off their child and must wear a mask.

Assemblies/Field trips/Hot lunch/ Extra- Curricular Activities:

We will continue to have virtual assemblies to limit larger gatherings of students. Hot lunch, field trips and extra curriculars will start again once we settle in to the school year.

MEDICAL EXEMPTIONS AND HOME SCHOOLING:

Students who have a compromised system or live with someone with a compromised system are eligible for the medical exemption, supported by a doctor's note. Please see link:

<https://westernquebec.ca/letter-to-parents-student-medical-exemptions/> Should you choose to keep your child home for any length of time, you need to apply for Home Schooling with the school board, as learning this year is mandatory and in person for all students. Please contact the school for more information for either of these.

I know that this is a lot of information- please spend time preparing your child for our current situation. We will be following these procedures very closely as per the requirements given to us by Public Health and the Ministry of Education. **For the safety of your child and our staff, we will be very strict about following these protocol and exceptions will not be made.** We are trying to give you as clear a picture as we can so that you know what to expect in sending your child back to school. Although many of the restrictions have eased, we are still very much living in a COVID world.

We will make the most of this challenging situation and welcome your child back to school with open arms and hearts.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns, and I thank you in advance for your cooperation so that all of us are protected and safe.

Thank you,

Julie Fram Greig

Principal, Wakefield Elementary School