



St. Clair Catholic  
District School Board



# Return to School Plan 2021-2022

A resource for St. Clair Catholic parents and guardians  
August 26, 2021



## Introduction

St. Clair Catholic District School Board is ready to welcome our staff and families back to school, and a return to joyful, faith-filled learning!

Our first priority is the health, safety and well-being of our students and staff. This plan has been informed and advised by the Ministry of Education, Public Health Ontario and our local Medical Officers of Health.

The St. Clair Catholic Return to School Plan is a living document. That means that some parts of the plan may evolve and change, as we continue to follow direction from the Ontario Ministry of Education, Public Health Ontario and the local Medical Officers of Health. Follow the Board's website and social media regularly for updates.



Our Catholic schools are places of learning and faith formation, where students grow intellectually, spiritually, physically and socially through their connections with our school communities. These relationships are essential to the ongoing development and well-being of our students. Pope Francis said, "We can only build the future by standing together, including everyone." These words frame our work at SCCDSB, as we are called to work together to support the return to school. Working together, we can be "Future Ready".

If after reviewing the 2021-2022 Return to School Plan you have any additional questions, please contact your school.

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## Supporting Student Health and Well-being

We know that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on our students, families and staff. Building a caring school community is a priority as we return to school. We are working to establish a sense of safety, belonging, and connection in our classrooms and across our schools, with a trauma informed approach. We will continue to provide service to our families through in-person, phone or virtual connections through our *Student Support and Well-Being Team* consisting of Child and Youth Workers and Social Workers. If you would like to access one of the members of the team, please complete the referral form found on the Board website or click [here](#). School staff will also be supported with additional information through School Mental Health Ontario. For additional resources to support your child please visit the Board website at [Mental Health and Wellbeing](#).

## Start Dates and Scheduling

### Elementary Schools

The Ministry has directed elementary schools in Ontario to reopen for learning in-person with enhanced health and safety protocols. **The first day of school is Tuesday, September 7, 2021, with the exception of Junior Kindergarten (JK) students as noted below.**

#### What about Junior / Senior Kindergarten Students?

- All Senior Kindergarten students begin full-time on Tuesday, September 7, 2021.
- JK students will have a gradual entry beginning on Wednesday, September 8, 2021, with half of the students attending for one day and the other half attending on Thursday, September 9, 2021. JK parents/guardians will receive a communication from their school regarding school entry.
- All Kindergarten students will attend on Friday, September 10, 2021.

#### What will elementary school scheduling look like?

- Elementary students will be grouped together in a cohort in the same classroom while indoors and may interact with other cohorts outdoors at recess.
- Students will engage in 300 minutes of face to face instruction.
- Schools will begin and end at regular times posted on the school website.
- School schedules may be different to support cohorting.

### Secondary Schools

The Ministry has directed secondary schools in Ontario to reopen for learning in-person with enhanced health and safety protocols. **The first day of school is Tuesday, September 7, 2021.**

### What will secondary school scheduling look like?

- All students will take four courses per semester using a modified semester model where students will engage in two courses per day, alternating weeks for a full semester.
- Students will engage in 300 minutes of face to face instruction.
- Timetables and scheduling information will be communicated.
- School will begin and end at regular times posted on the school website.
- A sample secondary student Schedule for Semester 1 is shown below.

	Week A	Week B
Morning	Math (Course 1)	Art (Course 3)
Lunch		
Afternoon	Physical Education (Course 2)	Science (Course 4)

## Elementary Remote Learning School

The first day of school is Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

### What does Elementary Remote Learning look like?

- Students will participate in full days of learning, with a combination of synchronous (live teacher led learning) and asynchronous (student learning using digital platform) activities, as prescribed by the Ministry.
- Students will use a digital learning platform (e.g., Edsby, Google Classroom, D2L).
- **Synchronous learning** will include direct teacher led instruction; whole and/or small group, where students are required to be online.
- **Asynchronous learning** will include a variety of learning opportunities posted to a digital platform (e.g. videos, recorded lessons, learning tasks, independent practice).
- Classes will be taught by qualified teachers but may not be from the child's home school and will include students from across St. Clair Catholic in classroom groupings.
- Attendance will be monitored; students are expected to participate fully every day.
- The Ontario curriculum will be taught, assessed and evaluated.
- French Immersion will not be available, but French instruction will be provided as per the Ontario curriculum requirements.
- Student daily minimum learning times by grade level:
  - Kindergarten:**
    - 180 minutes of live (or synchronous) learning each day.
    - 120 minutes of on-demand (or asynchronous) learning each day.
  - Gr 1 - 8:**
    - 225 minutes of live (or synchronous) learning each day.
    - 75 minutes of on-demand (or asynchronous) learning each day.

## Secondary Remote Learning School

The first day of school is Tuesday, September 7, 2021.

### What does Secondary Remote Learning look like?

- Enhanced distance/remote learning with access to learning materials posted online to support both synchronous and asynchronous learning.
- Students will participate in a quadmester schedule similar to last year; one course full day for one week and a second course full day for the alternating week. After approximately 9 weeks students will commence the next two courses.
- Students should expect to have different teachers deliver the online course rather than their scheduled teacher at the student's home school.
- Students may also have access to e-learning courses offered via the E-Learning Consortia.
- Fully independent learning models are also available through the TVO Independent Learning Centre (ILC).
- All reasonable requests by students for independent study will be considered and students should be able to access guidance counsellors to confirm that credits support their academic pathway.

## Requests to Change Learning Models

Families were asked in June 2021 to choose the preferred model of instruction for their child. Using this information, the Board has organized classrooms and determined timetables, staffing and other arrangements necessary for the return to school. There are no defined learning model switch dates available for the 2021-2022 school year and students will be required to continue learning in the model chosen for the whole school year. Under exceptional circumstances, St Clair Catholic may consider a change to a student's learning model when a request is communicated to the school principal prior to the start of classes.

## Transitioning to In Person Learning

We look forward to supporting a safe and positive transition to in person learning in September. We know that some students and families may require additional supports to facilitate a smooth transition to school. If you feel your child requires additional transition supports, or if you are new to the St Clair Catholic, please reach out to your school to learn more about the transition supports that are available.

## Healthy and Safe Schools

With regard to COVID-19 health and safety measures, St. Clair Catholic follows the direction of Chatham-Kent and Lambton Public Health Units, along with guidance provided by the Ministry of Education.

## COVID-19 Self Screening

Prior to attending school each day all students, staff and visitors must use the Ontario government COVID-19 daily school screening assessment tool, which is available [here](#).

**All students and staff who are experiencing symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 must stay home from school and should follow the guidance provided in the screening tool.**

## Masks

Students in Grades 1 to 12 are required to wear masks indoors at school and on buses. Cloth and non-medical masks are permitted for students.

Students in Kindergarten are encouraged, but not required to wear masks.

Physical activity indoors is permitted if masks can be safely worn.

Masks may be temporarily removed indoors to consume food and drink.

Masks are not required to be worn outside, but distancing is encouraged between cohorts as much as possible.

It is recommended that students come to school with at least two masks. The school will also have a supply of masks for students.

The Board supports the wearing of masks to the greatest extent possible. For some students with significant special needs, or significant medical conditions, wearing a mask may be problematic. Families should work with their school to determine if their child may be exempt from wearing a mask, as set out in the mask exemption protocol.

All school board staff are required to wear masks and other personal protective equipment when appropriate, in accordance with the Board's PPE Protocol. Medical grade masks and eye protection (face shields) will be provided for all teachers and other staff based on roles and level of contact with students. Parents/guardians can help their children understand that the staff will be wearing PPE to help keep everyone safer.

## Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are among the most effective strategies to prevent the spread of most respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. Staff and students will wash/sanitize their hands regularly. Students will be trained on appropriate hand washing, including the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer and soap/water. Scheduled breaks will allow students to wash their hands throughout the day. Hand sanitizer will be provided in every classroom. Students will wash their hands upon arrival at school and before/after recess and lunch breaks. Signage throughout the school will also support good hand hygiene.

Students are encouraged to practice proper respiratory etiquette (e.g., sneezing/coughing into elbow, avoid touching face, eyes, nose, mouth).

## Physical Distancing

Our staff will encourage and help students to understand physical distancing. Signage inside and outside the school and floor markings throughout the school will be visual reminders to support school routines that help to limit congregation in hallways and promote distancing between students and staff to the greatest extent possible.

Other physical distancing measures will be used, where possible, including:

- Removing non-essential furniture;
- Maximizing physical distancing in classroom/space arrangements;
- Moving activities outside when possible;
- Creating routes for movement within the school;
- Staggering periods of transition/movement of students throughout the day;
- Organizing appropriate drop off/pick up routines.

**Elementary students** will have a designated area to line up following physical distancing expectations, which will be shared with families prior to the first day of school.

**Secondary students** will use physical distancing during entry/access to the school utilizing multiple entrances. Protocols will be in place to support physical distancing at arrival/dismissal times/bus loading and exiting. Students are asked to proceed directly to their morning class. Secondary students will not be using lockers to start the school year.

Additional information may be communicated with site specific directions by the school principal. We appreciate parent support and adherence to our routines and processes. Practice of emergency drills will continue in our schools, mindful of physical distancing.



## Recess, Breaks, Lunch and Food Programs

Recesses and breaks may be staggered based on physical spaces at schools and supervisor availability. Schedules and routines will be established to promote physical distancing, while providing students opportunities for outside time and physical activity. Elementary school playground structures are open for use. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after each recess/outdoor time.

**All students** are asked to bring their own labelled water bottle to school each day. Water filling stations are available at every school and appropriate protocols will be shared with students.

**Elementary students** are required to bring their own food. Students will eat in assigned classrooms at their desks. Students with parent/guardian consent will be permitted to leave school during lunch.

**Secondary students** are required to bring their own food or leave the school premises for lunch. At this time the Board is working with our cafeteria food service provider to re-open; however, students should not expect these services to be available at the start of the school year. The school will communicate the plans for the potential use of shared spaces for lunch upon the return to school.

Student nutrition programs will continue. Hot Lunch programs are permitted to operate, provided that food handlers use adequate food handling and safety practices.

## Enhanced Cleaning

Many enhanced cleaning protocols in our schools have been added to the regular cleaning routines following guidance from Public Health and current research (e.g., additional cleaning for high touch points/washrooms).

## Shared Materials and Spaces

The use of shared materials and spaces is permitted. Students will be required to wash their hands before and after using shared materials. At this time large gatherings/assemblies will not take place in person. When shared spaces are used as much distancing as possible should be maintained.

## Visitor Access to School Sites

Visitors, including parents/guardians, who require access to school sites can make arrangements in advance with school administration. Any approved entry by visitors will require self-screening, masks and sign in at the office.

Please note that parents are discouraged from gathering on school property and are reminded to maintain physical distancing.

## Ventilation

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Clair Catholic has made a sizeable investment of more than \$7 million to improve heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems at schools across the district. These projects include:

- New HVAC systems in schools with partial mechanical ventilation systems;
- Upgraded air filters on all HVAC equipment, at all schools;
  - Filters are monitored monthly and replaced as necessary, or every three months at a minimum;
- Purchase and installation of portable air conditioners and high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units for classrooms in schools which are not air conditioned, to improve occupant comfort and lower classroom humidity;
- Purchase and installation of HEPA air filtration units in all kindergarten classrooms;
- Purchase and installation of operable windows in classrooms with previously inoperable windows.

In addition, the Board is working to ensure all HVAC equipment is working efficiently to optimize air circulation and meet system targets. Increased servicing and cleaning of rooftop units, unit ventilators and terminal devices has been undertaken and will continue.

Other strategies for improved ventilation include:

- Use of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) professional association for support in assessing and implementing technical matters related to the operation of mechanical systems;
- Retained an expert to conduct site assessments at all schools;
- Implemented ASHRAE's Epidemic Task Force recommended guidelines, COVID-19 Building Readiness opening document for schools and universities;
- Increased mechanical air filtration;
- Engaged licensed HVAC vendors to monitor air filters and inspect equipment monthly;
- Increased outdoor air ventilation;
- Running mechanical ventilation systems longer (pre and post occupancy);
- Added portable A/C units to all non-air-conditioned learning spaces.
- Added portable room air filtration (HEPA) systems to all occupied learning environments in schools without mechanical ventilation;
- Installed dedicated electrical power to all spaces requiring portable A/C units;
- Bypassed energy recovery system;

- Upgraded Building Automation Systems (BAS) at various schools to provide new digital controls to operate HVAC systems.

## Student Transportation, Child Care and Community Use

St. Clair Catholic works with Chatham-Kent Lambton Administrative School Services (CLASS) to provide student transportation, child care initiatives/support and community use. Click [here](#) for information and updates.

Safety continues to be a priority on buses:

- Students will be required to wear masks grades 1-12;
- Kindergarten students are encouraged to wear masks on busses;
- Students will be assigned a bus seat.

All child care centres and before/after school programs are operated by third party operators. Please check with your child care provider for more information. Schools will be working in partnership with child care providers to support health and safety protocols.

St. Clair Catholic looks forward to resuming community use of our schools within the school year. Timelines for resumption have not yet been determined.

## Other Programming Considerations

### Secondary School Graduation Requirements

The literacy graduation requirement is waived for students graduating in the 2021-2022 school year.

The community involvement graduation requirements has been reduced from 40 hours to a minimum of 20 hours for students graduating in the 2021-2022 school year.

### Co-operative Education, Dual Credit, Specialist High Skills Major and School Within A College (SWAC)

In person placements will be arranged, following direction from Public Health and the school Board. Where in-person placements are not possible students will be offered virtual placements where feasible.

Lambton College and St. Clair College have determined they will be offering virtual dual credit learning opportunities for our senior students. Certifications for Specialist High Skills Major can proceed but some certifications may be held virtually.

The SWAC classes typically hosted at Lambton College (Sarnia) and St. Clair College (Chatham) are not permitted in September 2021. The location of the program is yet to be confirmed.

## French, Physical Education, Music and Visual Arts

Elementary specialist subject teachers offer expertise to enhance student learning in French, Music, Physical Education and French Immersion science. Working with Public Health, specialist teachers are able to transition into classrooms to provide specialized programming. We will continue to refer to Public Health recommendations for safer instruction in these areas and also refer to the advisement of organizations such as the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) and the Ontario Music Educators Association (OMEA). School staff will advise students on the health and safety requirements.

Singing and the use of wind instruments is permitted, following the protocols outlined in the guidance document, which includes physical distancing and masking requirements. Masking is not required for physical education activities outdoors. Vigorous activities are only permitted outdoors. Masking is required for indoor sports where they can be safely worn.

## Field Trips

Field trips are permitted in accordance with relevant provincial and local public health requirements.

## Intramural and Extracurricular Sports

All extracurricular activities are permitted. Students may interact outdoors with physical distancing encouraged and indoors with masks (where they can be worn safely based on the activity) and physical distancing encouraged.

Spectators may be approved by school administration based on the space required for physical distancing. Any approved entry by visitors will require self-screening, masks and sign in at the office.

## Supporting Students with Special Needs

Supporting students with special needs continues to be a priority, and these students will be supported in all learning models, through a multidisciplinary team approach, collaborating with

the classroom/remote learning teachers to ensure our students receive the support necessary for success in any learning model. Students' Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will continue to guide the implementation of required accommodations and/or modifications, with parent/guardian consultation.

- Individual Education Plan: IEPs are the foundational documents for communication of program goals, expectations of focus, strategies to support learning, assessment and transition planning. Schools will follow the requirements to provide students with their IEPs in collaboration with the IEP team and parents/guardians. Changes in the school environments and/or remote learning needs will be considered when creating and updating the IEPs.
- Teachers are essential in the planning and programming for students with special education needs.
- School Based Team, Student Success and IPRC Meetings will continue either face to face and/or remotely using a secure platform. Professional Support Services and other members of the team will be included as usual (e.g., Social Worker, Consultants etc.) to be in attendance.
- Itinerant Staff: Itinerant staff (e.g., Speech Language Pathologists, Board Certified Behaviour Analysts, Teacher for Deaf & Hard of Hearing) will continue to support both remotely and in person following physical distancing guidelines and a Tiered Approach based on a student's IEP.
- Special Equipment Amount (SEA): Students will continue to access SEA equipment/assistive technology and staff will continue to be supported with SEA equipment training enhancing student access to learning.

## Monitoring Symptoms, Confirmed Cases and Outbreaks

Medical information about students continues to be private information and will only be shared as required by documentation protocols.

Any student who experiences symptoms of illness while at school will be immediately placed in a separate designated location. Students will be supervised with appropriate safety measures in place (e.g., physical distancing, personal protective equipment for staff). Parents/guardians will be notified and told to pick up their child from school as soon as possible following appropriate pick-up procedures as these students will not be able to take the bus home.

Timelines for return to school will be under the direction and guidance of Public Health.

Schools will report any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school to the local Public Health Unit.

Schools will support successful case and contact management by maintaining records which can be provided to the Public Health authority for contact tracing purposes (e.g., class lists, bus cohort lists).

The school community will be informed of any confirmed case of COVID-19 for students or staff by direct email and through the COVID-19 Advisory page on school and Board websites, at the direction of Public Health.

In the interests of privacy, information posted will not identify any student or staff member who has received a positive COVID-19 test.

If public health advises that a class, cohort or a school will be closed for a period of time, parents, students and staff will be notified immediately, by direct email and through posts to the COVID-19 Advisory page on the Board and school websites.

We will continue to work with our Public Health partners to review and revise procedures and protocols.