

Introduction

As we prepare for a return to school in 2021-2022, the health and safety of our students and staff is top priority in our planning. The decisions we make in all areas of concern – health and safety, teaching and learning, transportation – are made with extensive consultation with the Ministry of Education, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, and our community members and stakeholders.

Our Guiding Principles support the work and development of these plans:



Prioritize
Health and Safety



Support Well-Being



Ensure Equity
of Access

Guiding Principles



Be Flexible
and Adaptive



Foster Innovative
Learning Opportunities



Be Financially
Sustainable

Return to Learning Timeline

September 1-3

PA Days (Training staff for reopening)

September 8-10

Staggered entry for JK students

September 7

First day of school for students in SK-12

September 13

All JK students attend daily



Models for Return

On August 4th, the Ministry of Education confirmed that students would return to school in September with conventional in-person delivery of learning, with enhanced health and safety protocols, province-wide. The Ministry plan includes details for protective strategies, extracurricular activities, ventilation, and more. Lakehead Public Schools will incorporate the requirements of the plan at both Elementary and Secondary levels to ensure the safety, mental health and well-being, equity and learning for our students.

Elementary

- All students K-8 will attend school 5 days per week in their normal classes with normal class sizes – each class is a cohort and every effort will be made to minimize the mixing of cohorts indoors
- Start and end times as usual, but lunches and recesses may be staggered to reduce contact between cohorts
- Students will receive the full breadth of programming, including instrumental music classes that use wind or brass instruments. This means that they will see itinerant teachers, like second language, arts, and specialist rotary teachers as well as their homeroom teacher

Secondary

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4
Week 2	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5
Week 3	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4	AM Period 1 PM Period 4
Week 4	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5	AM Period 2 PM Period 5

- All students in Grades 9-12 will attend school 5 days per week with normal class sizes
- Secondary students will take two in-person courses per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon
- Secondary students will take four credits/subjects in the first semester
- In week one, students will have a 150-minute Period 1 class (Subject 1) followed by lunch and a 150 minute Period 4 class (Subject 2) each day
- In week two, students will have a 150-minute Period 2 class (Subject 3) followed by lunch and a 150 minute Period 5 class (Subject 4)
- This rotation will limit direct weekly contacts and allow students to complete four credits in the first semester
- Exams will occur at the end of the first semester

- If the status of the pandemic improves and the Ministry of Education permits it, students would return to the semester model (4 courses per day for the full semester) for the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of our students and staff is our top priority. To that end, the following measures will be in place in all our schools. These measures include personal health and safety, adaptations to physical spaces and timetables, and actions to reduce and contain the spread of infection.

Personal Health and Safety

- Masking will be standard practice in all schools — all staff and students in Grades 1-12 will be required to wear masks indoors. We strongly recommend that students in Kindergarten Year One and Year Two (JK and SK) wear masks indoors as well.
- Additional PPE for staff in special circumstances
- Frequent and proper handwashing is one of the most important things we can do to prevent the spread of COVID-19
- Sanitizer stations at all school entrances
- Many classrooms have sinks
- Regularly scheduled handwashing breaks during the day
- Younger students will be taught proper handwashing technique
- Respiratory etiquette (coughing and sneezing) will be taught and frequent reminders will be placed throughout the schools

Distancing Measures in Place, Including:

- Signage to promote spacing at queuing areas (like sanitizer stations, water filling stations) and provide direction for moving about schools
- Scheduling of common areas like gyms and libraries

Adaptations to Physical Spaces and Timetabling

- Lockers will be available for student use
- Enhanced cleaning of high touch surfaces (twice per day)
- Classroom furniture organized to maximize space between students and staff

- Controlled and staggered entry and exit
- Possible staggered snack and lunch times in elementary schools
- Elementary students may eat together, with a minimum distance of two metres maintained between cohorts and as much distancing as possible within a cohort
- Secondary cafeterias will be open for students to eat, with capacity limits established to enable two metres distancing between students
- Signage throughout schools providing direction and spacing, including wall and floor signage
- Signage at entries reminding to wear masks, self-assess (with symptom list) and wash hands
- Practices and supervision in place at bus and vehicle drop-off points to ensure proper distancing between cohorts
- Offices equipped to ensure safety of office staff, including signage
- Outdoor play structures will be open and available for students

Actions to Reduce and Contain the Spread of Infection

Lakehead Public Schools continues to work in close partnership with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit regarding efforts to reduce and contain the spread of infection. They have provided us with guidance on screening, tracing, and responding to students and staff who show symptoms, as well as suspected or confirmed cases. The TBDHU will be actively involved in working with schools who have suspected or confirmed cases.

- **Screening**
 - » Students, staff and visitors must complete the provincial school self-assessment before entering buildings. This tool is updated regularly by the Ministry
 - » Parents/Students must complete a self-assessment before students board a bus
 - » Symptom signage will be clearly posted throughout LPS spaces
 - » Students or staff who are ill should not come to school
 - » Students or staff who are ill or fail the self-assessment must follow the TBDHU guidelines for failed screens, which may include testing and self-isolation
- **Symptomatic Students and Staff**
 - » Students or staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms while at school must go home immediately. Students wait-

ing to be picked up shall wait in a restricted area and wear a mask while isolating. Staff should physically distance if possible and provide hand sanitizer, tissue, garbage bin as needed. Rooms will be disinfected after the student leaves

- » Symptomatic individuals must follow the TBDHU guidelines for symptomatic individuals, which may include testing and self-isolation

- **Suspected Cases**

- » If a student or staff member comes into close contact with a suspected case, they should self-monitor for symptoms and follow the TBDHU guidelines for close contact, which may include testing and self-isolation
- » The guidelines from Public Health are updated regularly, and the TBDHU will provide schools with clear instructions for families regarding suspected cases and contact with suspected case

- **Contact Tracing**

- » A record will be kept of all students (through attendance records) and staff indicating arrival/departure time, contact information, and screening assessment results
- » Movement of cohorts and students is to be tracked daily by staff
- » Confirmed cases are reported to Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU). The TBDHU will follow up with all positive cases and perform a risk assessment of their contacts
- » To help support this contact tracing schools must keep daily records of anyone entering the school setting (name, contact info, time of arrival/departure, screening completed)
- » Contact tracing also applies to school buses and before/after school child care

- **Outbreak Management**

- » The definition of a confirmed COVID-19 outbreak as outlined by the Ministry of Health will be used to determine an outbreak in a school
- » Upon receiving a positive laboratory result for COVID-19 the TBDHU will take actions to manage the outbreak within the school
- » Lakehead Public Schools will work with the TBDHU to manage the outbreak

- **Ventilation**

All Lakehead Public Schools elementary and secondary schools have mechanical ventilation. To optimize the air

quality in our schools, the following actions have been taken:

- » Filters have been replaced to ensure the highest-grade filters are installed, including MERV-13 where possible
- » Filters will be changed regularly throughout the school year
- » An external review of all HVAC systems was completed and recommendations for improvement have been implemented
- » Ventilation systems will operate 2 hours or more before and after school occupancy
- » Outdoor education will be encouraged as much as possible – many schools have outdoor classrooms
- » Windows will remain open as much as possible
- » Standalone HEPA filters will be in every occupied FDK classroom and in all occupied learning environments without mechanical ventilation

Mental Health and Well-being

Lakehead Public Schools will continue to provide the mental health support needed for students through the provision of three secondary social workers and three elementary social workers. Social workers will continue to provide brief treatment and referral services.

The Board Mental Health Lead will continue to provide access to training and support for employees and students.

We will continue to work through the mental health action plan creating a supportive environment for effective and sustainable practice and will continue to work with School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO) and follow all advice and guidance from the organization.

Special Education

Students with special needs will receive the same levels of support in the return to school in 2021-2022 as they would normally. Schools will implement the following measures to ensure the health and safety of students with special needs:

- Any support person providing support to students who need intensive support will be provided with necessary additional PPE
- Social distancing, to the greatest extent possible, will be practiced in self-contained special education rooms
- Paraprofessional visits will be available for students as usual, with proper screening and PPE protocols in place
- Students with special education needs are provided specialized furniture, equipment, devices and materials that are essential for them to access learning
- Regular cleaning of furniture, equipment and assistive devices will occur - including but not limited to bikes, laptops, iPads, sound field system mics, etc. Cleaning products used will be safe for students who may put items or hands in their mouths

Remote Learning

Elementary students who choose not to attend school in person will be enrolled in the Lakehead Virtual Elementary School and will attend virtually from home. Secondary students who choose not to attend school in person will continue to attend their home school but will join their classes remotely from home.

Elementary

Daily Schedule

- Attendance will be taken daily
- 300 minutes of instruction (combination of synchronous and asynchronous)
- Digital platforms will be SeeSaw and Microsoft Teams
- Large group, small group and individual instruction
- Instruction provided by more than one teacher

Teaching and Learning

- Full breadth of curriculum offered with some limitations
- Focus will be on overall expectations
- Assessment and evaluation of skills and knowledge in all curricular areas
- Independent study through project-based or inquiry-based learning where possible
- Specific expectations in terms of synchronous learning, check-ins and small-group learning will be developed by division

Secondary

Daily Schedule

- Students who choose to learn remotely will be joining their regularly scheduled classes virtually through their home school
- Download the Secondary Calendar from our website: <https://www.lakeheadschoools.ca/school-calendars/>

Teaching and Learning

- Students will remain in their course selections as much as possible depending on availability of specialized teachers
- Focus will be on overall expectations
- Assessment and evaluation of skills and knowledge throughout the course, which will include a variety of final assessment tasks that could include exams
- Independent study through project-based or inquiry-based learning where possible
- Students engaging in remote learning will be supported by Lakehead Public Schools with respect to devices and connectivity

Field Trips and Co-Curricular Activities

In 2021-2022, field trips and co-curricular activities, including inter-school sports and other competitions, have been approved by the Ministry of Education.

- Day trips and overnight stays are permitted and should follow the relevant provincial requirements under the Re-opening Ontario Act
- Daily accurate records of individuals entering the program setting (name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, screening completion) will be kept to facilitate contact tracing
- Further guidance and information about individual sports and other co-curricular activities will be forthcoming, with specific rules for high- and low-contact activities

EQAO

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

OSSLT and Community Involvement Graduation Requirements

- The literacy graduation requirement is waived for students graduating in the 2021-22 school year, but will be restored for students graduating in the 2022-23 school year
- Students in Grades 10 and 11 and non-graduating students, including those who are learning remotely, are required to work towards the literacy graduation requirement, through participation in the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT), adjudication or the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Course (OSSLC)
- The community involvement graduation requirement has been reduced from 40 hours to a minimum of 20 hours of community involvement activities for students graduating in the 2021-22 school year
- Temporary changes to reduce barriers students may face to earn their community involvement hours and provide greater flexibility in how they earn their hours will continue for the 2021-22 school year
- The community involvement graduation requirement of 40 hours will be restored in 2022-23 and students working towards their OSSD should be supported to meet these requirements in time for their graduating year

Adult and Continuing Education

- Adult and Continuing Education will be delivered as normal with additional health and safety practices in effect
- Programming continues at the Lakehead Adult Education Centre at 125 South Lillie Street

Before and After School Programs

- Before and after school programming will be available and students in these programs would be part of two cohorts
- Schools and child care operators will collaborate to ensure student lists are maintained and readily available to be provided to Public Health for contact tracing purposes
- Please contact your before and after school service provider for more information

Transportation

In 2021-2022, transportation routes will run as normal as per STSTB policies, with enhanced protocols in place for health and safety:

- Students in JK to Grade 12 will be required to wear masks
- Buses will operate at full capacity, but students should be assigned seats and a record of seating plan kept
- Siblings will sit together in seat assignments
- PPE for drivers
- Disinfection of buses at least twice daily
- Windows open as much as possible
- Training for drivers provided

Communication

Clear, open, and transparent communication is key to a smooth transition back to school. We will be communicating with families in the following ways:

- Regular updates posted to our website: <https://www.lakeheadschoools.ca/coronavirus-information/>
- Regular updates posted on our social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram
- Messaging in local media outlets
- Direct communication to families through the School Messenger platform. These include automated calls, emails and SMS messages
- Direct communication from the school and classroom teachers

Role of Families

A smooth transition back to school can only happen with extensive cooperation between Lakehead Public Schools and the families of the students we serve. Parents and guardians play an important role and we look to you for support and cooperation.

1. Screen your children for symptoms daily, and don't send them to school if they are sick or show symptoms, or if they have had contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19.
2. Teach them to wear masks properly, and proper respiratory etiquette when it comes to sneezing and coughing.
3. Follow drop-off, pickup and visiting protocols that your school establishes to help reduce the risk of spread of infection.