



Frequently Asked Questions Reopening of Rainbow Schools 2020-2021 School Year Updated: September 25, 2020

The safety and well-being of our students and staff is first and foremost.

This document has been prepared to give families a better understanding of the plan to reopen Rainbow Schools so they can make a more informed decision regarding in-person or online education for their children and teens once school resumes on Tuesday, September 8, 2020. Our plans are based on the advice, guidance and directives of the Ministry of Education, as well as provincial and local public health officials.

In-person Instruction - Elementary

Q. What will elementary learning look like in September?

A. When elementary classes resume on Tuesday, September 8th, students from JK to Grade 8 will be in school full-time. The school day will still include 300 minutes of learning each day, and there will still be breaks for recess and lunch. Regular classroom numbers will remain the same, although desks will be reorganized to allow as much physical distancing as possible.

Other aspects of the planned day include:

- Classes will stay together in one cohort (group) with one teacher, as much as possible.
- Desks will be spread out and spaced away from other desks as much as possible.
- All teachers and education support workers will be provided appropriate PPE (personal protective equipment).
- Tape, floor markings and directional signs will be used to help students remain appropriately distanced in the classroom, hallways and entrances.
- Recesses, lunches and bathroom break times will be held at staggered times, to maintain physical distancing and reduce the number of students outside and in the hallways and washrooms at one time.
- We will follow proper hand hygiene. Staff members and signage throughout the school will remind students to wash their hands thoroughly and often with soap and water, and additional hand sanitizer stations will be installed in classrooms and throughout the school.
- With reasonable exceptions, all students in Rainbow Schools in Grades 1 to 12 are required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Kindergarten students are required to wear masks and/or face shields in indoor spaces. Staff, parents/guardians and visitors are also required to wear masks. Medical masks and eye protection (face shields) will be provided for all teachers and other educational staff in the school. Students are encouraged to bring spare masks in the event one becomes wet or damaged throughout the day.
- The number of contacts for each elementary student will be limited to about 50 people.
- We will follow a strict health protocol for students or staff who become ill.
- Day-to-day cleaning and disinfecting will be increased.

Q. Do I have to confirm attendance for my child to attend school on September 8?

A. Parents/guardians are required to confirm if their child/children will be attending in person or online by completing a form at the following link: bit.ly/rdsbreopening. Please complete one form per child by Friday, August 21, 2020.

Q. What about students with special needs?

A. Individual students will be able to leave their classrooms to receive additional supports, such as time with a special education resource teacher or other professional; however, contacts in schools for students will be limited to about 50 people. Teachers will continue to accommodate students with individual education plans (IEPs) and those needing additional support, whether they are in the classroom or distance learning at home.

Students registered in ISP classes and all students with special needs will participate in full-time school. It is recognized that some students will require more support in adapting to the new school protocols, therefore extra time for transitions will be provided prior to the start of school, and during the school day, to become familiar with new routines. For some students, physical distancing might not be possible. In these cases, staff will be provided with appropriate PPE. Central professional staff who come to schools to support students will be adjusting their schedules to spend time in blocks at schools, to reduce the number of exposures and transitions to and from different schools.

Q. What about nutrition breaks?

A. Elementary students will remain in their classrooms to eat lunch. They will remove their masks to eat and drink, and remain with their cohort for that time.

Q. What about physical education and outdoor learning?

A. All teachers are encouraged to include outdoor learning in their program. Physical education classes will be outdoors as much as possible, particularly in early fall, as this supports physical distancing. Students will be expected to dress for the weather. During the winter months, time outdoors will be reduced according to the weather.

Q. What about school sports?

A. The status of sport will continue to be reviewed based on direction from the Ministry of Education, Public Health and provincial and local sport governing bodies. Sports will progress through phases of Return to Train with strict protocols and progress to Return to Competition when appropriate.

Q. What date will Junior Kindergarten students be starting school?

A. Kindergarten students will start school in a staggered entry, as in previous years. This will allow students to get to know their teacher, their early childhood educator, and their classmates in small groups. Schools will inform parents directly of the starting date and time for their child.

[In-person Learning for Secondary Students](#)

Q. What will the day look like for secondary students?

A. Secondary students also will attend school full-time starting September 8, but timetables will be adjusted to reduce the number of classes and to limit student and staff direct contacts to a maximum of 100 people per week. Schools will operate in a modified timetable so that students take only two subjects at a time, in alternate weeks throughout the first semester.

- Students will take their Period 1 and 2 classes each day, during the first week of school.
- Period 1 classes will take place each morning, for 150 minutes.
- Period 2 classes will take place each afternoon, for 150 minutes.
- Lunches will be staggered by grade and occur in the cafeteria, where possible.
- Period 3 and 4 classes will take place during the second week of school.
- Period 3 classes will take place each morning, for 150 minutes.
- Period 4 classes will take place each afternoon, for 150 minutes.

The following example may be helpful:

SECONDARY SCHOOL TIMETABLE - AT A GLANCE

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Week 1	AM - Period 1 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 2 (150 min.)	AM - Period 1 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 2 (150 min.)	AM - Period 1 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 2 (150 min.)	AM - Period 1 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 2 (150 min.)	AM - Period 1 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 2 (150 min.)
Week 2	AM - Period 3 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 4 (150 min.)	AM - Period 3 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 4 (150 min.)	AM - Period 3 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 4 (150 min.)	AM - Period 3 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 4 (150 min.)	AM - Period 3 (150 min.) LUNCH (40 min.) PM - Period 4 (150 min.)

Safety protocols for secondary schools will include mandatory masks indoors, students remaining in one cohort as much as possible, potential staggering of lunch and break times, proper hand hygiene, physical distancing measures, strict protocol for anyone who becomes ill, directional signs in hallways and entrances, and increased daily cleaning and disinfecting.

Q. When will students receive their timetables?

A. Student timetables will be confirmed by each high school prior to the start of the school year. If there are any concerns, students may reach out to Guidance staff on or after August 27, 2020. Class sizes will be consistent with previous years.

Q. Will common areas such as the secondary school cafeteria and library be available?

A. The cafeteria may be used for staggered lunch periods in secondary schools. Tables will be disinfected between lunch periods. There may be a need to use the cafeteria and library for dedicated classroom space.

Q. What about student lockers?

A. To lessen congestion, and limit the number of student to student contacts in hallways, students will not be given access to lockers. They will keep their belongings with them throughout the day, taking home everything they brought with them.

Q. What about accessing Student Success, Resource, Guidance and First Nations rooms?

A. Individual students will be able to access these services during the day by appointment. Signing in and out will be required, and rooms will have a stated maximum capacity to ensure physical distancing.

Q. Will all courses be available both online and in person?

A. Yes. Secondary students learning remotely will connect live to the classroom. Co-op placements will be offered virtually, where feasible. In-person community co-op placements may be offered in cooperation with some employers, as long as they comply with all requirements of Public Health locally.

Remote Learning - Elementary and Secondary Students

Q. What will remote learning look like?

A. Students participating in online distance education will:

- have to log in to the online classes five days a week, as attendance will be taken daily
- participate in both asynchronous and synchronous learning; synchronous learning refers to real-time teaching when the students and teacher will be connected live, while asynchronous education will involve online posting of resources that can be accessed and completed by the student at any time
- take the same courses they would be taking in person
- follow the same curriculum as their peers attending school in person
- connect live with their teachers while also learning independently
- be able to contact their teachers for help and to have questions answered

Q. How do I register my child for remote learning?

A. Parents may choose the remote learning option for their child by completing the form at the following link: bit.ly/rdsbreopening. Please complete one form per child by Friday, August 21, 2020.

Q Will students be able to change from online to in-person learning?

A. Yes, students will be able to move from online learning to attending class in person in November at mid-term.

Q. Will students be able to change from in person to online learning?

A. Families need to choose one or the other. At the elementary level, if there is space in online classes, we may be able to accommodate requests to transfer from in person to online, but it may not be possible if online classes are full. Secondary students remain connected to their classroom teacher remotely allowing more flexibility. Please see the Rainbow Remote Learning K-12 Document for details.

Q. What about students who don't have a computer at home?

A. Schools will distribute school resources **based on need and/or availability**, to ensure students can stay connected to learning.

Q. What learning software will students use?

A. Secondary students who decide to learn from home will use learning management software including D2L Brightspace and the Google Classroom. Elementary students deciding to learn from home will use the Google Classroom and/or SeeSaw. Students learning remotely will not enter their school buildings.

Q. Who will teach students online?

A. Teachers assigned specifically to remote learning will teach elementary students and provide their own lesson materials. For secondary students who choose to learn from home, they will connect live to the classroom through Google Meet and complete assignments through D2L.

Q. If I choose at-home distance learning, but still have to leave my home for work, can the hours be flexible?

A. Students will still have to participate in live, synchronous learning during the school day.

Q. What happens if my child has questions or is falling behind?

A. Students will be able to ask questions and interact with the teacher during the synchronous learning times of the day. Teachers and support staff (when applicable) will assist learners and provide additional support where needed.

Health and Safety Procedures for all Schools

Q. Will students and staff be screened for illness before school?

A. Safety is a shared responsibility between the school, the home and the community, and families play a critical role in limiting the spread of COVID-19.

Parents/guardians are required to screen their children daily for any COVID-19 symptoms and keep them home from school if they are sick, have had close contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19, have been advised by a doctor, health care provider or public health to self-isolate, and/or have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days. Secondary students can self-screen and monitor for symptoms.

Q. What will the self-assessment include?

A. According to the self-assessment, you should not come to school or attend work if:

- You or someone you are in close contact with have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days
- You have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19
- You have any of the following symptoms:
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath/Difficulty breathing
 - Sore throat
 - Chills
 - Difficulty/painful swallowing
 - Runny nose/nasal congestion without known cause
 - Feeling unwell/Fatigued
 - Nausea/Vomiting/Diarrhea
 - Unexplained loss of appetite
 - Loss of sense of smell or taste.
 - Muscle/Joint aches
 - Headaches
 - Pink eye (conjunctivitis)

Q. What if I need to drop something off for my child during the school day or talk to my child's teacher?

A. If you need to get in touch with someone at the school, you will be able to call or email the school directly. Parents and guardians will only be able to enter the school in case of emergency. Wherever possible, telephone meetings will be held with parents and guardians. In school access will be by appointment only.

Q. What about drinking fountains, water refill stations and personal water bottles?

A. All drinking fountains will be closed. Students will be encouraged to bring a labelled water bottle to school, and refill stations will be open for students and staff to fill their own water bottles. Refill stations will be treated as high touch surfaces that will be cleaned often throughout the day. Some water fountains will be used to refill water bottles only.

Q. What will drop-off and pick-up times at schools look like?

A. Schools will work to determine the best way to manage pick-up and drop-off times for students that respect physical distancing measures. These procedures will include students who are bused to school and those who walk. For example, buses may be the only vehicles allowed into the parking lot, while areas may be designated away from the school for parents to park legally and walk their children from there at the designated time. Families will be encouraged to use active transportation, such as walking or biking to school if they live within the walking zone, rather than being driven.

If Someone Becomes Ill

Q. What if a student or staff member becomes ill?

A. Rainbow District School Board will follow Public Health protocols and work closely with Public Health Sudbury and Districts. The protocol includes the following steps:

- Frequent reminders that students and staff **must not attend school if they are sick**, even if symptoms resemble a mild cold.
- Staff who become ill will be sent home immediately and directed to contact Public Health Sudbury and Districts regarding testing.
- Students who become ill while attending school will be isolated in a separate room with staff supervision, at least two metres away from other students. Families will be contacted to pick up their child or teen immediately.
- Kits with sanitizer, masks and other personal protective equipment will be provided for anyone who becomes ill at school, for use by the ill individual and the staff member attending to them.
- Spaces and items used by individuals who are ill will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after use; items that cannot be easily cleaned will be removed.
- If COVID-19 is ruled out by Public Health, the student or staff member may return to school after 24 to 48 hours of being symptom-free, based on Public Health guidance, and well enough to participate in all activities.

Q. What if Public Health Sudbury & Districts confirms a case of COVID-19?

A. If Public Health indicates there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, the school will take all steps advised by Public Health Sudbury and Districts. These will include:

- Public Health Sudbury and Districts will take over responsibility for management of the illness and contact tracing. The school will keep daily records of everyone who was in the school building, and share that information with Public Health.
- The individual who tested positive will not be allowed to return to school until they are cleared by Public Health.
- Public health officials will determine any additional steps that may be required, including possible declaration of an outbreak and any impacts on specific classes or schools.
- Public Health Sudbury and Districts will provide information and advice to the school and school board, for sharing with all families at the school.
- For students who will be away from school for an extended period, learning materials will be provided.

Q. What happens if there is an outbreak and classrooms or schools are closed again?

A. All affected students will be provided with materials and instruction for learning from home.

Q. If my family travels prior to the return to school, do we have to self-isolate for 14 days?

A. Travel outside of Canada is currently the only travel that requires individuals to self-isolate for 14 days upon return to Ontario. Public Health Sudbury and Districts will advise us, and we will advise families, should this change.

Q. If someone in my family has been exposed to COVID-19, should I let the school know? A. Yes. If any family member has been exposed to COVID-19, please contact Public Health Sudbury & Districts and let the school know.

Use of Masks

Q. Who needs to wear a mask at school?

A. With reasonable exceptions, all students in Rainbow Schools in Grades 1 to 12 are required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Kindergarten students are required to wear masks and/or face shields in indoor spaces. Staff, parents/guardians and visitors are also required to wear masks. Medical masks and eye protection (face shields) will be provided for all teachers and other educational staff in the school. Students are encouraged to bring spare masks in the event one becomes wet or damaged throughout the day.

Q. What if I feel my child needs to be exempted from wearing a mask?

A. Medical documentation should be provided to the school. Provincial COVID-19 requirements allow reasonable exceptions to the requirement to wear masks. For example, students with chronic respiratory illnesses (such as asthma), those with special needs and those who have

sensory challenges may be exempted from wearing masks, and an appropriate Plan of Care will be put in place. If you have any concerns, please speak with your school principal.

Q. Will the school provide masks?

A. Families are encouraged to get their own masks for their children and teens. Cloth masks are recommended, since they are reusable, can be washed daily, and are more environmentally friendly. Schools will also have a supply of reusable, cloth masks available for students who need them.

Q. When will masks be required during the day?

A. Students will be required to wear masks when they are indoors, including in hallways, entrances, during classes, and while they are riding the school bus. When students are outside with their cohort – such as for recess or during outdoor physical education – and can remain physically distanced from one another, they will be able to take a break from wearing their masks. Both elementary and secondary students will be able to remove their masks during lunch and nutrition breaks while they eat.

Q. How will students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 be encouraged to wear a mask?

A. A safe, caring and respectful learning environment is essential for everyone in our school communities. School staff will work closely with parents and guardians of Kindergarten to Grade 3 students.

Q. What if students refuse to wear a mask, remove it constantly or are singled out because they can't wear a mask?

A. As with all protocols, students will be expected to follow the school code of conduct and safety rules. Staff will work with families to find ways to ensure their children understand that masks need to be worn. Where students are exempted from wearing a mask for health or other reasons, and an appropriate Plan of Care is in place, teachers will help other students in the class to understand, respect and be sensitive to their peers' needs.

Cleaning protocols

Q. What cleaning protocols will schools follow?

A. All Rainbow schools will follow pandemic cleaning protocols to support safe, healthy facilities and focus on increased cleaning and disinfecting. The pandemic cleaning protocol, based on the advice of public health experts, includes:

- cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch surfaces in schools, several times per day; high touch surfaces include faucets, toilet fixtures and door locks in washrooms; eating areas, such as tables, sinks and countertops; doorknobs, push buttons, light switches, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, touch screens, handrails, photocopiers, and other frequently used equipment
- increasing the number of custodians to ensure high priority cleaning takes place
- bringing in an afternoon shift of custodians to thoroughly clean and disinfect the school and ensure it is a safe environment the following day
- maintaining close, ongoing communication with public health officials.

Q. What cleaning products will be used?

A. Rainbow will be using products listed on the Government of Canada list of approved disinfectants and that possess a Drug Identification Number. All custodial staff will be trained in proper application and use of the cleaners and disinfectants.

Q. Will frequent handwashing be part of the students' day?

A. Yes, handwashing reminders and opportunities will be part of the regular routine every day. Students will be reminded how to wash their hands effectively using soap and water, and how to use hand sanitizer. Handwashing hygiene will include:

- signs throughout the school and reminders by staff regarding proper hand hygiene
- sanitizers in shared areas throughout the school and sanitizer available in every classroom
- reminders to use proper hand hygiene when arriving at school, before and after eating or drinking, after using the washroom, after playing outside, when their hands are physically dirty, when they cough or sneeze, and before and after removing or putting on masks.

Q. What safety protocols will be followed by community services located at schools, such as child care and before- and after-school programs?

A. Rainbow is in close contact with child care providers at our school sites. On-site child care programs and before-and-after-school programs will follow enhanced cleaning and safety protocols, as directed by the Ministry of Education and Public Health Sudbury & Districts.

Q. What about Community Use of School permits?

All Community Use of Schools permit requests are on hold at this time.

Mental Health

Q. How will Rainbow address the mental health of students when all staff will be wearing masks and students can't see the teacher's face?

A. The social development and well-being of students is of utmost importance to us. Staff will work with students to understand the purpose and need to wear masks and other personal protective equipment. This will also help students understand the use of masks in public areas of our community. We know that adjustments will need to be made to teaching and instruction.

Q. What mental health supports will be available?

A. Social workers will participate in school planning and transition meetings to support planning for students with mental health needs, whether students are learning in-person or online. Depending on the circumstances, social workers will be able to provide individual mental health counselling face-to-face with physical distancing, or virtually. Resources and strategies from School Mental Health Ontario to support student transitions back to school are being provided to all Rainbow teachers. Rainbow elementary teachers have *Kids Have Stress Too* materials for their use in supporting social emotional learning, along with other programs. Our social workers will also continue to refer students to supportive resources in the community.

Q. What about online mental health resources?

A. Rainbow District School Board has a wealth of mental health resources available for students, parents and guardians, and staff at:

<https://www.rainbowschools.ca/parents/coronavirus/mental-health-resources/>

This page will be updated as new resources and supports become available.

Student Transportation

Q. Our family qualifies for busing. Will my child or teen have to take the bus to and from school?

A. Families can choose whether or not to ride the bus. For students who qualify for bus transportation, parents will be able to have their children opt out of taking the bus. More information on this is available on the Sudbury Student Services Consortium's Parent Portal at the following link: <https://consortium.businfo.ca/Parents/Login.aspx>

For More Information

We know that parents/guardians, students and staff have many questions about back-to-school, and we will continue to work through our planning with the advice, guidance and directives of the Ministry of Education and provincial and local public health officials. We, like families, want to safeguard the health and well-being of students, staff and the community.

We are committed to keeping our students, staff, families and community aware of new developments and decisions. To do so, we will:

- post latest information on COVID-19 back-to-school planning at <https://www.rainbowschools.ca/parents/coronavirus/reopening/>
- share information through the news media and social media
- email families directly, as required

For questions specific to COVID-19 and public health recommendations, please contact Public Health Sudbury and Districts: <https://www.phsd.ca/>

Thank you for working together to keep everyone safe.