

**August 20, 2021**

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are excited to welcome all students back to in-person learning on Tuesday, September 7. We believe that being in the classroom with familiar faces (with masks of course) and being able to interact in-person with teachers and peers is the best option for student learning and well-being.

As you know, school boards were given guidelines on August 3 from the Ministry of Education regarding the return to in-person learning. These guidelines are being updated regularly and [can be found here on the provincial website](#).

While we continue to work with our public health units and the Ministry of Education on the details of our own return to school plan, [including the vaccine policy for staff and students and vaccine clinics](#), here are the main points we want our families and students to be aware of and focus on for the initial return to school.

- The first day of school for students is Tuesday, September 7. There will be a staggered start for some of our JK students. Schools and teachers will be in touch with our JK families about this. [View the school year calendar here](#).
- We expect all students are returning to in-person learning. If your child or youth requires access to short-term, digital remote learning to start the 2021-22 school year, contact your school principal to discuss your needs and options between August 25 and September 1. [More details on remote learning can be found here](#).
- All students will need to screen for COVID-19 symptoms each day, prior to attending school using the [provincial COVID-19 screening tool](#).
- All staff and all students in Grades 1-12 will be required to wear masks while indoors and on student transportation. Students in Kindergarten are encouraged to wear masks, but it's not mandatory. Students are not required to wear masks outdoors.
- Kindergarten to Grade 8 students will continue to be in cohorts in class.

**John McAllister**  
Chair of the Board

**Ron Ferguson**  
Director of Education

- Students in Grade 9-12 will have two courses for the fall, with a quadmester operating schedule looking similar to last year. [Here is the current secondary calendar.](#)
- Sports and clubs will resume this fall, with some modifications. More info will come from your school and coaches.
- Similar COVID-19 protocols from last year will be in place, such as heightened cleaning, increased hand washing and hand sanitizing upon entry into the school.
- The UCDSB does not ask parents to send school supplies for students. Students need only a mask, indoor shoes (elementary), a backpack and a lunch kit. All basic school supplies are provided.
- Students who still have UCDSB loaned devices or school materials from last school year should bring them to school on the first day. If you have a device, don't forget to send the power cord back!

### **Improved Ventilation in UCDSB Schools**

Throughout the summer, the UCDSB has been continuing to improve ventilation in all schools and classrooms using the Ministry of Education guidance as a minimum threshold. We have been optimizing and improving air filtration on a school-by-school basis to the maximum level where possible, improving temperature and humidity controls, replacing or upgrading some mechanical systems, and have purchased more than 1,600 High Efficiency Particular Air (HEPA) filters units.

A detailed inventory of specific ventilation measures will be posted on the UCDSB website in the coming weeks.

As always, when we have more specific details to share with our families and students, we will send an update to parents through My Family Room, [post to our website](#), and share on social media. If you are not signed up for My Family Room, [you can create an account here](#).

Thank you and stay safe,

Ron Ferguson  
Director of Education  
Upper Canada District School Board

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