

2021-22 Back to School Parent Information Sheet

As detailed within the Nova Scotia Back to School Plan <https://backtoschool.ednet.ns.ca/> many aspects of our school day are returning to normal, but there are some restrictions that will continue. Our guiding principles will be the Core Public Health Measures.

- Public Health indicates that schools will follow a set of core public health measures. These mainly include staying home if unwell, regular cleaning of high touch surfaces, frequent hand hygiene (hand washing or hand sanitizer), and attention to ventilation as described by public health.
- To begin the year, masks are required for all students, staff, and visitors as per the Public Health guidance. We will transition to masks being optional once the province enters Phase 5 of its re-opening plan. Schools will begin to work with students and staff on preparing for this transition by developing supportive, safe spaces for those who choose to continue to wear a mask.
- Schools will continue to provide masks to those who need one.
- In certain circumstances, enhanced core measures may be added by Public Health.
- While these expectations are meant to operationalize the public health guidance, please note that the Public Health guidance takes precedence.

We have created this school information sheet to help families navigate the routines and activities in a typical school day at Debert Elementary for the start of this school year.

What to expect for the start of the school this year:

Before School

- Families are required to monitor for COVID-19 by using the COVID-19 Daily Checklist: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Daily-COVID-checklist-en.pdf>. By monitoring daily, you are helping to identify any potential cases of COVID-19 as quickly as possible.
- Remember to pack a face mask and water bottle. While Nova Scotia remains in Phase 4 of the reopening plan, masks must be worn in school and while traveling on busses. Students are permitted to remove their mask while participating in Physical Education class, eating in the cafeteria, and outside if they can maintain physical distance.
- Students will be provided with two face masks on the first day of school.
- Sending your child with a full water bottle in the morning is recommended and appreciated.
- The school is equipped with water coolers on each floor so students can refill their water bottles.

Getting to School

- Masks are required for all students travelling on buses.
- Bus unloading will be staggered to allow for reduced traffic entering the school.
- Students will wash/sanitize their hands on arrival and go to their classrooms.
- Parents who drive children to school will drop off and pick-up students at the following times:
 - Drop Off between 8:10 - 8:25 am
 - Pick up between 2:20 - 2:30 pm

During the School Day

- Hand Hygiene: There will be an emphasis on hand washing/sanitizing before & after eating and when sharing materials through-out the day. Hand sanitizing stations are set-up at main entrances and classrooms.
- All students and staff will be required to wear masks in school. Every student will be given two non-medical reusable masks. If a student forgets their mask, additional masks are available in the office.

- There is a “no-sharing” policy on food, personal belongings and their individual school supplies.

School Design

- We still have signage including directional signs to control flow in hallways, common areas, and outside spaces. Signage includes traffic flow arrows, physical distancing reminders, and designated Entrances & Exits.

School Schedule

- More classes (including Physical Education) will be held outdoors, when possible to encourage physical movement and support our students’ well-being.
- All students will continue to access healthy options through the school’s Breakfast Program offered in each classroom every morning.
- Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria (set-up in the gym).

Illness at School

- If a child feels unwell or begins to exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, a parent or guardian will be contacted for pick-up. It is very important to ensure that your contact information and other emergency contacts for your child are kept up to date with the school during the school year.
- Any student who becomes unwell at school will have a separate location in the school to wait to be picked up. Students who become ill during the day will not be permitted to return home on the bus.
- If a child exhibits COVID symptoms, parents/guardians are expected to complete the on-line assessment tool - <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/>. If you are unable to access the online tool, call 811.
- We will continue to monitor illness in schools and follow directions from Public Health on specific processes.
- When they are calling in to excuse your child, please provide as much detail as you are comfortable with, so we can provide Public Health with accurate information on our illness data.

After the School Day

- The school is now permitted to offer clubs and activities after school. Look for information about these opportunities in upcoming newsletters.
- Parents/Guardians can help reinforce proper COVID-19 hygiene protocols with children. Please help us to remind children about proper handwashing techniques, cough/sneeze etiquette, how to wear a mask properly, and physical distancing.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Miranda in the school office at (902) 662-4400 or batesmj@gnspes.ca.