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From: **Bird, Ryan**

Date: Fri., Dec. 31, 2021, 6:02 p.m.

Subject: Update Messages for Families and Staff

To:

Cc: Russell-Rawlins, Colleen, Salmon, Audley , Snider, Craig , Gold, Andrew <Andrew.Gold@tdsb.on.ca>, Curtis, Linda

Good Afternoon Union, Federation and Association Partners

Please find below the family and staff messages that are being shared momentarily with regard to next week. As we say in the letter, we know there are more questions to be answered, but we wanted to share as much information as possible prior to the weekend. There are a number of pieces that are still being looking at and we will be able to provide more info next week. As usual, we will be posting to the website and sharing via social media as well.

Thanks and enjoy the rest of 2021. Happy New Year!

Ryan

FAMILY MESSAGE

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to review the details from yesterday's [announcement by the Government of Ontario](#) about returning to school next week.

As we shared yesterday, the first day of school for students (in-person and virtual) has been delayed and will now be Wednesday, January 5.

While we are still confirming a number of items, here is the latest information we have available at this time:

In-Person Learning: For those already enrolled in in-person learning, classes will generally follow the same schedule/timetable. Given staffing shortages that school boards across Ontario have experienced over recent months, the Ministry of Education has said that school boards should consider implementing rotating days of remote learning to allow the limited number of available occasional teachers to be deployed to a smaller number of schools. We are currently determining if this will be necessary, however no final decision has been made.

Virtual Learning: For those students already enrolled in virtual learning, classes will continue as normal beginning Wednesday, January 5.

Masks: While students can continue to bring their own mask, high-quality three-ply cloth masks will continue to be provided, free of charge, to all students who need them.

COVID-19 Screening Tool: The COVID-19 screening tool that all students and staff complete prior to coming to school/work is being updated with symptoms of Omicron. The TDSB Screening App and paper screening form is currently being updated and we will share this once available.

Enhanced Cohorts: To limit the number of contacts as much as possible, the Ministry of Education is requiring all elementary students to cohort during recess and outdoor breaks.

Bussing: Bussing will continue as usual when classes resume on Wednesday, January 5.

Child Care Centres & Before and After School Programs: Child Care Centres and Before and After School Programs are allowed to open beginning on Monday, January 3, however parents should connect directly with the operator for confirmation.

COVID-19 Testing: The PCR self-collection initiative already running in TDSB schools will continue, with a focus on the most common COVID-19 symptoms. Schools, which have a limited supply of take-home PCR kits available, will provide them only to individual symptomatic elementary and secondary students and education staff experiencing only symptoms most commonly associated with COVID-19.

Rapid Antigen Test Kits: Families are reminded to have students use at least 1-2 remaining Rapid Antigen Tests provided prior to the Winter Break before returning to in-person learning, and to stay home if a student receives a positive test result.

Special Education: Students who learn in Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) and who have been accessing in-person learning prior to the winter break, will also return to school on Wednesday January 5. Bussing for these students will also resume on that day.

Absence Reporting: School boards have been advised to plan for potentially higher than usual student absences in the coming weeks. Parents/Guardians are asked to report their child's absence, date and length to the school. We will provide more information on this process in the days ahead.

COVID-19 Case Reporting: The Ministry of Education will no longer be collecting COVID-19 case numbers from school boards. The TDSB, which is committed to keeping families as informed as possible, is currently reviewing how reporting and notification may happen moving forward.

Extra-Curricular Activities: School boards have been directed by the Ministry of Education to pause high contact indoor sports and activities. All music activities that involve multiple cohorts will also temporarily be paused and the TDSB will consult with Toronto Public Health for guidance on other activities involving music.

Adult Day Schools & Continuing Education: Adult Day Schools and remote Continuing Education Programs including International Languages – Elementary and African Heritage, Adult ESL and Secondary Remote Night School will resume on Wednesday, January 5.

HEPA Filters: The TDSB currently has more than 16,000 HEPA filters in all occupied learning spaces. This exceeds the standards set by the Ministry of Education in August 2021. Additional units will be utilized to provide even greater coverage.

Letter from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Minister of Education: Please click [here](#) to read a letter from Dr. Kieran Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and Minister of Education Stephen Lecce.

I know that families will have more questions about the days and weeks ahead that may not have been answered here. Please know that we are continuing to meet and plan and will provide more information through system emails such as this one and through our schools.

Wishing you and your family a very happy and healthy 2022.

Sincerely,

Colleen Russell-Rawlins
Director of Education

STAFF MESSAGE

Dear Staff,

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to review the details from yesterday's [announcement by the Government of Ontario](#) with regard to returning to school next week.

As we shared yesterday, the first day back for all staff following the Winter Break will continue to be Monday, January 3. Most school-based staff may work remotely and are expected to be available throughout the day on Monday and Tuesday to participate in meetings and other planning in preparation for opening schools on Wednesday. Some school-based staff, such as caretakers, will continue to report to work in-person to ensure buildings continue to operate. Central and administrative staff should refer to the December 15 memo that outlines expectations around work location in the weeks ahead.

While we are still confirming a number of items, here is the latest information we have available at this time:

In-Person Learning: For those already enrolled in in-person learning, classes will generally follow the same schedule/timetable. Given staffing shortages that school boards across Ontario have experienced over recent months, the Ministry of Education has said that school boards should consider implementing rotating days of remote learning to allow the limited number of available occasional teachers to be deployed to a smaller number of schools. We are currently determining if this will be necessary, however no final decision has been made.

Virtual Learning: For those students already enrolled in virtual learning, classes will continue as normal beginning Wednesday, January 5.

Masks: Non-fit-tested N95 masks will be provided to staff in schools as an optional alternative to medical/surgical masks. These masks are being distributed to schools at the beginning of next week to ensure they are available for the first day.

COVID-19 Screening Tool: The COVID-19 screening tool that all students and staff complete prior to coming to school/work is being updated. The TDSB Screening App is currently being updated and we will share this once available.

COVID-19 Testing: The PCR self-collection initiative already running in TDSB schools will continue, with a focus on the most common COVID-19 symptoms. Schools, which have a

limited supply of take-home PCR kits available, will provide them only to individual symptomatic elementary and secondary students and education staff experiencing only symptoms most commonly associated with COVID-19.

Rapid Antigen Test Kits: Staff are reminded to use at least 1-2 remaining Rapid Antigen Tests provided prior to the Winter Break - if available - before returning to work in-person and to stay home if you receive a positive test result.

COVID-19 Case Reporting: The Ministry of Education will no longer be collecting COVID-19 case numbers from school boards. The TDSB, which is committed to keeping families as informed as possible, is currently reviewing how reporting and notification will happen moving forward.

Absence Reporting: Please continue to report all absences to your Principal/Supervisor with as much as notice as possible to ensure appropriate coverage can be arranged.

HEPA Filters: The TDSB currently has more than 16,000 HEPA filters in all occupied learning spaces. This exceeds the standards set by the Ministry of Education in August 2021. Additional units will be utilized to provide even greater coverage.

Letter from the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Minister of Education: Please click [here](#) to read a letter from Dr, Kieran Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and Minister of Education Stephen Lecce.

I know that you will likely have more questions about the days and weeks ahead that may not have been answered here. Please know that we are continuing to meet and plan and will provide more information through system emails such as this one and through Principals and Supervisors.

Wishing you and your family a very happy and healthy 2022.

Sincerely,

Colleen Russell-Rawlins
Director of Education