

The Kitchener-Waterloo Bilingual School (“**KWBS**”)

COVID-19 – Safe Return to School Protocol



Fall, 2020

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Introduction and Background

The staff and Board of the KWBS welcome you to the 2020-2021 school year!

2020 has brought with it new and unparalleled challenges for educators, students and families. Beginning with the closure of schools by Emergency Order on March 13, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, through to the end of the 2019-2020 school year, we have had to reconsider many of the ways in which we work, learn and interact with one another. We are so proud of our staff, students, and families who have risen to the challenge.

We know the value that the KWBS' educational model holds in our community. Our school is a nurturing environment where our students learn, play, and grow intellectually and socially under the caring guidance of our professional staff. Our environment, and the relationships built between children and staff and between peers are important to the ongoing development of our students and to their overall well-being.

We know there are many worries about the future and how the school year will unfold. We want to assure you that we are taking every reasonable precaution to make sure that we can return to school in a manner that maximizes the safety and well-being of KWBS students, staff and families.

This guide applies to all parents who have children enrolled in the KWBS program. For families with children in the Waterloo Infant Toddler Daycare (“WITDA”) program that operates in our school, **the WITDA policies will apply to the preschool class** as there are specific protocols that apply only to the daycare. Please refer to the information provided to you by WITDA. Where possible, we tried to coordinate between the two policies.

a) Provincial Guidelines

In response to COVID-19, the province of Ontario has directed all schools to prepare for three (3) different scenarios for September 2020. KWBS' return to school protocol will be based on the framework and guidelines established by the [Ministry of Education's Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year](#) (the “Guidelines”).

Accordingly, we have prepared three (3) possible scenarios for this school year for our school:

- a) **Face-to-Face** – Normal school day routine with smaller class sizes, and with enhanced health and safety protocols (e.g. cohorting, personal protective equipment (PPE), enhanced sanitation, etc.). This is described under the section **Reopening Model for September 2020 below**.
- b) **Blended Model** – Model that alternates Face-to-Face with Remote Learning. The KWBS Blended model involves students being divided into three cohorts and alternating weeks Face-to-Face and learning from home. Teachers and staff will support students' learning both in-school and at home. We recognize that a Blended model is more complicated for parents in managing care for their children.
- c) **Remote Learning** - similar to the model we used during March - June 2020 where learning takes place from home. This model may be used in case of school closure, or by parent choice. It provides opportunities for students to engage with their teachers in both synchronous and asynchronous learning from home:

- i. Synchronous learning occurs live and in real time (e.g. live teacher lesson with students participating virtually, via Google Meet);
- ii. Asynchronous learning is conducted remotely but without real-time interaction (e.g. teacher-recorded lesson uploaded to Google classroom).

In September, the KWBS will be offering the Face-to-Face mode. We are prepared to transition to either a Blended Model or Remote Learning model, as may be directed by the Province of Ontario, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, and/or the Region of Waterloo Public Health Unit Medical Officer of Health. In this case, our Remote Learning for the whole school will be organized as follows:

- **For B (JK), C (SK) classes, Grades 1 and 2** - there will be daily videos posted by each of the teachers and regular one-on-one or small group instruction with teachers and educational assistants;
- **For Grades 3-6** - there will be daily live teaching replicating our regular half day French/English model and small group instruction as necessary and possible with the teachers and our educational assistants or resource teachers;
- **Grades 7-8** - will follow the same schedule as in class.

All parents will need a reliable internet connection so their child can participate in Remote Learning if necessary to transition to online. Please advise the office if this is not possible in your circumstance.

We recognize that parents/guardians rely upon predictability and routine that our school typically provides so they can arrange childcare, home life and work commitments while knowing their child is receiving academic instruction in a safe, productive environment. Given the uncertainty that we face in the coming months, we hope that our students and their parents/guardians will continue to maintain flexibility, patience, and understanding as we develop solutions to the various challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

b) Purpose

This Protocol serves as a framework for how we plan to reopen our school to students and staff. It was developed in consultation with guidelines and other relevant health and safety protocols/mandates published by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour, Public Health Ontario, School Mental Health Ontario, and other relevant leaders and stakeholders.

c) Guiding Principles for our Return to School

In accordance with provincial mandates, our guiding principles for our return to school are as follows:

1. Take every reasonable precaution to keep students and staff safe and healthy at all times. Our priorities have been to eliminate or reduce risk of exposure where possible, and manage the risk where elimination or reduction is not possible.
2. Explore and provide opportunities for the continuity of learning through either Face-to-Face, blended or Remote Learning.

3. Focus on student and staff well-being and mental health throughout the return to school stage and beyond.
4. Address issues of equity and access for our students and families, while appropriately balancing health and safety considerations.
5. Keep stakeholders informed through regular communication.

We know that our parent/guardian community will have many unique family situations and work commitments that they need to resolve in the context of a return to our school. As such, this Protocol will not be able to address every individual situation. However, please know that we will work to find creative solutions designed to help as many of our families as possible so they can manage their competing demands of work, school and family life.

At this stage, we recognize that returning to school five days a week for all students will address the greatest number of family needs in our community.

We also know that some of our students have special needs, and will continue to face challenges and obstacles to learning during a pandemic given the realities of physical distancing and escalated health and safety requirements. We are committed to working with each family on a case-by-case basis, to find a solution that meets their child's needs while keeping them and others at the school emotionally and physically safe.

d) Communication

KWBS will communicate regularly with students and their parents/guardians over the course of the next several weeks and throughout the school year. Information and updates will be shared directly with families, students, and staff, through a variety of means, including by email and through SchoolDay. This document will also be available on our website: <https://kwbilingualschool.com/>.

This Protocol will be reviewed regularly and any changes will be communicated in a timely manner to our families. In the future, please take note of the date at the bottom of this document so you know you are referring to the most recent version.

Reopening Model for September, 2020

On July 27, 2020, the Ministry of Education directed all elementary schools (JK to 8) in Ontario to reopen with a conventional Face-to-Face delivery model of teaching and instruction with enhanced health and safety protocols in place.

The KWBS is planning a return to school on September 8, 2020, using the conventional Face-to-Face model.

While this Protocol establishes general protocols, practices and procedures, we will be introducing a more detailed COVID-19 Safety Plan which will include information on:

- Confirmation of student attendance in person
- Daily routines (screening, drop off and pick up, routine during the school day)

- Communication with the school/teachers
- Other protocols and safety items.

We are all aware of the advantages of being back to school full time and are glad to be able to provide you the opportunity to return to class with a reduced number of students in each cohort.

Please note: As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, we continue to revise and finalize our plans for reopening our school in September, in accordance with directions from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, and/or Public Health.

More details will be shared with parents/guardians and staff before the school year starts on September 8, 2020.

a) Class Structure and Programming

Under this model, our students will attend school full time, five days per week starting on September 8, 2020.

To ensure our students' and staff safety, we have many measures in place, including the following:

- All in-school extra-curricular activities have been cancelled, including sports, music, and nutrition programs.
- We will use all the spaces available (including library, staff room, music rooms, Old School House, resource rooms) in the school as classrooms.
- Students in each of the Grades 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 as well as students in B (JK) and C classes (SK) will be divided into three cohorts. Each of the cohorts in these grades will have between 11-15 students.
- Students in each of the Grades 7 and 8 will be divided into two cohorts only, of 11 students in Grade 8 and 15 and 16 students respectively in Grade 7. Students in Grade 1 will be divided into two cohorts of 17 students each. The students in Grade 1 as well as the students in Grade 7 will be using larger classrooms to allow for better distancing.
- Students in each cohort will remain together throughout the day. They will not mingle with other cohorts or grades. When going outside they will travel through the hallway with a staff member.
- Students will not change classrooms. Teachers will change classrooms while following the KWBS Half day French/English Model.
- Our educational assistants will continue to work with our students, provide feedback and support learning while the French and English teachers rotate to teach each of the 3 cohorts.
- Recess times and structured recess with Physical education teachers will be staggered.
- Drop off and pick up times will be staggered.

- A nurse will train the teachers on the appropriate safety protocols. The teachers will practice these protocols with the students.
- All meetings, including parent teachers meetings will take place remotely, as well as the curriculum night.
- To reduce the number of adults our students are in contact with, we have a plan in place where our EAs or VP or principal will supply when necessary and we will not have external staff.
- Only essential personnel will be allowed in the school. Parents are not essential personnel.

Students remain **with their class exclusively during the day**, including during structured recess/Physical Education time and lunch. **This class is considered their “cohort.”** Cohorted classes will stay together, while the French/English and support teachers will rotate between the cohorts of the same grade. This way we can ensure continuity of the French and English program, but also a balance between the time students spend with the teachers and with the EAs. While we are taking appropriate steps to limit exposure of students to COVID-19, we want to make sure that our students have access to the best quality bilingual education possible in the circumstances.

The decision to organize most grades in three cohorts is based on the assumption that most students will be returning full time. Our plan will be revisited after we know the number of students who will attend remotely and any changes will be communicated to parents/guardians. A survey will be distributed giving you the option to choose which program you would like your children to attend.

b) Face-to-Face vs. Remote Learning

Under the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Guidelines, parents/guardians will be able to choose whether their child engages in learning through Remote Learning from home or Face-to-Face learning when we return to school in person in the fall.

Students cannot attend school in-person part-time *and* participate in Remote Learning at the same time. Parents/guardians must choose one delivery method or the other. Note that the Remote Learning program delivered to some students will look different from the Remote Learning model that we can implement if the whole school transitions to online. Note also that there will also be variations in what the program looks like between grades. Please be aware that although we have a very good student support system, having three cohorts in most grades may limit our ability to provide the same remote program as in March-June.

The model that we are planning to offer for Remote Learning students includes:

a) asynchronous learning:

- teachers posting online the daily agenda with the work to be covered for the day;
- some teachers will also post a video to teach the lesson;

b) synchronous learning:

- 1:1 or small group support with a teacher or EA;
- whole class live teaching may take place also depending on the number of students registered in Remote Learning.

The frequency of the support will be determined depending on the number of students in the program and our staff availability. We will create a schedule for the synchronous learning stream based on grades and the number of students who choose Remote Learning. We will communicate the relevant schedules to our families.

Switching between Remote Learning and Face-to-Face learning streams:

Parents/guardians should be aware that students must remain in their chosen delivery stream for at least one (1) month, unless their child becomes ill and cannot attend in person. Students will be permitted to switch streams after the first month with one week's notice. Due to our system of tracking COVID-19, parents are asked to provide us with the reason they want to switch between Face-to-Face and Remote Learning streams. While we will accommodate these changes even when there is no medical reason, we are asking parents to understand that it may take time for their child to be included in the support one-on-one or small group schedule. Also be aware that this may affect other students who are in the Remote Learning program and their schedule and all parents will see occasional changes in their children's schedule.

If switching from one delivery model to another happens too often, we may have to increase the amount of notice we require. These changes will impact the schedules of each of the delivery models and may impact other students as well, so please be aware that it is ideal to limit the number of changes unless there is an urgent reason.

We ask that parents inform the school immediately in writing if their child is sick and whether their child's health allows the child to participate in Remote Learning. Students who become ill and would like to attend Remote Learning will have access to online learning and will be included in the support schedule as quickly as possible.

While we are making every effort to deliver a strong program there are some limitations to the Remote Learning program, especially to the synchronous learning stream (1:1 or small group instruction).

Due to restrictions created by this format, KWBS may not be able to guarantee student-teacher ratios in accordance with its in-person classes. This depends on how the COVID-19 situation evolves, staff presence and availability.

Students will be expected to spend the same amount of time each day engaged in learning regardless of the delivery stream they are enrolled in.

We will continue to use Google Classroom as our online learning platform as well as other tools in higher grades.

c) Outbreaks and Changes to Learning Models

KWBS will trigger an Outbreak Response Plan, should it be necessary to switch from the Face-to-Face school delivery model to the Blended model or to Remote Learning, depending on the current status of COVID-19 in the Region of Waterloo and/or direction received from the Ministry of Education and Public Health.

To facilitate this transition, we continue to ask parents to please ensure that your children have a device available to use for school, and internet access at home. Students in different grades will be asked to

bring the device to the school as teachers will help them learn how to navigate Google Classroom. This will be useful if we transition to Remote Learning and help students become more independent.

The platform that we will be using for Remote Learning is Google Classroom. By having these steps in place, a potential shift to Remote Learning will be more efficient and responsive to our students' and families' needs.

Access to School Property

a) Parent/Guardian and Visitor Access

In accordance with Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour guidelines, only **essential visitors** will be permitted inside the school. Essential visitors include staff employed by the KWBS, board members, students and maintenance staff. Essential visitors must complete a pre-entry self-assessment screening for COVID-19 symptoms **BEFORE** arriving at / entering our school. Essential visitors will be screened for any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If any signs are exhibited, essential visitors **must not** enter the school.

All other visitors, including parents/guardians, are not deemed essential and **will not** be permitted inside the school for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, except in case of emergency. Only the principal has the authority to make exceptions as appropriate and in emergency circumstances.

Parent-teacher meetings will take place virtually until further notice, as will staff meetings, training and any other meetings.

b) After-School Programs

To comply with Ministry of Education guidelines and best practices, all third-party in-school and after-school programs **have been cancelled** for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic.

All students must be picked up as per KWBS' pick-up schedule.

c) Third Party Use of School Property

All outside contracts with third parties (staff, students, non-staff members, non-students, community members, *etc.*) have been cancelled. **To best safeguard our students and their families, outside third parties will not be permitted to use the school during the pandemic.**

Parent / Guardian Responsibilities

a) Confirmation of Attendance Survey

Parents/guardians will receive a survey where they will be asked to indicate if their child will be attending school in person starting on September 8th, 2020 or if they will be attending school through Remote learning. Students in all streams (i.e., Face-to-Face learning vs. Remote learning) will be assigned to a specific cohort and teacher.

Parents are asked to respect the deadline that they will be given for the survey as we require this information for planning.

b) Pick-up and Drop-off

KWBS will establish a pick-up and drop-off procedure and will communicate the procedure to our families. At all relevant times, parents/guardians are to remain outside the school and adhere to physical distancing protocols.

Drop offs and Pick-ups will be staggered and physical distancing protocols will be implemented as follows:

- We will have seven entrance points (two at the front, two at the back, and two side entrances for JK and SK students, so JK and SK parents can drop the children off at the classroom door). The seventh entrance will be designated entrance for the preschool class only.
- There will be a staff member in each area assisting children.
- If children need to leave early, parents/guardians must inform classroom teachers and the office by email. Children will wait in the main hallways to be picked up. They will be allowed to leave after visual or phone confirmation that parents/guardians are there.
- End of school dismissal will be from outside, with staggered pick-up times to be circulated to parents/guardians in early September.
- Parents will have the chance to select their arrival time, and they will automatically be assigned a dismissal time.
- In the morning we will have a “kiss and ride” zone where parents drop off their children. Parents should stay in the car.
- Students will use the same door that they entered in the morning and will be ready for pick up waiting in their designated area. Please respect the time assigned to your family. To ensure that parents respect the time, each family will be given a visual sign to place on the dashboard when arriving at school. The color of the sign indicates your time slot to the staff.
- An orientation will be conducted by staff with students in each grade who will practice arrival/dismissal/travelling in the hallways, and other routines.
- We are also planning to use the Chinese Alliance Church parking lot as a drop off and we will engage a crossing guard to cross students.
- If congestion becomes problematic, staff will direct traffic to ensure that physical distancing and cohorting requirements are adhered to.

More information will be provided to parents. We will make adjustments and improvements based on our observations and your feedback.

c) Personal Student Belongings

i. Lockers and Cubbies

In compliance with Ministry of Education cohorting requirements, our students **will not** have access to lockers or cubbies during the COVID-19 pandemic. All student belongings will stay with them in the classroom for the duration of the school day. Parents/guardians are asked to make sure that their children bring minimal personal belongings to school. Student belongings must be taken home each day to be cleaned as needed. We may revisit this in the winter and allow students to use the lockers or cubbies in a staggered way to store their coats and boots. In September, students will not change to indoor shoes when they arrive at school. They are asked to always use the same clean pair of shoes indoors and for physical education/recess outside or in the gym. Kindergarten teachers will communicate specific information regarding a change of clothing when necessary.

ii. Lunch bags / boxes

To comply with Ministry of Education cohorting requirements, our students will be required to bring their own personally labelled lunch bags / boxes to school each day. All outside food services have been cancelled for the duration of the pandemic. This includes the milk program, the Lunch Lady, pizza days and so on. We will be creative with our birthday celebrations and will not be sharing food or bringing cakes or cookies until further notice.

We remind you that we are a **nut free environment**.

iii. Water bottles and Water Fountains

To comply with Ministry of Education cohorting requirements, our students will be required to bring their own personally labelled, reusable plastic or metal water bottles to school each day.

Water fountains will be accessible to refill water bottles only. Students will not be permitted to drink directly from water fountains. Water fountains will be sanitized several times during the day.

iv. Stationery, School Supplies and Equipment

KWBS staff will limit or eliminate the sharing of supplies, equipment, textbooks. All students will have their own private materials and students must not share these school supplies with others.

Students will be asked not to share stationery and other school supplies with their classmates for the duration of the pandemic. If students forget stationery, they will be provided with spares by their teacher. Students should not accept stationery from other students, even if they are in the same cohort. Donations of unopened packages of pens and pencils will be accepted by homeroom teachers to stock the supply cupboards in each classroom.

Equipment that must be shared will be cleaned or disinfected between each use.

Some stationery supplies will continue to be provided by the parents, such as pens & pencils, calculators, pencil crayons etc. The list of supplies for students can be found by visiting <https://www.staples.ca/pages/schooltools#parents>. Staples will deliver directly to your house, or you can source these items from anywhere you like.

The school will provide individual copies of each book and/or handout for each student. Some required reading material (and much leisure reading material) may also be available online through either the Kitchener Public Library (<https://kpl.org/ebooks>) or Waterloo public library's (<https://www.wpl.ca/digital-library>) digital library services including e-books, audio books, and other media formats which can benefit different learning styles tremendously. Visit your library to obtain a library card to access this material.

New this year, each child will also require access to a device that they can use to access Google classroom. For students in JK, SK and Grades 1-2 the device will be necessary if we transition to Remote Learning and children will be using it under the guidance of parents/guardians. Students in Grades 3-8 may be asked to bring their device to school. Please ensure that the device has a suitable protective carrying case, and that it is labeled with your student's name. Teachers will communicate to you when students will be asked to bring the device to school.

For students who will be engaging via Remote learning, we will communicate a pick up time for the textbooks and different materials prior to September 8, 2020.

d) Screening of Students

Parents/guardians will be asked to perform an online **daily** screening form for their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms **BEFORE** they leave home. Parents are to monitor their child(ren) for symptoms of COVID-19:

- Common symptoms of COVID-19 include:
 - Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
 - New or worsening cough
 - Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

- Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:
 - Sore throat
 - Difficulty swallowing
 - New olfactory or taste disorder(s)
 - Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
 - Runny nose, or nasal congestion – in absence of underlying reason for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.

For additional information on symptoms, please refer to the Province of Ontario's reference guideline on COVID-19:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf

If your child shows **any** signs or symptoms of illness of any kind, or especially potential COVID-19 symptoms, they must stay home for 14 days and the school must be notified. KWBS will administer return to school (*i.e.* if your child tests negative) in accordance with directions received from Public Health Ontario and/or the local Public Health Unit.

Any confirmed case of COVID-19 will be communicated to the local Public Health Unit and the school will take the necessary safety measures following the guidelines of the Public Health. We are keeping the students in cohorts and tracking the contacts and the movement of the cohorts in the school to ensure that we can limit the scope of a required closure in case of a COVID-19 case within a cohort. However, we will at all times take instructions from the local Public Health Unit on how best to proceed in any given situation.

For parents who have children in the WITDA daycare in our school, please note that the screening process may be different for WITDA.

Safety Protocols

Safety protocols ensure the safety of our physical school environment and the people within it, which is both a place of learning for students, and a workplace for staff.

a) Safety Inspections

Our administration has ensured the functional operation and regular maintenance of the school throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Before students return to school, and at designated checkpoints before September 8, 2020, we will complete a full scale Safety Inspection within each area of the school:

- Classrooms including all new spaces (library, music rooms, old school house) designated as classrooms;
- Hallways, stairways, and common/congregate spaces;
- Restrooms;
- Offices;
- Gym (including change rooms);
- Utility and storage spaces;
- Playground and all outdoors spaces;
- Regular inspections will continue to take place as usual

b) Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be in place for our entire property. The school administration will be responsible for the training of staff and instruction on cleaning requirements. **For further information on cleaning requirements, please refer to Appendix “A” – Hygiene and Cleaning.**

c) Physical Distancing

Signage on our walls and floors will help direct the flow of traffic along one side or the other and will remind students to maintain physical distance from one another. The signage will be posted at various locations throughout the school, in accordance with Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Public Health Ontario guidelines.

Physical distancing measures will be implemented throughout the school. These can include:

- Reducing maximum room occupancy and organizing grades in three cohorts instead of two when possible.

- Increasing the number of spaces we use for learning within the school (using library, music rooms, old school house, staff room as classrooms).
- Allocating the largest spaces to the largest cohorts, some grades will be in different rooms than the usual specific grade room.
- Maximizing physical distance between chairs and tables/desks in all rooms and keeping the furniture to a minimum.
- Utilizing furniture that can be easily cleaned, and refraining from use of furniture that cannot be sanitized in accordance with Public Health Ontario standards.
- Close greetings (e.g., hugs, handshakes, high fives) will not be allowed.
- Incorporating more individual activities and independent learning through games, educational activities/videos, social stories.
- Avoiding activities that involve shared objects in higher grades.
- Kindergarten students will play with a limited number of toys in each cohort that we will clean and rotate. There will be no stuffed animals, or any cloth objects in the classrooms.
- We will have a system in place in the kindergarten classes to ensure that students use the books in a safe way. Each cohort will have access to a set of books for a week. The books will be sealed and wait for two weeks before we share them with another cohort.
- Creating designated routes for students/staff to get to and from classrooms.
- Having staggered bathroom breaks.
- Using markings on floors and walls to promote physical distancing, including for lines/queues (e.g., tape on floors, signs on walls).
- Moving activities (including lessons), outside to allow for more space, assuming weather permits.
- Staggering periods of student movement around school and discouraging student congregating in hallways where possible.
- Tracking all movement of cohorts in the school by the classroom teachers.
- Some doors in the hallways will be propped open to avoid students touching the door when travelling.
- Staggering student/staff arrival, lunch, break times, and structured recess/gym times where applicable.

Maintaining physical distancing at all times can be challenging. Students may sometimes forget this important safety measure or will unintentionally enter someone else's space. It is important to recognize that we are aiming for best efforts and not perfection; however, we would appreciate any assistance our

parents/guardians can provide in their daily routine conversations at home to reinforce the importance of physical distancing protocols both at home and at school.

Friendly reminders will be provided to parents/guardians, as necessary, to ensure that all students are complying with the required physical distancing standards.

d) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

We will maintain an inventory of disposable masks and gloves for individuals who may exhibit signs of illness, and face shields for those who may require additional levels of protection or isolation. Public Health Ontario guidelines will guide our PPE adoption practices, and we will communicate and train all of our staff on any new requirements introduced by the province. Staff will be provided with all PPE required for their specific role. PPE donations can be directed to your child(ren)'s homeroom teachers.

e) Non-Medical or Cloth Masks

Because the risk affects students who interact in similar spaces equally, students on the upper floor in Grades 3 through 8 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Outdoor times like recess may be used as opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks, provided they adhere to physical distancing guidelines at all times. Parents/guardians may instruct their children to always wear a mask if they choose, however, the school will not enforce this during recess when the distance is easier to maintain.

Our students in Kindergarten through Grade 2 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in indoor spaces.

Because these are new situations for all of us, we encourage parents/guardians to reinforce masking requirements for students both within and outside our school. Students are encouraged to practice wearing masks and learn what type of mask is most comfortable for them. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and families who cannot provide a mask for their child may request support from the school, and where available, a mask will be provided.

Students will be taught the proper use of a mask. Please consult the Region of Waterloo for what is an acceptable mask. <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/face-coverings.aspx#:~:text=In%20Waterloo%20Region%20wearing%20a,the%20spread%20of%20COVID%2D19.>

Any logo or design on a mask will be subject to our normal school dress code policies (*i.e.* no profanity, no provocative or obscene language or images, *etc.*).

f) Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

KWBS will ensure that hand hygiene signage and products are available in all rooms where possible and at all entrances (e.g. hand wash sink with soap dispenser or hand sanitizer).

All staff, students and essential visitors will be expected to conduct proper hand hygiene, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer, at the following times:

- Upon entering the school

- At regular time intervals throughout the day
- Before/after eating food
- After using the restroom
- Before/after outdoor play
- After sneezing or coughing
- Before putting on and after removing PPE and/or non-medical masks/face coverings

We will be posting signage and reinforcing good hand hygiene and respiratory practices, in accordance with Public Health directives:

- [How to wash your hands \(child focused\)](#)
- [How to wash your hands with soap and water](#)
- [Reduce the spread of COVID-19: Wash your hands](#)
- [How to clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub](#)

A nurse will be training staff on appropriate hand washing, distancing and other necessary measures. Our staff will be practicing these with students, including respiratory etiquette:

- Covering the nose and mouth during coughing and sneezing with a tissue, or sneezing or coughing into your sleeve or elbow.
- Disposing of used tissues into the garbage immediately after use.
- Practicing proper hand hygiene immediately after coughing or sneezing or touching one's face.

g) Ventilation

Where possible, and subject to weather and any requirements under provincial regulations (such as Fire Code), windows and doors will be opened to allow fresh outdoor air into the school.

In addition to opening windows and doors (when possible), KWBS will ensure that ventilation systems are set to intake maximum fresh air and are set at their "maximum" operating capacities. KWBS currently ensures that air filters and relevant consumables relating to the ventilation systems are replaced in compliance with manufacturer specifications. In response to additional load on these systems (*i.e.* operating at maximum capacity), KWBS may elect to replace relevant consumables in advance of manufacturer specifications.

Pandemic Response Protocols

Symptomatic individuals or anyone who has come into close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the previous 14 days should be tested for COVID-19. Resource: [COVID-19 Assessment and Testing Centres in Region of Waterloo](#). Families are responsible for deciding when and how to get tested. Positive test results need to be communicated to the office as soon as possible. The office will communicate to Public Health. We will follow the steps recommended by public health to inform you and protect the other students and staff. Students will not be permitted to return to school unless authorized to do so in accordance with Public Health Ontario guidelines.

Health and Safety Room / Area

In compliance with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labour requirements, KWBS has designated a **Health and Safety Room/Area**. This room/area will be used for the temporary placement

of any individual who becomes ill during the day where rest and/or health services may be provided, and exposure to any possible illness can be isolated from others in the environment. Children will be attended to by a staff member while in the designated room. A kit will be available for use by the ill individual and staff member attending to them. This will include hand sanitizer, gloves, surgical/procedural masks, eye protection, tissues and a gown.

Caretaking staff will conduct a deep cleaning and decontamination protocol to disinfect the Isolation Room/Area after each use, including any items touched by the symptomatic individual.

i. Thermometer

Touchless thermometers are available to verify the temperature of an ill individual.

Temperature testing may take place if necessary.

COVID-19 Symptomatic Students / Staff

Parents/guardians will be notified immediately if a child becomes unwell during the school day. Symptomatic students must be immediately separated from others and supervised in the designated health and safety room/space. Parents/guardians (or designates) must immediately come to the school to pick up their child. Students from the same family will need to be picked up as well if exhibiting any COVID-19 symptoms.

Symptomatic students will be supervised by a staff member who will follow safety protocols.

Soiled personal items will be placed in a securely tied plastic bag and sent home with the student's parent/guardian. Soiled items will not be handled, rinsed and/or washed at school.

i. Staff Health Screening

Staff will complete a daily self-assessment prior to leaving for work and staff who have any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 will stay home. Symptomatic staff and essential visitors will go home immediately. If they cannot return home immediately, they will be isolated in the designated Health and Safety Room/Area until their departure.

A surgical / procedural (e.g. N-95) mask will be worn by the symptomatic person (if tolerated).

Caretaking staff will conduct a deep cleaning and decontamination protocol to disinfect the designated room/space and any items touched by the symptomatic individual (outside of the designated room/space). Caretaking staff may be required to close parts of the school in order to administer appropriate deep cleaning / decontamination, in accordance with Public Health Ontario and Ministry of Labour guidelines. **At no point in time will deep cleaning/decontamination occur while students are present in the area(s) being cleaned.**

a) Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

When a student or staff member has been diagnosed as positive for the COVID-19 virus, parents or staff must notify the office immediately. KWBS will follow the directions of the Region of Waterloo Public Health Unit.

The Region of Waterloo Public Health Unit may require one or multiple classes to move to a distance learning model or may require the school to be closed to in-person instruction for a length of time.

KWBS will cooperate with any contact tracing efforts to ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of students, their families, and all staff are safeguarded.

Students or staff who test positive for COVID-19 must provide medical clearance before being allowed to return to in-person instruction at our school.

b) Privacy

KWBS will follow the directions from the local Public Health Unit in terms of what medical/health information related to colleagues, students or their families can be shared. Parents should understand that not all personal information can be shared due to privacy legislation.

School Day Operations

a) Staff Rooms

All staff rooms will be closed for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic to prevent staff from socializing and/or compromising the integrity of cohorts / bubbles. This space may be used as a classroom.

b) Student Transportation

Student transportation to and from school will continue to be the responsibility of parents. All outside activities requiring transportation by school bus have been cancelled until further notice.

c) Attendance

Student attendance will be taken for all students who arrive at school, and a record will be maintained by the classroom teacher when the cohort of students is in areas of the building other than their classroom.

This will assist KWBS with contact tracing should a positive case of COVID-19 be determined. Daily attendance will also be taken for any student participating in Remote Learning.

d) Fire Drills

Practice drills will continue in keeping with Ministry of Education guidelines. Classes will move throughout the building while maintaining physical distance between students in the classroom, hallway and at all exits.

KWBS will train staff on emergency protocols and where to go in case there is a real emergency and an evacuation is required. Locations on the school playground or field will be identified that will allow for physical distancing between students to be maintained.

e) Lockdown, Tornado and Bomb Threat Drills

These drills will not take place during COVID-19; however, KWBS students will participate in a modified drill and review of emergency procedures in case of an actual life-threatening situation. The modified practice drill must adhere to physical distancing requirements, and may include supplementary classroom instruction and/or simulation.

f) Student Nutrition

Students will continue to bring and eat their lunch in their classroom. They will remain with their cohort classmates. We will have two snack times and a lunch time. Students will be asked to wash or sanitize their hands before and after eating. Students are asked to bring a napkin to place on their desk when eating. Food sharing is not permitted. We encourage students to continue to bring healthy snacks to the school. They will take home all recyclable containers to recycle them at home. KWBS will continue to follow its current protocols with respect to students leaving school property at lunch.

Outside food from restaurants or chains should not be delivered to school since only essential visitors are permitted in the school during this time. All outside nutrition programs have been cancelled for the school year. We kindly remind you that we are a **nut free** facility.

g) Field Trips

In accordance with Ministry of Education and Public Health guidelines, in the initial stages of return to school, all field trips are cancelled until further notice. Cohorted classes may be permitted to take short walking trips outside of the school premises (e.g. to the pond, to the park).

h) Intramural and Extracurricular Sports

In accordance with Ministry of Education and Public Health guidelines, in the initial stages of return to school all intramural and extra-curricular sports are cancelled until further notice.

i) The Music Program, Clubs and Other Activities

School clubs that can run virtually after school hours may continue. Clubs that are not able to run virtually are cancelled until further notice.

According to Ministry guidelines based on the elevated risk of transmission of COVID-19 between cohorts, and the elevated risk associated with vocal, wind, brass, and group music activities, all in-person music lessons and performances during the school day have been cancelled for the 2020-2021 school year.

The school will continue to consult with Public Health with regard to when it is safe to resume instrumental music and vocal classes.

j) Contactless Payments and Deliveries

To reduce the handling of cash, parents are encouraged to use online or digital payment methods including EFT.

All delivery persons will leave deliveries/parcels outside for our staff to take into the school. Delivery persons are not considered essential workers and under no circumstances will a delivery person be allowed to access a student-only or staff-only area.

k) School Equipment and Communal Spaces

i. Doors

Where possible, and where safe to do so, classroom and office doors should be left open during the day to minimize the number of students or staff who need to physically touch the door. Where permitted by the Fire Code, doors will be left open to minimize contact in high traffic areas. Students will use the same doors when they enter and exit the school.

ii. Restrooms

Signage will be placed inside the restroom, reminding students of both physical distancing and proper hand hygiene. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected at regular intervals throughout the school day and again each evening.

iii. Outdoor Space

Staff will be encouraged to take advantage of outdoor space for instruction where feasible. KWBS will plan for and schedule the use of outdoor space to minimize interactions with other classes where possible. Our JK and SK students will be allowed to use the Preschool playground. The playground will be disinfected after each cohort of students. Use of outdoor space may include use of otherwise unoccupied community spaces like trails and parks.

iv. Recess

Recess will be staggered and structured. A schedule and necessary routines will be in place that allow for students to maintain appropriate physical distancing while still having an opportunity for fresh air and physical activity. Physical Education teachers will meet the students outside.

KWBS will not permit unstructured free play (Grades 1-8) during recess time for the first month of school. The goal is to create a routine so students maintain a safe distance. We will then transition students to unstructured outdoor time (e.g., recess) when we consider that they are ready to do this safely. Students will be taught about the importance of distancing but it is recognized that this may be challenging to enforce. We ask parents to reinforce these requirements when discussing physical distancing and Return to School with their children.

v. Playground Structures

Playground structures and sandboxes will be closed to start the school year.

vi. Library

In the initial Return to School phase, the Library will be used as a classroom space and will be closed for other students and staff.

vii. Large Group Gatherings and Assemblies

In the initial Return to School phase, all large gatherings and assemblies will be cancelled. KWBS will hold virtual meetings using Google classroom or other options.

Program, Student Support & Course Considerations

a) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Our teachers strongly believe that personal interactions with students are a critical component of the regular school day. Our teachers will be wearing a mask. They may choose to wear a face shield only when teaching at the front of the class and the 2m distance requirement is respected. This will permit students to see the teachers' facial expression. Teachers may wear both a face mask and shield when the 2m distance cannot be maintained.

KWBS will provide compliant face shields and masks to staff in accordance with Public Health guidelines and requirements.

PPE is provided for Kindergarten teachers and EAs and for the staff who will attend to the children in the "Health and Safety" room designated for children who become sick during the day.

Essential workers who come into the school during the day will wear a face mask, a shield and gloves.

b) Special Education

KWBS is committed to supporting our students who require special education services. KWBS administration will work alongside classroom teachers, special education teachers and support staff as well as families, to determine the support required to develop safe learning environments for each student identified as exceptional.

We will monitor the mental health of all students and communicate with parents if we have concerns and make recommendations to parents.

For this work to continue to be successful during these changing times, a great deal of collaboration and flexibility will be required to enable a student's support network to adjust to the changing needs of the student and the potential changes in learning environments as we work through the year to come with COVID-19 in our community.

Some key considerations will be as follows:

- Teachers will review the information on each student who has an Individual Education Plan before the first day of school. They will meet virtually with the previous year's teacher to ensure continuity of the accommodations that worked for the student.
- Classroom teachers will plan and develop Accommodated and Modified IEPs and will have a virtual meeting with parents to review together the IEP. This will enable teachers to be prepared to have plans in place to support the changing learning environments of our students.

- We are reducing class sizes and teachers will be delivering the modified program ensuring all accommodations are in place so students can perform at the best of their ability.
- This year we will be replacing the out of class support with an inclusive model. Students will be working in class and receiving all the necessary support from the classroom teacher while remaining with their cohort.
- School administration will be working closely with the teachers and supporting the staff as they develop the IEPs.
- Except in emergencies (student in crisis, etc.), all meetings between parents, teachers, management and / or support staff will be held remotely. School administration will discuss the platform parents would like to use to hold such meetings with a choice of an online virtual phone meeting or telephone meeting.
- Collaboration is key: classroom staff will work collaboratively with students, parents, school support staff, and administration when necessary to consider the supports and strategies to be best used to support the individual needs of students in their classrooms. This work will be done considering the individual profiles of students with a proactive lens.
- A review of any required specialized PPE or classroom modifications will be conducted for any students who are identified as requiring specific accommodations. We want all students to feel safe and comfortable at school, to connect with their teachers and peers and to grow and learn in a nurturing environment.

c) National Anthem

As singing at school will not be allowed, students will listen to O'Canada rather than sing.

d) Physical Education

It is vital that our children continue to get exercise and spend time outdoors. In an effort to reduce physical contact, we are planning to experiment with more structured recesses led by Physical Education teachers. To ensure this we have hired a second Physical Education teacher who will work with younger grades. Students will still get outside 2 - 3 times a day but each time they will be greeted outside by the Physical Education teacher who will plan and coordinate games and other activities for the kids. This should allow them to get exercise, spend some time outside, and have fun while minimizing the risks associated with close physical contact. Each cohort will be using a different area when outside and students in different cohorts and grades will not intermingle. They will switch areas periodically.

For the 2020-2021 school year, cohorted students may only come in contact with at most one (1) physical education teacher. Masks/face shields are required for any close contact (under 6 feet).

We will make use of outdoor spaces for gym class where possible. Students may also continue to use our gym facilities when physical distancing can be maintained. KWBS will ensure that proper cleaning procedures are in place for all equipment that is used.

Staff/students will clean and disinfect any shared equipment before and after use and maintain physical distance from others who may be in the room simultaneously.

In accordance with Public Health guidelines, students will not be required to wear masks while performing vigorous exercise. Sports and activities where physical distancing cannot be maintained will not be permitted at KWBS for the duration of the pandemic.

e) Specialized Courses and Programs

Some courses and programs will require greater modifications than others given the goal of maintaining physical distance from one another and the need to clean and disinfect any shared equipment. KWBS staff will be developing guidelines to assist staff in modifying activities such as drama class, science labs, computer and technology courses, music, physical education, *etc*, where modifications are feasible having regard to physical distancing requirements and applicable health and safety protocols.

Where safety cannot be addressed with in-person activities, alternative online activities will be recommended.

Safety, Mental Health & Wellbeing

a) Students with Health Conditions

Some students will not be able to take part in the in-person stream of returning to school due to health conditions or other reasons. For this group of students, Remote Learning and other accommodated options will be provided.

b) Racism, Discrimination and Bullying

We all have a responsibility to prevent discrimination against all students and families. KWBS will actively monitor any derogatory comments based on race at all times. Racism and bullying related to COVID-19 myths and misinformation will not be tolerated and will be specifically addressed early in the Fall semester.

c) Student Well-being

All staff will be made aware of the potential impact of trauma on student learning, behaviour and relationships. KWBS' trauma-informed approach will help students feel safe to learn. Resources for our approach to trauma will be shared prior to the beginning of school for staff to implement during the return to school.

Everyday mental health is a key element of return to school and teachers will be provided with a variety of evidence-based tools and activities that can be implemented at the beginning of each class/day to further enhance student well-being. These supports and daily wellness focused tasks will be embedded into all grades in both virtual and in-person formats (as possible and necessary).

d) Mental Health Supports

While all classrooms will embed wellness into their daily activities, there will be some students who require a higher level of support and some who require more direct intervention and clinical support and we are asking parents to ensure that their child will get the support that they need.

We encourage parents with concerns about their child/ren to connect with the appropriate staff so that the staff can make recommendations for parents to seek the appropriate support and/or intervention. There will also be ongoing and continued collaboration with community mental health partners to ensure smooth access and clear pathways to community care when needed.

KWBS teaching staff will engage students in learning activities that foster social emotional learning and that will assist all students with coping skills.

Commitment to Ongoing Support

The procedures, practices and guidelines outlined in this document are based on the most recent advice from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, Public Health, the aforementioned stakeholders and our professional judgement on how to optimize safety and learning in our environment with the resources we have access to.

Our Protocol and associated policies will evolve as required, recognizing the changing nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the changes that Public Health and directives from the Ministry of Education may impose.

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing cooperation, support and patience as we navigate these challenging, uncertain, and unprecedented times. We look forward to welcoming all of our students back to school, in whatever form that may take, over the coming weeks.

We know that this year will bring more surprises and change. To best deal with these challenges, we are assembling a group of staff, board members, and parents to operate as our COVID-19 response committee this year. Included in this group will be parents who are themselves health care workers and can provide helpful guidance. We will work closely with Public Health to ensure that we take all the necessary steps promptly to limit the impact on our school population. Changes to policies and procedures will be made under the guidance received from local/provincial/federal health care experts.

This group will work directly with the Principal to evaluate any situations that arise and will consult on any actions that should be taken. As part of this, we will ensure that we consult with local officials, healthcare professionals and experts that can assist us.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the contents of this Protocol, or any of the linked supporting materials, please contact Mona Balea at m_balea@kwbilingualschool.net, and we will respond within 24 business hours.

Getting this right is going to require a team effort. We count on your full and continuous support.

Yours truly,

Mona Balea

Principal / Directrice

On behalf of Kitchener-Waterloo Bilingual School

Appendix “A” - Hygiene and Cleaning

a) Approved Cleaning Products

KWBS will continue to use asthma-safe, hospital-grade, green-based cleaning products where available. Scent-free products continue to be adopted for cleaning. KWBS caretakers are responsible for: cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting. Cleaning involves removing dirt, while sanitizing reduces germs from surfaces up to 99.9%; and disinfectants destroy bacteria and prevent them from spreading. Soap and paper towels will be refilled as needed on a regular basis.

When administering routine sanitization, or deep cleaning / decontamination, KWBS will only use Drug Identification Number (DIN) approved cleaning products, in accordance with manufacturer instructions.

b) Touch Point Cleaning

Cleaning will take place in all high contact areas including desks, tables, railings, door handles and other surfaces throughout the school:

- Where KWBS is open to the students all day, the cleaning will take place at the end of each day with high touchpoint surfaces cleaned throughout the day.
- Where KWBS is open based on shifts such as alternating days, touch point cleaning will take place throughout the day and between the rotation of student cohorts.
- In addition to routine cleaning, surfaces that have frequent contact with hands will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice per day and when visibly dirty.
- KWBS' caretaking team will focus on high touch surfaces, including door handles, railings, water fountains, faucets, and areas such as Restrooms. Special attention will also be focused on classrooms.

The caretaking team will receive special training on deep cleaning / decontamination protocols for the isolation room and any affected areas if / when anyone is sent home for exhibiting any signs of illness.

As students and staff return to school, cleaning routines will be based on current advice from Public Health Ontario and directions from the Ministry of Education in consultation with the Medical Officer of Ontario.

c) Hand Cleaning

Classrooms that have a water supply will be equipped with hand soap and paper towels. Hand sanitizer placement will be prioritized in school entrances, in classrooms and hallways. Students are asked to always wash their hands after using the washrooms. They are asked to use hand sanitizer before they enter the classroom and when they exit the classroom.

Escalated hygiene requirements will be applied for all students. All students will receive specific direction on when to wash their hands, how to wash their hands, and how to use hand sanitizer.

d) Water Fountains

Water fountains are being used for water bottle filling only, and will be cleaned on a regular basis. Drinking directly from fountains is not permitted.

e) Garbage

Classroom garbage will be collected and disposed of daily. All garbage pails/bins are lined with plastic bags. Caretakers will use appropriate PPE when disposing of garbage, and will take extra care not to disturb garbage when disposing of it. Garbage will not be compacted, in accordance with applicable health and safety protocols.

f) Recycling

Students will be asked to bring home all containers and recycle in their own home rather than at school.

Where possible, and safe to do so, KWBS will endeavour to continue to recycle items such as paper and cardboard boxes from school based activities.