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

COVID-19 – Safe Return to School Protocol



##

Fall, 2021

Reviewed Aug 31st, 2021

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# Introduction and Background

The focus of this document is to review and update the Safe Return to School Protocol that we had in place during the school year 2020-2021. This review is based on the most recent recommendations received from the Ministry of Education at the beginning of August 2021 and on the Additional recommendations and suggestions for enhancement to the COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022), from Region of Waterloo, Public Health and Emergency Services. You will notice that we maintain most of the health and safety measures that we had in place during the last school year.

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 those 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.

## **Provincial Guidelines**

This document follows as a guideline the **“COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022)**” published on Aug 3rd, 2021 by the Ministry of Education. <https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>

We also follow Waterloo Public Health recommendations, stipulated in the document mentioned above. We are determined to ensure the health and safety, well-being of our students and staff and we want to achieve this by providing a protocol that is coherent and consistent.

**For the school year 2021-2022, the KWBS will be offering full time in class, Face-to-Face learning only.** If at any time the Ministry of Education or the Premier will make the decision to transfer the whole school to online learning, we will do so for the duration required by the Province of Ontario.

## **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, Waterloo Public Health - Ontario.

## **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. Focus on student and staff well-being and mental health throughout the return to school stage and beyond.
3. Address issues of equity and access for our students and families, while appropriately balancing health and safety considerations.
4. 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.

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.

## **Communication**

KWBS will communicate regularly with students and their parents/guardians 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, 2021

On August 3rd, 2021, 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. Please note that while other schools and school boards may offer online learning, **the KWBS will only offer in person learning.**

**The KWBS is planning a return to school on September 7, 2021, using the conventional Face-to-Face model** **only.**

While this Protocol establishes general practices and procedures, we will be continuing with many of the measures that we had in place during the previous school year:

* Daily routines: mandatory screening for students and staff before entering the building, staggered drop off and pick up, cohorting, masking, etc.

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. At the same time, we are aware of the inconvenience that not being able to offer an afterschool program is causing to some of our parents. We apologize for this.

## **Class Structure and Programming**

**Under this model, our students will attend school full time, five days per week starting on September 7th, 2021.**

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

* All in-school extra-curricular activities, that we offered out of our regular classes during the day or after hours will remain cancelled, including mixed grades team-sports, chess, karate, music, nutrition programs and other.
* We will use all the spaces available (including library, music rooms, Old School House, resource rooms) in the school as workspaces.
* Students in each level from JK, SK and Grades 1-8 will be divided in two cohorts.
* Students in each cohort will remain together throughout the day. They will not mingle with other cohorts or grades for any activities or during recess. When going outside they will travel through the hallway with their cohort.
* Students will not change classrooms. Teachers will change classrooms while following the KWBS half day French/English Model.
* Our educational assistants and resource teachers will continue to work with our students who need support.
* Recess times will be staggered to ensure that we maintain the cohorts during this time.
* Drop off and pick up times will be staggered.
* All meetings, including parents-teachers meetings will take place remotely, as well as the curriculum night. Parents may request an in-person meeting with the principal.
* To reduce the number of adults that 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 limit the external staff.
* Only essential personnel will be allowed into the school. Parents are not essential personnel.

Students remain **with their class exclusively during the day**, including during 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.

# Access to School Property

## **Parent/Guardian and Visitor Access**

The KWBS will continue to allow access into the school to **essential visitors** only. 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. The QR code for this screening is available on the front door. KWBS families and staff will be emailed the link. 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. Parent-teacher meetings will take place virtually until further notice, as will staff meetings, training and any other meetings. Only the principal has the authority to make exceptions as appropriate and in emergency circumstances.

## **After-School Programs**

We consider that offering an after-school program will break the safety of our cohorting system and we want to ensure safety and consistency. Therefore, any third-party activities, as well as before school and after-school programs **are cancelled**.

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

# Parent / Guardian Responsibilities

## **Pick-up and Drop-off**

KWBS will establish a pick-up and drop-off procedure similar to last year’s and will communicate the procedure to our families. At all 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 continue to 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 or outside in the field). The seventh entrance will be designated entrance for the preschool class only. The WITDA director will communicate this to the families.
* 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 selected by parents before our return to school.
* 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 (Grades 1-8) drop off their children. Parents should stay in the car. Students should get off the car only on the sidewalk and never on the street side. Kindergarten parents are allowed to park in front of the school.
* At the end of the day, 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.
* 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 will continue to use the Chinese Alliance Church parking lot as a drop off area and we will continue have 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. We need your full support and cooperation to ensure everyone’s safety.

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

## **Personal Student Belongings**

### **Lockers and Cubbies**

Students will have access to lockers or cubbies: they will be assigned and grouped by cohort, staggered access to minimize congregation, hand hygiene before and after use. Parents/guardians are asked to make sure that their children bring minimal personal belongings to school. 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.

### **Lunch bags / boxes**

Students will be required to bring their own personally labelled lunch bags / boxes to school each day. The KWBS decided that all outside food services are cancelled. This includes the milk program, the Lunch Lady, pizza days and so on. While we will not be sharing food or bringing cakes or cookies, we will be creative with our birthday celebrations. These are in place until further notice.

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

### **Water bottles and Water Fountains**

Our students will be required to bring their own personally labelled, reusable plastic or metal water bottles to school each day.

Oasis water filter stations are available for our students to refill their water bottles. Water filters will be sanitized several times during the day.

### **Stationery, School Supplies and Equipment**

KWBS staff will continue to reduce the sharing of supplies, equipment, textbooks. All students will have their own private materials. In JK/SK, the use of shared materials is permitted with hand hygiene before and after use. f students forget stationery, they will be provided with spares by their teacher.

The school will provide individual copies of each book and/or handout for each student. Some required reading materials (and much leisure reading material) may also be available online through either the Kitchener Public Library ([https://kpl.org/ebooks)](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.

Children from JK to Grade 3 do not need to bring any devices to school. Students in Grades 4-5 may bring a device for temporary usage at school as instructed by the teachers. Students in Grades 6-8 may wish to bring their device regularly, as instructed by teachers. If your child is bringing a device, please ensure that the device has a suitable protective carrying case, and that it is labeled with your child’s name. Teachers will communicate to you when students will be asked to bring the device to school.

## **Screening of Students**

Parents/guardians will be asked to do 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.

Please note that our screening will be updated regularly.

If your child shows **any** signs or symptoms of illness, they **MAY NOT COME TO SCHOOL. Please read and follow the guidance provided by the screening.**

**We rely on you to do the screening daily. The classroom teachers are required to check the screening at 9 o’clock sharp each day and to report to the office if any children are missing the screening. Our secretary or principal will contact each parent who did not complete the screening. This part of our daily routine is time consuming for teachers and the office and we need your full cooperation to do the screening daily before dropping off your child at school.**

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 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. Any information regarding COVID-19 cases in our school will be posted on our website under “COVID-19 Advisory”.

**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.

## **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 7, 2021, we will complete a Safety Inspection within each area of the school:

* Classrooms including all new spaces (library, music rooms, all spaces) 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.

## **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**.

## **Physical Distancing**

Signage will help direct the flow of traffic along one side or the other and will remind students to maintain physical distance from one another.

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

* Increasing the number of spaces that we use for learning within the school (using library, music rooms, old school house, other spaces as classrooms for the EAs and the resource teachers to work with small groups).
* 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.
* Creating designated routes for students/staff to get to and from classrooms.
* Having staggered bathroom breaks.
* 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. We realize that in kindergarten and early grades this is impossible to achieve. 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.

## **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 communicated and trained all of our staff on any new requirements introduced last year by the province. Staff will be provided with all PPE required for their specific role. Staff are required to wear an adequate (surgical/procedural) mask all the time. Use of eye protection is no longer required when both staff and students wear a mask.

## **Masks**

Because the risk affects students who interact in similar spaces equally, all students in the school from JK to Gr 8 are required to wear a mask indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Outdoor activities, such as physical education, may be used as opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks, provided they adhere to physical distancing guidelines at all times. Students will wear their own 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. If occasionally students forget their mask, they may ask the office to provide them a mask for the day. Staff will always wear a mask.

Students will be reminded and new 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*.).

## **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)](https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/file-attachments/HCP/g148510_how_to_wash_your_hands.pdf)
* [How to wash your hands with soap and water](https://www.wdgpublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/file-attachments/HCP/handwashing_with_soap_and_water.pdf)
* [Reduce the spread of COVID-19: Wash your hands](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/phac-aspc/documents/services/publications/diseases-conditions/coronavirus/covid-19-handwashing/covid-19-handwashing-eng.pdf)
* [How to clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub](https://can01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.publichealthontario.ca%2F-%2Fmedia%2Fdocuments%2Fncov%2Ffactsheet%2Ffactsheet-covid-19-hand-hygiene.pdf%3Fla%3Den&data=02%7C01%7Cevents%40oahpp.ca%7C25602fb279ca4b13f39d08d7f2a5320c%7Ccddc1229ac2a4b97b78a0e5cacb5865c%7C0%7C1%7C637244663631597933&sdata=rfe9Q5iAORS2nJhHYXKhP2GBu1lGWj31a8iFYlUQXdE%3D&reserved=0)

Our staff will be practicing hand washing 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.

## **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 has replaced the regular filters with MERV 13 filters and is replacing them regularly throughout the year. The HVAC system is calibrated for maximum air flow and increased fresh air intake.

# 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](https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/community-assessment-centres.aspx). 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. For details regarding COVID-19 Outbreak Management Protocols, please check Addendum #1 posted on our website.

1. **Health and Safety Room/Area**

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.

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.

### **Covid -19 Symptomatic Students/Staff**

Touchless thermometers are available to verify the temperature of an ill individual. Temperature testing may take place if necessary.

Parents/guardians will be notified immediately if a child becomes unwell during the school day. Symptomatic students will 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. Symptomatic students will be supervised by a staff member who will follow safety protocols.

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.

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 temporarily 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.**

## **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.

## **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 protection legislation.

# School Day Operations

## **Staff Rooms**

Staff room will be open for a limited number of persons at one time specified on the door. The Old School House will be used as staff rooms during lunch. Staff lunch will be staggered.

1. **Student Transportation**

Student transportation to and from school will continue to be the responsibility of parents. All outside activities requiring transportation by school bus that may take place will be following specific protocols.

## **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.

1. **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 following the evacuation plan posted in each classroom. Each classroom teacher will exit first, take the wipe bucket and is responsible to disinfect the railing with a wipe for their cohort. This way we ensure that the railing touched by students during the evacuation is disinfected between cohorts. If there is an EA, the EA will follow students. Everything else will take place according to our Emergency Plan available in each classroom.

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.

## **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. Staff will be aware of all these protocols.

## **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. Students are discouraged to leave during lunch with their family members but may do so occasionally. Students are never permitted to leave by themselves to go to any coffee shop, restaurants during recesses.

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.

## **Field Trips**

Day trips are permitted and will follow the relevant provincial requirements under the Reopening Ontario Act (A flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, S.O.2020,c.17.

The KWBS students will be cohorted for the whole duration of the trip, with the adequate number of staff assigned to a cohort. Keeping daily accurate records of individuals entering the program setting (name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, screening completion) is required to facilitate contact tracing. Operating programs in consistent cohorts (with assigned staff members) who stay together is recommended throughout the duration of the program.

A decision regarding the end of year trips to Quebec and Ottawa for our Grades 8 and 7 students will be made later in the year depending on the restrictions and the situation at that time.

Cohorted classes are also permitted to take short walking trips outside of the school premises (eg. to the pond, to the park, etc).

## **Intramural and Extracurricular Sports**

Intramural activities may take place as long as they are organized by cohort.

Extra-curricular sports are cancelled.

1. **The Music Program, Clubs and Other Activities**

There will be no activities that could compromise the integrity of the cohorts. We need your understanding and everybody’s full cooperation to ensure that we reduce the risk of transmission and keep the school open to in person learning.

School clubs, activities may continue to run virtually after school hours. We will communicate to you all information we receive about different activities available. Activities that are not able to run virtually are cancelled.

## **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.

## **School Equipment and Communal Spaces**

### **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.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Recess**

Recess will be staggered when necessary. 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.

KWBS will not permit cohorts to mix during recess. Students will be taught about the importance of distancing but it is recognized that this may be challenging to enforce.

**Playground Structures**

Playground structures will be open and disinfected regularly.

### **Library**

In the initial Return to School phase, the Library will be used as a classroom space and will be closed for students. Staff may borrow books from the library to use with their classroom.

### **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

## **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.

## **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.

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 with the previous year's teachers to ensure continuity of the accommodations that worked for the student. Students on a modified program will continue to receive the support that they need to continue in the program. IEPs will be developed for the students recently identified as requiring special education support.
* The school administration including the VP and the principal will be working closely with the teachers and supporting the classroom teachers as they develop Accommodated and Modified IEPs. Teachers will have virtual meeting with parents to review together and discuss the IEPs. This will enable teachers to be prepared to have plans in place to support our students.
* This year we will be returning to our withdrawal model. Students who are a modified program may be withdrawn from the regular class to work on the modified program with a different teacher or EA. Students who need particular accommodations that cannot be offered in the regular class setting may be withdrawn by the resource teachers or the EA. We will ensure all accommodations are in place so students can perform at the best of their ability.
* Specific teachers or EAs are assigned to different grades so we limit the exposure and the contacts while ensuring that all children receive the support that they need to be successful.
* We encourage all meetings between parents, teachers, management and / or support staff to be held remotely (phone call, video-conferences, etc). In person meetings may take place only if teachers feel comfortable and prefer to do that. The principal needs to be made aware of any in person meetings and everyone attending has to follow the protocol, screening, wearing a mask and distancing.
* Collaboration is key: classroom staff will work collaboratively with students, parents, school support staff, and administration when necessary to consider the strategies to be best used to support the individual needs of students in their classrooms.
* Please be aware that the school administration and teachers may recommend that you use resources in the community specialized to meet your child’s needs such as psychologist, therapists, counselor, etc. We count on your support to ensure together the well-being and academic success of your children.

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.

## **Announcements****/ National Anthem**

We will be doing morning Announcements/O’Canada. Students are expected to stand during the national anthem and to listen attentively to the announcements. The first work period will start promptly after the announcements.

## **Physical Education and Arts**

It is vital that our children continue to get exercise and spend time outdoors. Based on the positive feedback that we received from students, parents and staff, we decided to continue to have dedicated physical education teachers for all students beginning from JK to Grade 8. We will ensure that 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.

The use of indoor spaces such as gymnasium, change room, indoor education equipment and shared outdoor equipment are permitted with distancing. High and low-contact activities are permitted:

* High contact activities are only permitted outdoors. Masking is recommended.
* Low contact activities are permitted indoors. Masking is encouraged but not required indoors for low-contact physical activities if a minimum distance of 2m can be maintained between students in the cohort. Masks are required for any close contact (under 6 feet).

We will make use of outdoor spaces for gym class where possible.

KWBS will ensure that proper cleaning procedures are in place for all equipment that is shared.

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.

## **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.

**Music**

Singing is permitted indoors. The KWBS is requiring masking for singing indoors. No mix grades choir activities are allowed. Singing may only take place as a cohort activity.

# Safety, Mental Health & Wellbeing

## **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.

## **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.

Our strong character education program will continue through different activities and students will be guided by our dedicated staff to ensure that we build together a community that we are proud of.

1. **Student Well-being**

All staff will be made aware of the potential impact of trauma on student learning, behaviour and relationships.

Everyday mental health is a key element of return to school and teachers will be provided with a variety of 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).

## **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 receive from mental health professionals 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 document published by the Ministry of Education.

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 will work closely with Public Health to ensure that we take all the necessary steps promptly. Changes to policies and procedures will be made under the guidance received from local/provincial/federal health care experts.

We appreciate your ongoing cooperation, support and patience as we continue to navigate these challenging times.

We look forward to welcoming all of our students back to school in person on Tuesday September 7th.

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.

We continue to count on your full support so we can ensure together a safe and successful year to all the students in our program.

We thank you for your cooperation.

Yours truly,

**Mona Balea**Principal / DirectriceOn behalf of Kitchener-Waterloo Bilingual School

# Appendix “A” - Hygiene and Cleaning

## **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.

## **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.

## **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.

## **Water Bottles Filling Stations**

Water bottles filling stations are being used for water bottle filling only, and will be cleaned on a regular basis.

## **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. Garbage will not be compacted, in accordance with applicable health and safety protocols.

## **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 continue to recycle items such as paper and cardboard boxes from school based activities.