

École St. Joseph School

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August 24, 2020

Dear Parents/Guardians

We are very excited to welcome everyone back to the start of another school year at École St. Joseph School. Covid-19 has imposed a long break upon us but we are ready to get back to a regular routine and have some fun again. Over the break we have been working closely with our senior administration, ECE and the OCPHO to put measures in place to allow for a safe reentry into our school community. With your help, we hope that the transition back to school will be an easy and safe one for both students and staff.

What's the SAME?

All classrooms are in the same place. Junior Kindergarten is still in the "JK" wing as are all of the primary classes. The grade 7 students are in the portables with the exception of the grade 7 students in the Learning Through the Arts Program. That program remains in its previous location upstairs. Students will be able to get lockers and we will ask students to remove outdoor footwear as they enter the building. We will have Phys-Ed classes and we will have recess and lunch breaks. In many respects, school will be the same as before!

What is NEW?

Signage:

There will be markings on the floor that indicate the flow of traffic that must occur. Stickers will remind us of where to stand (2 meters apart) when in the hallways and which way we can go.

Entering the school:

- Junior Kindergarten, Kindergarten and Grade 1 students will enter and exit the same JK doors only.
- Grade 2 - 6 will enter and exit the main doors. This includes the grade 7 students from the LTA class.
- Grade 7 students (exception LTA group) will walk directly to the portables.

All of this is in an effort to prevent crowds from forming and to promote physical distancing where possible. We are asking that parents and students not congregate in the common areas of the school and move as quickly as possible when classes have ended.

Masks:

As students enter the school they must wear a face mask. It can be a non-medical mask but they will need to put one on as they enter. We will provide masks at the doors and collect them as students leave. These masks will be washed daily. **If students have their own mask, we encourage them to use it.** All students using the bus will also be asked to wear a mask on the bus. Masks will be worn by the students any time they

leave their classroom bubble. Cloth masks issued by the school will be washed daily at the school, when used. We encourage you to have your children wear their own mask to and from school each day. All staff will be wearing masks and/or shields when within 2 meters of students and in the hallway. When parents and visitors need to enter the school, they will **be required to wear a mask**, use hand sanitizer, then report to the office.

Cleaning/Disinfecting:

In each class we have removed as much furniture as possible. The remaining materials will be easier to disinfect and clean. A regular cleaning will be done each day. Common areas will be disinfected midway through the day by custodial staff and again in the evening.

Procedures and routines:

Classes will have designated outdoor recess times, lunch times and designated areas of play. Students will be kept in their bubbles as much as possible. While physical distancing in a classroom of 25 will be challenging, we will practice personal hygiene, physical distancing and become good hand washers. We will also be teaching students that there should be no physical contact.

All staff who have travelled during the summer or who are new to the NWT, have been or are still self-isolating prior to being allowed to enter the school. Families who have travelled out of the NWT are also expected to self- isolate upon return.

The First Days of School:

We are a large school, with a combined staff and student population of over 650. To bring all of our students and their parents/guardians back into the building safely, we will require a bit of extra time and space. To allow for our 600 plus students and their caretakers into the building to check out the new class, teacher and set-up, we will be inviting families in at staggered times during the first three days. We believe that the safest action is to allow students and staff time to practice the new routines in small groups before the entire school is in session. We have been working very diligently to follow the rules of the OCPHO and their recommendations and believe that the many new routines are best taught in smaller, more manageable numbers. Junior kindergarten will do its regular staggered entry that has already been communicated to those registered in JK.

How this will look:

Day 1: August 31 (Kindergarten to grade 7) Last names beginning in letters **A - G**

Day 2: September 1 (Kindergarten to grade 7) Last names beginning in letters **H - P**

Day 3: September 2 (Kindergarten to grade 7) Last names beginning in letters **Q - Z**

We want to ensure that families are together on the same day, so if you have children with different last names, please choose one of the three days to send all your children from K - 7.

You do not need to notify us.

Please note that if the staggered entry is causing hardship, please contact me so that we can make arrangements.

Morning times:

Teachers will be connecting with you this week to inform you of what class your child will be in and its location. This will reduce congestion and confusion on the first three days. All students will know their teacher and room number prior to coming to school.

We ask that parents make use of parking on Range Lake Road by the playground as much as possible.

- JK students can enter at 8:00am through their doors only.
- Kindergarten and Grade 1 students will enter only through the JK doors at 8:15am.
- Grade 2 - 4 students will enter through the main doors at 8:15am and the Grade 5-6 students will enter at 8:20am.
- Grade 7 students walk directly around the school to the portables for 8:15am entry. Please do not walk through the school to the portables.

During the first three days, support staff will be at the doors to guide students to their wings and classrooms.

The above entry times will stay the same throughout the 2020/2021 school year.

Dismissal Procedures:

Students will be required to wear their masks and practice physical distancing until they exit the building. To help with this process, we will be dismissing in an orderly fashion.

- Grade 7 students dismissal right at 3:05pm / *Early Thursday dismissal at 2:07pm*
- Grade 5 - 6 and 7LTA students dismissal at 3:05pm / *Early Thursday dismissal at 2:07pm*
- Grade 2 - 4 in the Elementary Wing dismiss at 3:08pm / *Early Thursday dismissal at 2:10pm*
- Grade K - 2 in the Primary Wing dismiss at 3:10pm / *Early Thursday dismissal at 2:15pm*
- JK dismiss at 3:10pm / *Early Thursday dismissal at 2:15pm*
(*JK students that attend the JK Afterschool Program will stay in their rooms until the Afterschool Program Staff picks them up*)

The above dismissal times will stay the same throughout the 2020/2021 school year.

Students who live in the Woolgar or Williams Avenue area may choose to exit through the back playground doors. All others will exist one class at a time through the main doors. **We will arrange for a meeting place for students who pick up younger siblings.**

Bus students will be directed to the mini gym but they must continue to wear their masks and physical distance as much as possible.

After school program students will be directed to their areas as quickly as possible.

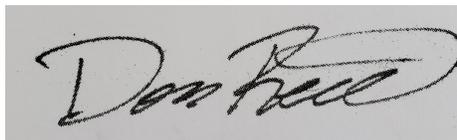
What parents/caregivers are asked to do:

- * When entering the building **you must wear a mask and sanitize your hands**. Whenever you visit our building we ask that you come to the office through the main doors to sign in. We ask that you only visit the school for essential purposes.
- * Please make use of both Range Lake Road and Woolgar Ave. for parking as you drop students off or pick up. If entering our drop off/pick-up lane, please ensure that you stay as far to right as you can. This will allow for other traffic to get by.
- * If no spaces are available at any one time, please make a loop around. You cannot park in such a manner that stops the flow of traffic.
- * We are asking that you monitor your child(ren) for symptoms on a daily basis before coming to school. It is imperative for the safety of all students and staff that if your child is displaying symptoms they are kept at home.

The excitement in the building has been palpable this week as staff are preparing for the arrival of their students! We all want to be in school and to stay in school. **To make all of this happen we are relying on our community support to help keep us safe.** All of the rules might not be what we want, but right now it is what we believe will keep us as safe as possible. There is no manual to refer to for planning for this school year. We are on version 12 of our back to school plan. We may continue to adjust as we go and change on the fly to meet new restrictions or to adjust as we live the routines and procedures real-time. **We can and we will get through this year together, successfully!** It will require a great deal of care, collaboration and patience but I know we can do it.

We look forward to seeing all of your smiling faces again and to feeling the energy of our students. Please feel free to call or email Don.reid@ycs.nt.ca with specific requests, or if you think I failed to mention something here.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Don Reid". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, sweeping "D" and "R".

Don Reid