



Lori Wilder, *Director of Education*

Bluewater District School Board

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January 12, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians:

As announced by the provincial government, students across Ontario will return to in-person learning beginning next week. In following this direction from the province, all elementary and secondary schools in Bluewater District School Board will fully return to in-person learning on **Monday, January 17, 2022**.

Student transportation services, as well as before and after school programs will also resume on the above date.

In preparation for this transition, I am reaching out to share an update on what students and families can expect upon returning to school. As was the case previously, COVID-19 health and safety protocols will continue to be followed in our schools as guided by Grey Bruce Public Health and the Ministry of Education. These measures include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Students are requested to complete a Rapid Antigen Test (as provided by the Ministry of Education before the break) prior to coming to school on January 17, 2022, if they have any tests remaining. Additional Rapid Antigen Tests for students and staff will be provided in the near future to be used when symptomatic.
- Daily screening prior to coming to school will be required using the COVID-19 screening tool at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>.
- All students and staff will have to confirm daily that they have completed their self-screening. Grades 4 to 12 students will do this verbally with their teacher. If your child is in kindergarten to Grade 3, more information will be coming about how to provide confirmation.
- Mandatory masking will occur indoors at school and on school buses for Grades 1 to 12 students and all staff (kindergarten students are strongly encouraged to wear masks). Optional new three-ply cloth masks will be provided by the ministry for students to wear.
- We ask that parents/guardians wear masks if required to be on school property and social distancing cannot be maintained.
- Cleaning protocols will continue to be in place.
- Hand hygiene routines will continue to be practiced.
- To address ventilation in schools, Bluewater District School Board has already installed additional HEPA units beyond the ministry recommendations, and looks to add 32 units as soon as the supply becomes available.
- We are currently investigating school-based vaccine clinics with Grey Bruce Public Health.

Our board continues to maintain the strong belief that learning face-to-face at school with peers and staff is critical to student mental health, well-being, and social development. While we are pleased to be returning in-person, be advised of the possibility of occasional short-term school closures that may result from staff shortages impacting our school operations. Every effort will be made to utilize our occasional and temporary staff to keep our schools open. Closures will be a last resort, however, I wanted to provide advance notice so that parents/guardians are prepared. In the event of a school closure, remote learning may be provided where possible.

To provide continued support for students who may not be attending in-person learning due to isolating at home, curriculum-based content is available on the TVOntario (TVO) and Télévision française de l'Ontario (TFO) website, which can be found at the following link: [TVO Learn | Learn at home resources for Grade 1-12 Students | TVO Learn](#)

Resources include:

- Daily broadcasting of grade-level, curriculum-based content from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Digital elementary curriculum-based content, including engaging learning activities linked to grades and curriculum
- “Open house” course material for secondary students in the Independent Learning Centre offered by TVO

While most students will be returning in-person on January 17, please note that those who have already been learning remotely throughout the school year will continue to do so.

I want to acknowledge and thank all our amazing parents/guardians, students, and families for the continued collaboration with our staff.

I look forward to our return to in-person learning next week. In the meantime, I continue to encourage all eligible students and families to seek out vaccination, including booster doses. Please use the following link for information regarding vaccines: [Getting Your COVID-19 Vaccine \(publichealthgreybruce.on.ca\)](#)

As always, please feel free to reach out to your child’s school with any questions you have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Wilder".

Lori Wilder
Director of Education