Safe Return:

Shatford Memorial Elementary School

August 2020

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Welcome Back!!

It seems like an eternity since we were together as a school community. A lot has changed and so have we. Children have outgrown clothes, have played outside and inside, perhaps socialized with friends and maybe even did a few chores all during a worldwide pandemic. We continue to learn how to wear a mask, physical distance, wash our hands properly and use hand sanitizer. So much so, it might even start feeling normal. Do you recall the first time you entered a grocery store and how strange it was? Whatever feelings your family may have about starting school in less than a week are normal. Excited, anxious, relieved, angry, tired, stressed are all normal emotions in a time of uncertainty.

In this handbook, we hope to provide you with information that you will find useful and supportive. As detailed in the Provincial “Return to School Plan” <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/backtoschool> it is natural for parents to have questions. We may not have answers for everything, but we want you to know we will do our best to answer your questions. Our information is based on our most current understanding of where we are with the pandemic. I would like to thank the Shatford Staff and our SAC chair and Home and School chairs for help in reviewing and contributing to this document. We hope you find this information useful as we prepare to start a new school year unlike any we have had before!

**\*\*Please note the following information that is being provided is based on our most recent information and guideline from Public Health. This information could change and/or be modified as we respond to the COVID19 pandemic.**

 Everyday- Before Coming to School

• All parents will be required to screen their child daily for any symptoms of cold, flu, or other symptoms that may be associated with COVID-19, prior to sending their child to school using the COVID-19 Daily Checklist.

• Students and staff are required to STAY HOME if they exhibit any signs of illness.



Hygiene Practices

● Staff will teach and review hygiene routines in their daily practice.

● Staff will schedule handwashing/trips to bathroom throughout the day, particularly around staggered eating times (recess and lunch).

● Hand Sanitizing stations will be located throughout the building and at every threshold within the school.



Monitoring for Symptoms

As stated on page 4, families are expected to use the COVID-19 Checklist daily before sending child/children to school each day. Staff have been instructed to follow protocols should any student in their classroom exhibit COVID-like symptoms. Any student with symptoms will be sent to office for further screening. A phone call will be made home and may result in a request to pick up your child from school.

Please remember, we are not health professionals. We will do our best to monitor students in the building for symptoms related to COVID-19, and we need your continued cooperation. If we do call you to pick up your child because they are exhibiting COVID-like symptoms, it is imperative that you come to pick up your child immediately and have them screened using 811 assessment <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/>

Any child needing to go home will remain in principal’s office with an adult until they are picked up.

 Beginning of School Day

Supervision on our school grounds **begins at 8:05am.** Please be very diligent in not arriving early. This will help ensure that adequate staff are in place to maintain physical distancing and keep our children as safe as possible.

Each classroom will have its own meeting space outside. However, for first few days, maybe weeks, we will be taking the preprimary, p/1, 1/2 classes directly inside starting with the first bus (8:06am). These classes will go directly to their designated door of classroom. (p/1 door is main doors, flag is on top of it , 1/2 door is the second front entrance and preprimary is by the wooden fence on right side of building). We will have staff guiding them.

**Walkers:**

1. If your children walk to school by themselves review crosswalk etiquette. Walkers should not arrive on playground before 8:05am and keep to the right by the dumpsters and rocks on jr. playground area. They should stand by one of the orange dots on the rocks. A staff will direct them to proceed to designated door or class area. The orange circles are on the rocks as guides for physical distancing for all.
2. Parents who are walking their children we would ask you to follow protocol for walkers set out above and do a “kiss and go” at the rocks. Then direct your child to the designated door and proceed off the playground. Please no lingering.

**Bus Students:**

Preprimary, p/1 and 1/2 see above for procedure

3/4 and 5/6 students will be walking back via the small driveway area to the basketball court. Their teachers will meet them there and they will have one area for each classroom divided off for physical distancing. We will use hula hoops for first few days to teach children about physical distancing. They will enter school at approx. 8:13 when second bus arrives.

**Parents/Guardians in Cars Dropping off**

If possible, please avoid bringing your car onto the school grounds. We are going to have more congestion this year in a very small front area. Buses take up a great deal of room.

If this is not possible we would ask you to drop off your child/children out on the right hand side of the vehicle by the jr. playground. Please do this as a “Kiss and Go”. Long lingering will put everyone in a traffic jam.

If it is an emergency or there is some reason why you need to park on grounds, please do so very carefully and be aware that children and buses will be moving.

On inclement weather days, students will come directly into the building, upon arrival, through their designated doors and go directly to their classrooms.

 

Arrival and Departure from School

As stated on page 7, parents and guardians will not be permitted inside the school. Adults are required to wear a mask and physically distance while on school grounds. If you need to pick your child up early you will need to call ahead and meet them at front door.

We understand that sometimes unforeseeable things arise which interfere with giving us notice. In this situation, please ring the bell, stand off the cement platform and wait. Someone will be with you as soon as possible.

**Non-bus students:**

Walkers, bikers, Excel and parent pickups will be dismissed first at 2:10pm to avoid congestion and allow for physical distancing.

2:10pm Parents should be on property a couple minutes early (See protocol for masks and physical distancing).

2:10pm Students who have written permission to walk home will walk by the wooden fence, left side of building, make their way to the walk space, and cross safely.

**Bus students:**

 All bus students will be dismissed one class at a time, starting at 2:15pm. We anticipate this process will take some time during the first few weeks of school, but will speed up as we get used to the end of day routine. Your child will exit the door they entered until further notice.

 Bus Transportation

Please talk to your child about physical distancing at the bus stop. All children in preprimary to grade two should be supervised by a parent while waiting for the bus. Students will need to put their mask on before getting on the bus and keep it on for the duration of the ride. Siblings will be encouraged to sit together on the bus.

School staff will receive your child when they arrive to the school and will supervise them while they walk to their designated class meeting spot.

Further bussing information can be found at Halifax Regional Centre for Education’s transportation team at <https://www.hrce.ca/about-our-schools/student-transportation>

Breakfast Program

Our “Grab and Go” breakfast program will start up in late September once our routines are in place. Bins of prepackaged food will be delivered to the classrooms. Teachers will pass snacks to children as needed to avoid children having to touch the bin. “Grab and Go” bins will be available Monday, Wednesday and Fridays.

 Lunch Time Procedures

All students will eat in their classroom or outside. All students will need to follow these guidelines.

* Eat their food in their designated classroom area. No Sharing Food
* Grades 3-6 only take their mask off to eat their food, once they are finished eating, they need to put their mask back on
* Students must stay in their designated area within their classroom during the inside portion of lunch. They will be permitted to read, draw, or color while waiting for others to finish eating.
* Students will have time during the lunch hour to go outside (weather permitting) with their class. We will be going outside unless there is extreme weather. Ex. We do go out in rain unless it is torrential or cold rain. We go out when its cold so kids need to be dressed to stay out in weather.
* Students will take all garbage and leftover food back home.

\*Please ensure that your child is able to open all food and drink containers independently

 Recess and Outdoor Time

At Shatford we take pride in spending a lot of time outside for learning and play in a variety of weather. With our current situation, using outdoor spaces is encouraged even more as it allows for more relaxed and spacious physical distancing. As a result we have been planning outdoor learning and play spaces to provide the best opportunities for students. Teachers are encouraged to take their students outside as much as possible during the day for learning, lunches and play.

In the past, Shatford community of children have always mixed and mingled during play at recess and lunch. The older and younger children have wonderful, supportive friendships. This will look different on the playground this year as students will be staying with their class throughout the day in class cohorts to minimize intermixing of classes. Teachers will schedule times where students will go out for recess to play and also times where they go outside for learning. While this will look different, please be reassured that at Shatford we hope to find a new way to connect the grade levels and will find new ways to allow the students to build and create the relationships with children in other grades.

Preparation for outdoor learning:

* Please apply sunscreen and/or bug repellant(when appropriate) at home each morning. It is impossible for us to reapply at school. Please be scent sensitive.
* Ensure that your child is dressed appropriately for outside learning (i.e. hat, boots, warm clothes etc.). Once outside, students will be able to take off their masks as long as they are 6 feet or 2 meters apart.

Each class will be able to go outside together as a group, but if there are other classes outside at the same time they will NOT be able to play together. Please review that with your children.

 Classroom Set Up

Classrooms are currently being setup to meet Public Health requirements. Because of this, classrooms will look a lot different from what your child might remember. Currently, we are working on maximizing space in our classrooms to allow for as much physical distancing as possible. Classrooms with individual desks will have them spread out throughout the classroom to allow for as much space between children as possible. Classrooms with tables will have two to three students per table depending on the size of the table.

Students will also have an assigned seating in the classroom. This will be their seat for the year. All of their belongings will need to stay in their area and some materials may need to go back and forth in their book bag. Please keep sending these items back and forth. This will allow each classroom to thoroughly be cleaned and ready for the next day. Storage space has been limited in order to optimize spacing for desks.

Students will not be able to share materials this year. Teachers will individually prepare students materials and they will be in their assigned locations prior to their arrival each day.

 Traffic Flow of the Building

Creating a flow to the building is an important element to help students and staff physically distance while travelling from one location to another when necessary.

Each class has designated doors to enter and exit. P/1 will use main doors. 1/2 the secondary doors in front. Preprimary the side door. The 3/4 and 5/6 will share a door and will be given instruction on how to use this space safely. Stairwells will be dual track- flow (travel up and down), however, cohorts having interaction will be limited.

Hallways will be dual track with students needing to stay on the **right side**. We will be doing creative scheduling to minimize traffic flow during instructional hours.



Specialist Classes (Music, Physical Education, Core French and Library)

Students will not be travelling to specialist classes as in the past. The specialists will be bringing the curriculum to the individual classrooms or to outdoor classroom spaces created for this purpose.

**Physical Education**- will continue to be twice a week for 5/6 and three times for p/1 , ½ and ¾. Children need to dress for the weather as Phys.Ed will be outside as much as possible.

**Music**- will continue to be twice a week.

**French**- will continue to be an hour every second day for Grades 4-6 only.

**Library**- will be coming to the children.

**Band**-once again will be offered to Grade 6 students only.

 Student Belongings/School Supplies

School supply lists have been listed on school website. We have tried to minimize the lists. The supplies listed are for the whole school year. Teachers will reach out to you to let you know what materials they need to bring for the first day. Please keep in mind that students **may** need to bring their belongings back and forth to school each day, so they will need to be able to carry their backpack.

**Please send a reusable water bottle (filled with water from home) every morning**. **We need to minimize the amount of students in the hallway even for drinks.**

Parents/Guardians Coming to the School

As noted earlier, parents will not be permitted to come on the school grounds this year during pick up and drop off times without wearing a mask and practicing proper social distancing protocols. All adults are limited access to the interior of the building unless necessary for maintenance. That includes parents, volunteers, couriers and delivery personal.

If you need to drop something to your child or do an early pick up, you will need to call the office ahead of time at 902-857-4200 to arrange a time for pick up. We will then have your child meet you at the door when you arrive.

We are required to record every person entering the building for contact tracing and because of this we are minimizing school entry to essential personnel.

Outbreak Consideration

• A detailed outbreak management protocol is being developed by Nova Scotia Public Health for use by all schools in the region. Any case of COVID within a school setting will be considered an outbreak and we will follow Public Health’s direction.

As for responding in the moment:

• As indicated earlier, if a staff member is concerned that a student is exhibiting signs of illness, this will be reported to the school administration for follow-up.

• The parents or guardians will be contacted and asked to pick up their child immediately. Adult will supervise the child in principal’s office.

The space will be disinfected once the child has departed.

• Parents will be required to follow Public Health protocols, call 811 and follow their guidance.

This same protocol will be in place if a staff member in the building has COVID like symptoms.

What will Learning Look Like?

• Our initial learning time will focus on building relationships and creating a safe and welcoming class community.

• Instructional time will focus on all curriculum areas. A number of curricular areas will be modified, including Music, Core French, Band and Physical Education as already indicated.

• As usual, staff will immediately begin assessing the students and they will receive ongoing feedback to help move their learning forward. We will start were the students finished off the previous year and move them forward.

• These are unique times, requiring a lot more traditional teaching practices than the ones we have implemented over the past decades. While many of our students are used to working in a collaborative setting, this style of learning will not be possible in the same way this year. Staff will aim to create engaging activities that do not require partners, moving around different stations in class or the sharing of material and equipment. This will be a shift from our previous practices; however, student and staff safety is our number one priority at this time.

• Where possible, classroom windows will remain open for improved air quality. Please send your child dressed in layers, including a sweater, when the fall and winter seasons arrive. This will allow choice in being comfortable.

• The library will not be open for its usual purpose. We will be discussing a system that would work to get the children the books that they are interested in reading. We will communicate the process to the students as it evolves throughout the school year.

• All support teachers will come to students’ classrooms to teach their respective subjects, following hand hygiene expectations.

Usage of Protective Masks

• All students in Grades Pre-primary to 6 must wear their mask on the bus.

• All Grade 3 to 6 students must wear their mask on the bus and inside the school building. Our grade 3 students are required to wear a mask as they share a classroom with the grade fours.

• All students in Grades Pre-primary to 2 must wear a mask while in common areas (hallways, stairwells, and bathrooms).

* HRCE will be providing each student with 2 reusable masks on the first day of school, along with a lanyard for students to hang their mask on while not using it.
* We will provide disposable masks, at school, in the event that one is lost or forgotten.
* Parents are encouraged to help their children get used to putting on and removing their mask safely, and practice wearing their mask for extended periods of time before September 8th. The following link is for a video demonstrating how to properly use and maintain a mask: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Tv2BVN_WTk>

At Home Learning

While the goal is to maintain learning within the school building by practicing healthy habits; we are all aware that this may have to be modified, due to an outbreak. We have learned many lessons while embarking on “At Home Learning” for term three last year and will continue to learn about options and tools to enhance “At Home Learning” should it be required. This would only occur if there is a change in COVID-19 epidemiology this coming school year.

Our teachers will be diligently working to incorporate technology where appropriate into the curriculum as soon as possible. This will mean that in the event of a change to “At Home” learning, our children will have had some experience with the technology and the programs that can be used.

Responses to Changes in COVID19

The province announced a three phase approach to schools responding to the COVID 19 pandemic. These decisions will be made by Public Health and could potentially be done as needed in particular schools, family of schools, or regions.

Below is a description of each phase and how it impacts the students and staff at Shatford Memorial.

**Phase 1** – 100% Participation – all students from Shatford Memorial will come to school each day following Public Health directions.

**Phase 2** – 100% Participation with reduced class sizes for your children – all students from Shatford Memorial will go to school each day. Class sizes are reduced to approximately 15 students to allow for greater physical distancing. The reduction of class sizes means creating more classes. At this time, our student population allows us to stay on site. It is possible if things change in Health protocols or our numbers increase significantly, that some students may have to go to an alternate location, which is Sir John A High School (SJA). In the event that this occurs it would be our older children who would be relocated to SJA.

\*Please note that SJA would be closed to the High School students in this situation and become an elementary learning site in Phase two. High School students would continue their learning off site, at home.

**Phase 3** – At Home Learning – all students within a school, family of schools, region, or province would move to an “At Home Learning” model. Please see page 23 for a description of at home learning.

Field Trips and Gatherings

Under Public Health orders there will be NO field trips or large group gathering this year. The in person events cancelled this year include curriculum night, parent teacher interviews, holiday and spring concerts, dances, spring fair, etc.

Teachers will reach out to you virtually for curriculum night and parent teacher interviews.

If Public Health changes the directive on field trips and gatherings at any point during the school year we will communicate that with families in our monthly newsletter.

Physical Distancing

This year students will be with their class all day, every day. We will not be bringing any classes together at any point of the school day. Classes will spend classroom time, recess, and lunch together. Students within a class will be able to interact with each other without a mask while physical distancing outside.

Please review with your child the importance of physical distancing, especially in common areas (like the washroom) inside the school. This is an important element in keeping everyone safe at Shatford Memorial Elementary School.

Comprehensive Guidance

We would like to welcome Jennifer Williams to our Guidance Counselor position. Jennifer is eager to get started and to help our students transition back to school. Her email is Jennifer.Williams@hrce.ca.

We are so fortunate to have guidance on Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:15-10:30am.

Late Arrival Procedures

All Students arriving late will need to enter the school through the main office doors and notify the admin assistant or principal in order to be signed in for the day. All students need to be masked and use hand sanitizer upon entry.

Emergency Procedures

As part of our emergency management planning we will continue to have evacuation drills. With Public Health guidelines those drills will look a little different this year. Our evacuation drills will occur with individual or small groups of classes to allow them to practice the procedures while maintaining proper physical distancing. In the event of a real emergency, all students will evacuate the building as quickly as possible or go into Hold and Secure or Lockdown procedures.

Important Links

Below are some links to some sites that may support you in getting home internet access, if that is something you need financial support with.

Home - Connecting Families

<https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/111.nsf/eng/home>

Frequently asked questions: Connecting Families - Connecting Families

<https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/111.nsf/eng/h_00002.html>

Welcome - Connecting Families

<https://www.connecting-families.ca/welcome>

Low-income families qualify for $10/month internet in new program

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/cheap-internet-low-income-family-1.4695281>

Resources

COVID-19 Daily Checklist (Screening Tool): <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Daily-COVID-checklist-en.pdf>

Halifax Regional Centre of Education Webpage for Updates: <https://hrce.ca/backtoschool>

Shatford Memorial Webpage for Updates: <https://sme.hrce.ca/>

Follow us on twitter at @shatford mem