



# York Catholic District School Board

Catholic Education Centre, 320 Bloomington Road West, Aurora, Ontario L4G 0M1

Tel: 905-713-1211, 416-221-5051, 1-800-363-2711

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May 21, 2021

Dear Parents and Guardians,

The York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB) has begun to plan for the 2021-2022 school year.

Over the past two school years, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of education in Ontario. Our administrators, teachers, education workers, support workers, students and their families have demonstrated resilience and flexibility in responding to changes in their learning environments, and we have come a long way in embracing new ways of teaching, learning and connecting. These tremendous efforts have helped our schools remain healthy and safe places to learn and work, and have supported the continuity of learning for students during this difficult time.

As we plan for September, we are following Ministry of Education direction and parameters. Here is a brief summary of some of those requirements and the York Catholic District School Board's (YCDSB) opening plans as they align with Ministry parameters.

The Ministry has instructed school boards to plan for a return to in-person learning and directed us to also offer a remote learning option, for both elementary and secondary schools.

## **In-Person Learning**

Parents are **strongly encouraged to send their children to school in-person in September**. We have heard from students that they want to be back in school in-person interacting with their peers and teachers, as their mental health and well-being have been impacted during these challenging times. COVID-19 cases are continuing on a downward trend in York Region, and vaccination uptake is high. The Provincial government is launching Ontario's Youth Vaccination Strategy in collaboration with Public Health Units and School Boards. This gives students between 12 and 17 years of age the opportunity to be fully vaccinated by the start of the school year. Details will be shared with YCDSB families soon.

In addition, our Re-entry Plan and health and safety protocols continue to be updated with the latest guidance available, and we are engaged in many health and safety-related projects, such as upgrading HVAC systems and replacing roof top units to improve the ventilation in our schools.

## **Remote Learning**

We realize that for some families, remote learning will continue to be a preferred option, and will offer this mode of learning in both our elementary and secondary schools.

## **Hybrid Model**

In order to accommodate the remote learning option, YCDSB will be continuing with the Hybrid Model in both elementary and secondary schools. This model allows all students to remain at their home school and blends face to face students with remote learners in the same class under the direction of



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the classroom teacher. Other school boards in the GTA will also be adopting the Hybrid Model in September. Staff is in the process of reviewing and adapting our model for the 2021-2022 school year. **Where possible, we will reduce the number of hybrid classes by grouping remote students in one class. We also intend to explore the possibility of fully remote and in-person classes, particularly for our younger students in Kindergarten to Grade 3.**

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

The Ministry has confirmed that school Boards should plan to operate elementary schools full time in-person with students continuing to be cohorted with their classmates and their homeroom teacher. In addition, the Ministry has directed school boards to offer a remote learning option.

At YCDSB, elementary students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 will attend school five days per week, with one classroom cohort for the full day, including recess and lunch. Enhanced health and safety protocols will continue to be in place.

## SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The Ministry requires school boards to adopt secondary timetable methods that emphasize cohorting of students as much as possible and limit the number of student-to-student contacts. School boards are required to limit schedules to two classes per day (quadmestering).

Both in-person and remote secondary students at YCDSB will continue with our existing quadmester model for at least the first semester of the year, where they will take two courses at a time. What will be different next year is that **in-person students will attend school every day for the full day for both classes (one in the morning and one in the afternoon)**. Details on how that will work will be shared as soon as they are finalized.

Following Ministry direction, we have plans in place in case we have to pivot back to our current adaptive model, with cohorting and attending in-person on alternate days, if mandated by Public Health. If possible, we will revert to the regular semester model in the Second Semester.

## Parent Survey

In order to plan effectively, we need to know how many students will opt for remote learning. We ask that all YCDSB parents take the time to submit the survey linked below, as this important information will allow us to plan the appropriate learning experience for your children. **If parents do not fill out the survey, we will record their choice as “in-person”.**

Survey responses are due **no later than June 4, 2021 at midnight**. The survey asks for your child's OEN number (displayed on Provincial Report Card or in the Parent Portal) and the parent email address on file with your child's school. Families needing assistance filling out the survey can request help by virtually visiting our Call Centre at <http://help.ycdsb.ca/vle>.

Overall, we are **anticipating a higher percentage of students attending in-person** during the 2021-2022 school year. Once the parent survey has closed and we review responses, we will begin to organize classes in our schools.



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## **A few important items to consider as you make the decision for in-person or remote learning for your child(ren):**

- Students who begin the school year as **remote** learners will remain in the remote learning model until the end of the first term in elementary schools (January 29, 2022), and the end of the first semester in secondary schools (February 7, 2022). Students will **not have the option to switch** between in-person and remote learning within the term/semester.
- Parents will have **one** opportunity to fill out the survey (due June 4 at midnight) and indicate the learning choice for their child(ren).
- Should parents change their minds in regards to their selection of remote learning after completing the survey and prior to the start of the school year, they will need to contact their school beginning August 23 and no later than August 27 to request a change.
- Requests to change from remote to in-person will be considered as space permits.
- **Families who do not fill in the survey will have their child(ren) automatically placed into in-person learning.**

The Ministry memo indicates that full guidance on 2021-2022 health and safety measures will be communicated to school boards during the summer. This will include guidance on requirements such as masking, hand hygiene, cohorting for clubs and other extracurricular activities, and screening. More information will follow at a later date on these items.

The York Catholic District School Board is working diligently to finalize our plans for next year, in keeping with direction and guidance from the Ministry of Education and York Region Public Health. We remain committed to the health, well-being and safety of students, educators, school staff and the broader community. Thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding as we carefully plan for the safe operation of our schools next year.

Parent Survey: <https://forms.gle/BDgABAP7kd7AsaPs5>

Yours in Catholic Education,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. Battista".

Mary Battista  
Interim Director of Education