



DR. JOHN HUGH GILLIS REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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September 2, 2020

Dear Families:

Further to the detailed information I provided last week, I wanted to share some further details with you before we officially welcome you back and return to school.

First, I would like to acknowledge the great work of our staff who have been busy preparing classrooms, learning spaces and common areas to comply with public health protocols as outlined in the Nova Scotia Back to School Plan. I would also like to thank Strait Regional Centre for Education regional office staff for their ongoing support in helping us implement the Plan.

I have attached a few photos to show some signage and a classroom will have extra furniture removed to give students an idea of some of the changes at the school this year.

I would also like to highlight the following additional details:

School Entry:

- Grade 9 Students will enter the school at the Wood Shop doors. When they arrive they will walk the pathway on the left hand side of the school to their doors.
- Grade 10 students will enter the building through the left side main doors.
- Grade 11 and 12 students will enter the building through the right side main doors.
- Students will wash hands upon entry and go directly to their first class.
- Masks must be worn in hallways and other common areas.
- Breakfast program items will be delivered to each wing.

Transitions:

- On class change bell students in grade 11 wing classes travel on the second level to the front of the building and down the stairs. They then make their way towards their next class. This will allow for classes in the grade 12 and grade 10 wing to dissipate. Grade 9 students are “cohorted” in their class.
- All students and staff will follow directional arrows and spacing.

Recess:

- There will not be a regular recess break. Classroom teachers will arrange movement breaks during regular classroom time.

Lunch:

- Grade 9 students and grade 11 students will have the same lunch break. Grade 10 students and 12 students will have the same lunch break. As usual students in grades 11 and 12 are able to leave school grounds during their lunch period if the permission form to do so has been signed by a legal parent or guardian.
- Students will have access to cafeteria services, although lunch options may be reduced. The food services provider will follow public health guidelines. An emphasis will still be placed on keeping groups of students together and maintaining physical distancing.
- Students in grade 9 will eat lunch in their classrooms with their regular class or cohort of students.
- Students in grades 10-12 will have an additional designated area to eat their lunch as the cafeteria will have a limited capacity.
- During grades 9/11 lunch, grade 9 will start prior to the bell to allow for ordering in the cafeteria if needed.
- They will be outside areas designated to eat as well.
- Students must clean hands prior to eating.
- Masks can be removed while eating.
- Microwaves are not available.

Dismissal:

- Staggered 2 min early (1. Walkers and drivers are dismissed first and must leave promptly. 2. First run bus students are dismissed second. for bus 3. Other bus students are dismissed last. They will keep physical distance while waiting for the bus.(cafeteria and spread outside)
- Walkers and drivers leave through the door closest to their last class.
- Grade 9 students leave through their entrance/exit by the Wood Shop.
- Grade 10 students leave through the doorway they entered at main entrance.

· Grades 11 and 12 students leave through the doorway they entered at main entrance.

With a focus on health and safety, equity for all learners, well-being, mental health and academic progress, our staff will meet students where they are in their learning and support them in the transition to their new grade level. I want to assure you our staff will take the necessary time to help students become familiar with our new school routines and expectations.

We know the last several months have not been easy. As we continue to adjust and learn to do things differently, I want to remind you that our teachers, school administrators, school counsellors, school psychologists and SchoolsPlus staff are available to help and support all learners as they return to school.

As we included in last week's message, please take a few minutes to help us prepare by reminding your children about the new procedures, key changes and public health protocols that are in effect this year as part of your getting ready to return to school routine including:

ü Daily At-Home Monitoring and Self-Screening for COVID-19 Symptoms

o It is very important students stay home when they are ill, even if their symptoms are mild. Families must monitor and self-screen children for COVID-19 symptoms daily, before sending them to school and/or on the school bus using the COVID-19 Daily Checklist that I provided to you last week. No student will be penalized for attendance if they miss school because they are unwell and need to stay home. Loss of credit provisions in the policy will be suspended. Hand hygiene practices and proper handwashing procedures

o A reminder that students will wash/sanitize hands when entering/exiting the school; before/after eating, and regularly throughout the day.

ü Cough/sneeze etiquette

o Practice cough etiquette by coughing and sneezing into your sleeve or a tissue and discard immediately and wash/sanitize your hands.

ü Mask wearing

o Please review how to wear a non-medical mask properly and the importance of wearing it with your children.

o All students in Grades 4 to 12 and school staff are required to wear a mask if they cannot physically distance from others, even when they are in a classroom with their cohort. That is, students in Grades 4 to 12 will wear a mask unless they are:

§ seated in the classroom at a distance of 2 metres/6 feet from others facing in the same direction

§ eating or drinking

§ participating in indoor physical activity where a mask cannot be worn.

o All students who travel by bus, regardless of age, and staff are required to wear non-medical masks while riding the bus. Students must wear the mask until they get off the bus and can clean their hands.

o Masks are not required for any students during outdoor activities.

o We know it may take time for some students to get used to wearing a mask, and some students with sensory or health issues may not be able to tolerate wearing a mask.

o All students and staff will be provided with two reusable masks on their first day back to school. It is recommended that you bring your own masks, whenever possible, however, we will ensure additional masks are available to those who need one or who may forget theirs.

ü Physical distancing

o Please maintain physical distancing of two metres/six feet when and where required.

Working together, we can all help students feel safe and supported when they return to school. Let's keep the lines of communication open to make this a positive and successful year.

We will continue to share information with you through school-based alerts, our school website and through our social media account on Twitter.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have specific questions or concerns.

We can't wait to welcome our Royals back!

Sincerely,

Jack MacDonald

Principal