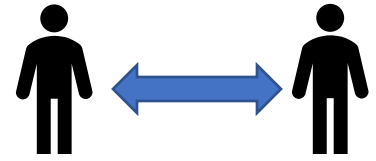




Fact Sheet

Distancing and Cohorting



2 Metres or 6 Feet

Revised: August 17, 2021

The health, safety and well-being of students and staff is a top priority as schools are reopened. Distancing plays a key role in this priority. In all schools and buildings, the physical distance of 2 metres or 6 feet will be encouraged, where appropriate. This practice can reduce the reliance on safety measures that may be impractical. The following document provides an overview of how **Distancing** will be encouraged in the schools and buildings of SGDSB.

Cohorting The purpose of *cohorting* is to limit the mixing of students, so that if a student or employee develops COVID-19, the number of exposures would be reduced. Cohorting allows, to the greatest extent possible, for students to remain in contact with only their classmates and a single teacher for as much of the school day as possible (specialty teachers/staff will also be in contact with students). Cohorting also allows for closer contact for students, particularly in the younger grades, where playing and socializing is central to child development. In the case where a student or staff member becomes ill, cohorting allows schools to carefully track who the ill person has come into contact with.

Distancing in the Classrooms

- ✓ Furniture will be arranged to leave as much space as possible between students and staff. Unnecessary furniture will be removed. Desks should face forward (rather than in circles).
- ✓ High School students will have two classes per day (Quadrimester System) in order to allow for cohorting.
- ✓ Class cohorts will be maintained throughout the day while indoors. During outdoor time, students are not required to stay within their cohorts, but distancing should be encouraged as much as possible.
- ✓ Consideration will be given for engaging in classes outdoors, weather permitting.
- ✓ While cohorting will be established in all classes, distancing is not required for younger students (Kindergarten to Grade 3), as play and interaction is essential to childhood development.

NEW

Movement Throughout the School

- ✓ Designated routes for students/cohorts to get to and from classrooms, including the use of designated school entry doors, will be established.
- ✓ Visual cues (decals on the floor, signs/posters on the walls) will be used to guide and remind students and employees.
- ✓ Students will not be required to “line up”.
- ✓ Traffic flow lines will be in place in hallways.
- ✓ Student movement periods in the hallway will be staggered.
- ✓ Congregation of students in the hallways will be discouraged.
- ✓ Fire Drills will be conducted in a manner to ensure distancing (e.g. one/two classes at a time to conduct the drill separately).



Fact Sheet

Drop Off and Pick Up

- ✓ Pick-up and drop-off of students will occur outside of the school (unless in exceptional circumstances).
- ✓ Personal belongings brought to school should be minimized.

Shared Spaces

- ✓ Common areas such as cafeterias will have a schedule for use by cohort classes with cleaning occurring between use. Students will eat their lunch in their classrooms or go home for the lunch break. Lunch breaks will be staggered if necessary, to maintain distancing.
- ✓ Gatherings, such as assemblies, may occur, with distancing between cohort groups.
- ✓ In shared outdoor spaces, distancing is encouraged between cohorts.
- ✓ Schools will make plans to prevent the mixing of cohorts of students (their class) in washrooms/changerooms and to frequently clean and disinfect shared surfaces in washrooms/changerooms.
- ✓ Equipment and classrooms spaces will be cleaned after being used by a class/cohort.
- ✓ Congregating of staff will be limited to minimize potential for transmission. Staff meetings will be virtual. Staff rooms will be virtual.
- ✓ Visual cues and safety measures will be put into place to support distancing in office areas.

NEW

Visitors/Non-Essential Individuals

- ✓ Access to the school by guests and visitors, including parents/caregivers, can occur by appointment. The telephone and video calls are encouraged in order to interact with parents/caregivers.

Transportation (for further information, please see the **Transportation Fact Sheet**)

- ✓ Students, parents and caregivers should, where possible, distance at bus stops.
- ✓ Students of the same household/same cohort/same school will be assigned seats together, to the extent possible.
- ✓ The use of cloth masks will be required for students from Grades K-12 (exceptions will be made for students with medical conditions).
- ✓ Distancing should be maintained during loading and unloading of buses.

*This Fact Sheet has been designed to provide information for school communities considering the changes required by COVID-19. For any questions, concerns, or accommodations, please contact your child's school principal. ** Adapted from the Ministry of Education "COVID-19 Health, Safety and Operational Guidance (2021-2022) Version 2"*