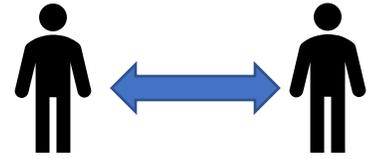




Fact Sheet

Physical Distancing



2 Metres or 6 Feet

Revised: August 4, 2020

The health, safety and well-being of students and staff is a top priority as schools are reopened. Physical 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 **Physical 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 (for more information see the Public Health's Guidance on Outbreaks in Schools, K-12).

Physical Distancing in the Classrooms

- ✓ Furniture will be arranged to leave as much space as possible between students and staff. Unnecessary furniture will be removed.
- ✓ Class cohorts will be maintained throughout the day, including lunch breaks and recess (elementary schools only).
- ✓ Consideration will be given for engaging in classes outdoors, weather permitting.
- ✓ Physical Distancing should be maintained, where possible, for older students (Grades 4-12).
- ✓ While cohorting will be established in all classes, Physical Distancing is not required for younger students (Kindergarten to Grade 3), as play and interaction is essential to childhood development.

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 physical distancing (e.g. one/two classes at a time to conduct the drill separately).



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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.
- ✓ Large gatherings, such as assemblies, will be cancelled or will occur virtually until further notice.
- ✓ In shared outdoor spaces, Physical Distancing should be maintained between cohorts of students (their class) and any other individuals in that same space.
- ✓ 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 (including playground equipment where open) and classrooms spaces will be cleaned after being used by a class/cohort.
- ✓ Staff meetings will be virtual.
- ✓ Staff rooms will be virtual.
- ✓ Visual cues and safety measures will be put into place to support **Physical Distancing** in office areas.

Visitors/Non-Essential Individuals

- ✓ Access to the school by guests and visitors, including parents/caregivers, will be limited. The telephone and video calls will be used to interact with parents/caregivers.

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

- ✓ Students, parents and caregivers should, where possible, physically distance at bus stops.
- ✓ Students of the same household/same cohort/same school will be assigned seats together, to the extent possible.
- ✓ To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of cloth masks will be required for students from Grades 4-12. Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged, but not required, to wear masks (exceptions will be made for students with medical conditions).
- ✓ Physical 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 "Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-2021 School Year"*