

**Equinox Holistic
Alternative School**

**Roden
Public School**

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Messages from Admin

Welcome back!

The staff have been working hard to prepare for a safe Return to Learning. Please understand that the information that follows is being shared in hopes of maintaining a safe learning environment for everyone at our two schools. The information is based on guidelines from Toronto Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the Toronto District School Board and other stakeholders. This September will be unlike any other and we will continue to do our best to support our students, their families and our entire school community. We thank you for your understanding, your support and most importantly, all you have done to prepare your child(ren) for a safe return.

There will be a few new faces in the building as a result of reduced staff, virtual learning and new hires. All staff are excited to join our team.

Mr. Lam has joined us from Westwood Middle School. He is excited to be part of this amazing group of educators. He comes with a tremendous amount of expertise and knowledge. He really has been a great asset as we prepare to come back to school. Please join me in welcoming him to our building!

Please take some time to view our [Welcome Back Video](#). Thank you to Ms. Cappadocia, Mr. S. Lam and all the staff for all their hard work on the video.

Guiding Principles



Prioritize health and safety



Support well-being



Provide predictable
learning opportunities with
high quality instruction



Foster connections
to staff and peers



Ensure equity of access



Consider needs of staff,
students and families



Be adaptable and flexible



Be financially feasible
and sustainable



COVID SAFETY

COVID SCREENING PRIOR TO ENTERING THE SCHOOL



Do you have any of the following:



Fever



Cough



Difficulty breathing



Sore throat, trouble swallowing



Runny nose



Loss of taste or smell



Not feeling well



Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea



Have you been in close contact with someone who is sick or has confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days?



Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the past 14 days?



If you answered YES to any of these questions, go home & self-isolate right away. Call Telehealth or your health care provider, to find out if you need a test.

My answer: NO 🙅 My answer: YES 👍

Daily Student COVID Screening: Students, staff community members entering the school MUST conduct an assessment at home, PRIOR to coming to school. Once anyone has arrived, a secondary screening will be conducted. We will use the poster below to assess whether each individual is potentially unsafe to enter the building. Individuals wishing to enter the school outside of scheduled entry times will have to do the screening with a staff member before entering the building. In case contact tracing is required, contact information with guests and community members will be recorded. We appreciate your patience and your cooperation as we work together to ensure the safety for all.

For translated posters, please use the following links: [TRANSLATED COVID POSTERS](#); [OTHER POSTERS](#)



Parents are not permitted on the yard and are asked to wait on the other side of the fence at drop-off and pick-up times. If you are able, please wait until the screening is done before leaving your child at school at drop-off in the morning. Teachers will conduct the COVID Screening while they are outside and waiting for their turn to safely enter the building. Classrooms have been designated specific entry doors and this information will be shared with you by the classroom teacher or another member of the school staff.

IF YOU OR YOUR CHILD IS NOT WELL, **PLEASE STAY HOME.** Children who are not well, or become unwell, will be sent home. Parents and or guardians MUST come to bring your child home **immediately.**

ATTENDANCE and SECONDARY COVID SCREENING

Attendance and a secondary COVID screening will be taken by classroom teachers **at their designated Classroom Meeting Spots.** Please ensure that your child arrives on time so that their attendance can be taken and the COVID screening administered.

Please take the time to explain to your child that their teacher will be asking them some questions using this [screening poster](#).

- Students will be responding to some questions.
- If they are **healthy**, they will say no and/or show a **thumbs down**. 
- **If they answer yes and/or show a thumbs up, they must go home.**
- **Parents are asked to wait before the screening is complete before they leave their child(ren) at school.** 

Please note that late arrivals make attendance procedures more challenging and are time consuming, not to mention they are a disruption to the learning in class. If your child is late, they will need to buzz in. **Parents will not be allowed entry into the school** and must wait at the door. Someone in the office will do a [secondary screening](#) with you and your child and then will buzz your child in. Someone will take your child to class. Parents who wish to enter the school will need to make an appointment by calling the school office or emailing us.

COVID SAFETY

RECESS and LUNCH

In order to ensure physical distancing and to establish student cohorts, recesses and lunches will be staggered. This means that each cohort or group will have recess and lunch at different times. Teachers will be sending out a student timetable with recess and lunch breaks that are clearly defined. **Please ensure we have the most up to date information regarding allergies and other medical concerns and contact information in case of emergency. Please complete this survey so we have the most up to date information.**

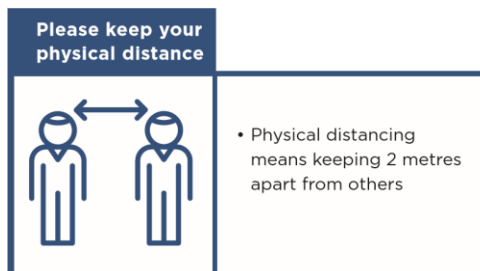
Re-entry after Lunch Off School Property: Students returning to school must do a COVID screening with a staff member at their assigned entry door / class lineup (outside).

Students must sanitize their hands and always wear a mask inside the school.

Students are expected to follow social distancing rules when making their way to class and do their best not to touch surfaces on their way. Students who are late after lunch will need to sign in at the office. Please remind students that they must wait outside the office until they are asked to come in.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING AT SCHOOL

- Classroom relocations (classes have been moved to increase distance between students)
- Floor Decals (everyone is expected to follow the direction and maintain distance)
- Staggered Entry, Staggered Recesses, Staggered Lunch (maintains cohort cap of 50)
- Sectioning of school yard to keep cohort interaction to a minimum (students and staff will have a limited number of people they come in contact with)
- Exiting Protocols: including identifying exit doors and timing/staggering of student exits.
- Washrooms: only 2 students at a time; urinals and toilets have been placed out of service to create distance between urinals and toilets.
- Until further notice outdoor school play structures will remain closed.



OTHER HEALTH AND SAFETY IDEAS TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR CHILD

- Lockers will not be used
- Water bottles may be refilled at drinking fountains. Refilling at sinks is not permitted. DO NOT drink directly from the drinking fountain, a bottle must be filled.
- Students are not permitted to share their lunch, learning materials, or personal items/toys
- How to: Wash hands, Put on a Mask, How to Wear a Mask Safely (and where to store it)

SAFETY VIDEOS

Parents are encouraged to view the following videos with their child(ren):

- [How to Hand Wash](#)
- [How to Hand Rub](#)
- [Putting on Mask and Eye Protection](#)
- [How to Wear a Fabric Mask Safely](#)

PROGRAMMING

OUTDOOR TEACHING AND LEARNING



We are fortunate to have amazing teacher leaders at our two schools who are experts at creating learning opportunities outdoors. We have met with staff to share ideas, collaborate, plan and organize materials that will maximize learning outside our school walls. This will not only increase the amount of time spent outdoors, it will also help to foster our connection to the environment and our community.

An added bonus is that this will provide students and staff an opportunity to break from mask wearing. The removal of student masks while outdoors will be at the discretion of the parents/guardians. Please have a supportive discussion with your child about wearing/removing their mask while outdoors. Please understand that some families may choose to keep the mask on, while others may choose to allow their child(ren) to remove the mask. If you choose to have your child remove their mask, please ensure they understand the need for physical distancing while being outdoors and during play.

Please ensure your child has appropriate outdoor clothing that will help them stay warm and dry. If your family needs some assistance with this, please contact the school and let us know.

INDOOR TEACHING AND LEARNING SPACES

To increase the opportunity for classrooms to be physically distanced, there have been a few classroom reorganizations and relocations. This means that for some students and teachers, learning will take place in different spaces throughout the school. In addition, all classrooms have been organized to MAXIMIZE the space between desks/tables to create physical distanced learning spaces in the classroom. This was no easy feat and we want to thank all the staff who have been flexible and who have worked hard to ensure a smooth transition during this time of change. These efforts have been monumental in a successful and healthy return.



Keep safe, stay distanced.

STAGGERING WHEN WE DO THINGS

In an effort to maximize the opportunities to be physically distant, there are parts of the day that will be held at different times for different groups.

STAGGERED START DAYS

DATE	GRADES / CLASSES
Tuesday, September 15	Senior Kindergarten, Grades 4 and 8
Wednesday, September 16	Junior Kindergarten, Grades 1 and 7
Thursday, September 17	Grades 2, 3, 5, 6

Students in Mr. Egan's 2/3 class will begin on different days, depending on their grade. He will be reaching out to families to let them know. Once a student starts school on the first day for their grade, they continue to attend school every day.

STAGGERED PARTS OF THE DAY

Cohort A

8:45-8:55	Supervision
8:55	Staggered Entry
10:00-10:15	Morning Recess
11:15-11:55	Outdoor Break
11:55	Indoor Lunch
1:45-2:00	Afternoon Recess
3:00	Dismissal –FDK 6-8
3:30	Dismissal - 1-5

Cohort B

8:45-8:55	Supervision
8:55	Staggered Entry
10:30-10:45	Morning Recess
12:10-12:35	Indoor Lunch
12:35-1:15	Outdoor Break
2:15-2:30	Afternoon Recess
3:00	Dismissal –FDK 6-8
3:30	Dismissal - 1-5

Teachers will notify parents which cohort your child is in by Monday, September 14th.

WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS BRING?

In addition to the regular items that students need for school (notebooks, pens, pencils etc...), students must have a mask/face covering. It is highly recommended that all students wear masks as soon as they enter onto school property (if not before); masks are required by all students when inside the school, but as physical distancing can be a challenge outdoors, students are advised to put masks on as soon as they arrive at school. As our snack program is on hold, please try to provide your child with a healthy snack to enjoy at a scheduled break. Please note snacks are not to be shared.



MASK / FACE COVERING GUIDELINES To improve the health and safety in schools, all students and staff will be required to wear a mask/face covering in TDSB buildings and on school buses. This decision is in line with the overall City of Toronto requirement that anyone over the age of two wears a mask/face covering in indoor public spaces --- with exemptions for medical reasons. It is an expectation that students will provide and wear their own masks/face coverings, but should one be required, we will have masks available for students. It is also recommended that students have a breathable bag (e.g., hip pouch / fanny bag) that can be used to store the mask/face covering when not in use.

STUDENT BREAKS

Regardless of the ages of students, teachers will be encouraged to schedule in-class wellness breaks. Where a break includes going outside, this will be coordinated as a school to minimize interactions with other classes or large group gatherings. Our staff are encouraged to support the learning environment where the indoors and outdoors co-exist so that students (while outdoor) can have a break from wearing their masks. Student breaks will include time for washrooms and handwashing. Very few of our classrooms have sinks, however ALL classrooms will have hand sanitizer for students to use.

VIRTUAL SCHOOL (ON-LINE LEARNING)

For students whose parents/guardians have chosen to continue their child's learning at home, there will be four elementary 'Virtual Schools,' each connected with one Learning Centre. Each of the four Virtual Schools will be fully online and will be staffed with TDSB teachers, principals, vice-principals, guidance counsellors, and support staff. Students will be taking part in synchronous (live/online) learning throughout the day.

SWITCHING BETWEEN IN-SCHOOL AND VIRTUAL LEARNING

We recognize that parents/guardians and/or students may want to switch between in-school and virtual learning. It is important to note that, for health and safety reasons, and because of the impact of switching would have on staffing, physical distancing and space allocation, it will not be possible to immediately transition between the two models (In-School/Virtual School). As a result, opportunities to enter the Virtual School or to return to in-person learning will be provided at key dates during the school year.

Opportunity to Change	Date the Change of Class would Take Effect	Deadline for Requesting Change
#1: Approximately One Month into School Year	October 13, 2020 (day after Thanksgiving)	September 30, 2020
#2: Following Progress Reporting Period	November 23, 2020	November 06, 2020
#3: Following Distribution of First Provincial Report Card	February 16, 2021 (day after Family Day Holiday)	January 29, 2021

Educator List and Locations

Roden

FDK A Hilary Mighton (Laura Berton), ECE: Heather Speedie (Area 11)
FDK B Vanessa Barnett, ECE: Carrie Spanton (Area 17)
FDK C Carolyn Gilts, ECE: Rubina Abbasi (Tania Newell-Thompson) (Area 13)
FDK D Pauline Vaccinos, ECE: Mira Mongoush (Area 14)

Gr. 1/2 Marie Jeganathan (Area 28)
Gr. 1/2 Laura Cappadocia (Area 29)
Gr. 1/2 Brian Bigioni (Area 22)
Gr. 1/2 Terrence Castle (Area 31)
Gr. 3 Jen Kozelj (Area 19)
Gr. 3 Erin Robichaud (Area 18)
Gr. 4 Terry Campbell (Area 49)
Gr. 5 Tyrone Mattison (Area 27)
Gr. 5 /6 Brad Niven (Area 45)
Gr. 6/7 Thelma Akyea (Area 32)
Gr. 7 Doug Mighton (Area 33/34)
Gr. 8 Sherman Lam (Area 43/44)

Core French	Arta Naci
ESL/Prep	Carl Donovan
Resource Support/Prep	Sarah Press
Resource MART/Prep	Corinne Brown
Resource MART/Prep	Erica Wilhelmson

Equinox

FDK A Lori Baxter, ECE: Angela Nikolakakos (Area 15)
FDK B Heather Lott (Area 16)
Gr. 1/2 Julia Thompson (Area 41)
Gr. 2/3 William Egan (Area 35)
Gr. 3/4 Linley Maher (Area 36)
Gr. 4/5 Philip Pace (Area 39)
Gr. 6/7 Marcia McVean (Area 38)
Gr. 7/8 Dan Galvin (Library)

HSP/Spec. Ed	Kyle Punch (Area 40)
Music/French	David Sexsmith
Prep	TBD

FLEXIBILITY AND UNDERSTANDING

It goes without saying that we all may have more questions than there are answers. That is a good thing. Together, we will do our best to provide the environment where our school community will continue to grow and thrive. In doing so, we ask that you continue to support us, ask questions and share solutions to challenges we face. We can't do it without you and all the amazing staff we have in our building. In the face of all this uncertainty, we are confident that together we will make the most of an unprecedented situation. We thank you for all the support and encouragement thus far and appreciate all your efforts and support, past, present and future. We are grateful! We would like to take a moment to acknowledge just a few remarkable individuals who have worked alongside us to gather items for inside and outside. They have also answered many questions for families by acting as a liaison between the community and the school.

We would like to thank Carrie Klassen and Jen Pendergast, for your ongoing support, advocacy, and tenacity to build capacity among teams, community partnerships and the school. Immense gratitude from us to you!

Thanks to Bridget Ku, Jodi Wheeler and Arlene Reynolds for your working tirelessly to get us items for our outdoor classrooms. Staff and students are extremely grateful.

As we move from the summer heat to the beginnings of a fall chill, we want you to know, we are excited to be back and grateful to be part of an amazing community.



thankful
grateful
blessed