

Nova Scotia Back to School Plan

Key Details:

- All public schools in Nova Scotia will welcome back students on September 8.
- The Nova Scotia Back to School Plan supports the safe return for children, students and staff from pre-primary to grade 12.
- The plan was developed in consultation with provincial public health officials, advice from the IWK Health Centre, and feedback from students, parents, teachers, union and education partners.
- Regional Centres for Education and the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial will have local plans for their schools.
- Public health measures will be in place in our schools for September including:
 - Frequent cleaning
 - Creating more space in classrooms
 - Mask use will be required for some grade levels and staff, for some situations
 - School bus riders and drivers will be required to wear a mask while on the bus.
 - No use of lockers, no large gatherings like assemblies and cafeterias
 - Signs in schools will support physical distancing and promote health and safety practices
- The plan is flexible and allows for a range of changes on how learning is delivered to students in the event of an outbreak or second wave of COVID-19.
- More information about returning to school in September and the plan is available at www.novascotia.ca/backtoschool

Frequently Asked Questions

What measures will be in place to ensure the safety of students and staff?

Students and staff will be required to clean their hands as they enter the school and before and after eating and throughout the day. There will be enhanced cleaning procedures and high-touch surfaces will be cleaned throughout the day. In the younger grades, we are asking classes to stay together. There will be staggered recess, and lots of outdoor play and exercise. Non-essential furniture will be removed or moved aside in classrooms to ensure desks are spaced out. Students and staff are asked to self-monitor and stay home if they feel ill. There will be a “no-sharing policy” in place, meaning students will not be able to share school supplies. If tech equipment is used, it will need to be cleaned between uses. There will be few visitors in the school, and only for essential purposes. Parents will need to drop off their children outside the school.

Will mask use be mandatory in schools? Who will need to wear them? Will masks be provided to every student?

We are taking our lead from Public Health. As Public Health has been saying, masks are used when physical distancing is not possible. At this time, high school students and teachers will be required to wear masks in hallways and common areas.

On buses, all students will be required to wear a mask unless there is a medical reason for not doing so. Teachers and students may wear masks at other times if they wish.

It is recommended that students bring and wear their own masks. Masks will be provided to those students who do not have one. Information about non-medical masks can be found on the government website.

Not everyone can wear a mask. Will students and staff who cannot wear one be required to produce proof from a physician?

There may be a small number of students with sensory or health issues who may not be able to tolerate wearing a mask. Parents of these students are asked to consult with the school to develop a plan for their children.

Will you do temperature checks in the morning?

No, students and staff and families will be asked to stay home if they are not feeling well. There will be a screening tool for families and children, much like we have for childcare. Schools are not required to physically screen children.

What happens if there is a COVID-19 case at school? Will the school be closed? Will everyone be tested?

If there is a case, Public Health will be notified immediately, and they will advise the school and region as to next steps. In consultation with public health, schools will follow the Public Health Guidance for Schools.

My child is immunocompromised and cannot attend school. How will they be educated?

In our consultation with IWK, we know that a very small number of children will not be able to attend school. There are existing processes in place to deal with these rare situations. Students unable to attend school will receive learning materials at home. Those discussions will take place between families and their school.

Will students participate in all subject areas including physical education and music, if in-person class resumes?

We will offer all subject areas, including music and physical education. They may just look different. We are working with Public Health on a plan that will allow students to safely engage in these subjects.

Will all sports be available to students?

The Nova Scotia School Athletic Federation is planning sports consistent with Sport Nova Scotia guidelines approved by Public Health. The NSSAF plan for school sports will be provided to schools and families when it is complete.

Is Pre-Primary moving ahead? Won't there be challenges ensuring children remain physically distanced?

We are moving ahead with our commitment to Pre-Primary. We worked extensively with Public Health and IWK on the re-opening of licenced childcare. Similar principles and best practices including extensive hand washing and cleaning of high-touch surfaces will apply to pre-primary children.

How will you offer food programs, like the breakfast program?

These programs will continue to be offered, but, like many other things will be done differently. We recognize the importance of these programs to many of our students and have a team of educators and health professionals working on the logistics to continue to support this in our schools for September.