

Polaris COVID Health and Safety Protocol

Note that this Health and Safety Protocol may change, as needed, as the situation in Ottawa evolves and will be reflective of the current situation and any new directives from Ottawa Public Health.

Hand Hygiene

Children and youth will be taught how to clean their hands properly and to try and avoid touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible. This should be done in a non-judgmental and positive manner. There should be age-appropriate signage placed throughout the school to remind children and youth to perform proper hand hygiene.

Students and staff should perform hand hygiene upon entering and before exiting the building/classroom, after using the washroom, before and after eating, and before and after playtime with shared equipment/toys. If students or staff decide to wear masks, they should be instructed to perform hand hygiene before putting on and after touching or removing their mask.

Access to hand hygiene facilities is critical with consideration for ensuring accessibility for those with disabilities or other accommodation needs. Mobile washing stations, with liquid hand soap, will be installed in each classroom and there will be a mobile hand washing station for outdoor use. Hand sanitizer (60-90% USP grade alcohol, not technical grade alcohol) should be available as well throughout the school at all entry points. Safety precautions to avoid toxic exposure (e.g. ingestion) from hand sanitizers should be in place. Liquid soap and hand sanitizer will need to be replenished and paper towels available for drying. No-touch waste receptacles should be available for disposal of materials.

Physical Distancing

Interaction such as playing and socializing is central to a child's development. It is not always practical to enforce strict physical distancing among elementary school children, especially during periods of play. It is felt that our small class sizes and cohorts will help minimize the number of potential exposures during close interactions.

Physical distancing will be enforced in the hallways and bathrooms. Floor signage will be installed to assist with this. No more than two children, from the same class, will be permitted to use the bathroom at one time. Students will be required to adhere to social distancing signage while they are waiting to use the facilities.

It is recognized that a 1 metre separation provides protection in school settings with young children (10 years old and under) who are asymptomatic. Student's desks are to be placed a minimum of 1 metre apart.

For Kindergarten, we would recommend leaving space between the children during indoor snack or lunch. This would also apply if the children were doing a craft or activity that requires them to sit at a table.

For Middle School and High School, physical distancing will be encouraged whenever possible, especially during periods of prolonged exposure indoors. Students desks should be placed 2 metres apart. It is noted that physical distancing at this age is more easily understood.

It is understood that transmission of the virus is less likely in outdoor settings, and that the need for physical distancing lessened in these circumstances. We would recommend 1 metre minimum distancing outdoors when children are seated and/or eating.

Physical distancing of school staff from children/youth and other staff should be emphasized. Teachers should maintain a distance of 2 metres from students and other staff as much as possible, recognizing that distancing will not always be feasible in classrooms, especially with young children.

Staff may need to use enhanced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in specific situations (e.g. the child who becomes ill at school and needs close physical attention).

Masks

Due to our small class sizes and limited number of students in each cohort, we will not require the use of masks in the classroom by teachers or students at this time. If a family or teacher chooses to do so their choice will of course be respected. Teachers and staff should ensure that the child is putting on and taking off their mask safely, ensuring that they wash/sanitize their hands prior to putting it on and after taking it off. They should also ensure it is then stored safely.

Masks will be required when students are in transit through public areas of the building, as per OPH by-laws. For example, on their way to Eurythmy class.

At the time this policy was written, community transmission in the Ottawa area was low and this influenced the school's decision not to require that masks be worn in class. This issue will be assessed on an ongoing basis throughout the school year as the situation in Ottawa evolves and changes will be made if it is felt necessary to ensure the safety of staff and students at the school and/or if mandated by OPH.

Cleaning and Sanitization

A regular cleaning schedule, using Health Canada approved disinfectants with a drug identification number (DIN), will be in place. Product instructions must be followed. Classrooms will be cleaned/sanitized once a day either before classes begin or after school.

Teachers and staff will be asked to disinfect high-touch surfaces (door knobs, light switches, cupboard handles, handrails, tables etc.) and washrooms at least once during the day. Each class will be provided with disinfectant wipes or a similar product.

Efforts will be made to reduce the need to touch objects/doors (no-touch waste containers, prop doors open).

When possible, toys and class equipment that can be cleaned and disinfected by staff and/or students (as appropriate) should be used. Items that are not easily disinfected such as soft toys or modelling beeswax, etc. should be washed if possible or removed from the classroom and returned/reused only after 3 days.

Each class should have a regular cleaning routine. Teachers are responsible for keeping the classrooms organized and tidy. Cleaning staff will come in once a day to disinfect the classroom but it will be extremely helpful if classes can ensure that items are put away, desks are free of any objects, floors have been swept and the cubby area is tidy.

The importance of hand hygiene to children after contact with any high-touch surface (such as door handles) should be reinforced.

Food Policy

Students are not permitted to share food, water bottles or cutlery. All food and water bottles are to be brought from home. The use of fountains is prohibited.

It is recommended that each class have access to fresh drinking water in their classroom for students to replenish their water bottles as needed throughout the day.

The importance of hand hygiene before eating should be reinforced. Desks and/or eating areas should allow for a minimum of 1 metre between elementary students and 2 metres for high school students.

Pick Up and Drop Off

Kindergarten

Kindergarten drop off and pick up will be indoors. Entrance C will remain unlocked between 8:30 and 9:00 am. Parents after this time will have to call the school office to be let into the building. Doors will also be opened between 2:30 and 2:50 pm for pick up. Families will be asked to adhere to social distancing requirements of 2 metres when dropping off or picking up.

Grade School

All Elementary Grades will be dropped off and picked up outside. Each class will have a designated drop off and pick up zone. Parents/guardians are asked to drop children off between 8:15 and 8:25 am. Pick up is between 2:40 and 2:50 pm.

Late for class

If a student is late for school, parents/guardians are asked to contact the office upon arrival to be let into the building. Unless necessary, parents will be asked not to enter the school but administrative staff will bring the child(ren) to their classroom(s). Note, this does not apply to younger students such as Kindergarten or Grade 1 students, as parents/guardians will bring them either to their classroom or to join their class outside.

Parents and School Visitors

We will be limiting non-essential visits to the school. Anyone visiting the school, including parents, will need to make prior arrangements with the school office or call upon arrival. Entrance C will be kept locked during the day, one will have to contact the office to arrange for school access. All visitors, including parents, will be asked to complete a COVID questionnaire prior to entering the school each time they visit. Records of all visitors will be kept in the school office.

All adults are required to wear a facemask indoors and encouraged to use the hand sanitizer located at each entrance or to wash their hands when entering and leaving the building.

Masks are not mandatory when pickup up or dropping off outside.

Class sizes

Class sizes will be capped as needed to comply with physical distancing requirements in this policy.

Recess

Recess will be organized to facilitate social interactions while maintaining safety.

Friday Nature Program

This program will be organized in cohorts of up to a maximum of 12 students.

Part-Time Students

Due to the circumstances of reopening this fall we are only able to accommodate registration in our 4-day Main Lesson Program, 5-Day Full Time Program and Nature Connect Program for Grades 1 to 8.

Eurythmy, Games and Gym

Where possible these activities will be held outdoors and need to be re-examined as things evolve in the Ottawa area.

Singing and Wind Instruments

It is recommended that these activities be held outdoors at this time. Indoor guidelines for these activities are still evolving.

Monitoring and responding to reports of COVID-19 symptoms

All families will be asked to complete the **Parental Agreement, Appendix A of the enrollment contract** and to agree and sign **Appendix A: COVID Checklist Form** found below.

Based on current recommendations from Ottawa Public Health, (OPH) the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health and Public Health the following protocol should be followed if a child becomes ill at school with COVID-19 related symptoms.

Any student or staff member who develops COVID-19 symptoms while in school will be immediately separated from others, with exposure to others minimized during this process. They will be brought to the office where they will remain until they are able to go home. Parents/guardians will be immediately contacted to pick up the child. Isolated students will be supervised, note that we will do our best to ensure physical distancing is maintained and staff members caring for the child may use PPE to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 if

physical distancing is not possible. Teachers and Administrator will ensure all areas/items the student or staff member in question was in contact with are properly cleaned/sanitized.

Staff with symptoms and parents/guardians of children with symptoms will be directed to use an online self-assessment tool and follow instructions. We are awaiting more clarification from OPH in regards to procedures to be followed when a student or staff member develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID. At this time, we have been given the following guidelines which may be modified by OPH during the year.

OPH directives:

Child and/or staff with symptoms who are referred for COVID-19 testing:

- Child and/or staff should stay home and self-isolate while waiting for results of COVID-19 test. The parent(s)/ guardian(s) will need to look up results and provide information back to the school. Please refer to the [Self-isolation Instructions](#) on OPH's website.
- Close contacts of the symptomatic child or staff at the school, over the past two days (48 hours prior to when their symptoms started), should be monitored for symptoms and cohorted while results are pending for the staff member/child. If the child/staff member results are positive, additional testing may be required as directed by Ottawa Public Health.
- If not tested, the child and/or staff member should stay home and self-isolate for 14 days from the first day of symptoms OR until 24 hours AFTER symptoms have FULLY resolved, whichever is longer.
- Determining when the child and/or staff member can return to the school will be done in consultation with the OPH OB Reporting Line.
- Determining closure and re-opening of the school will also be done in consultation with the OPH OB Reporting Line.

Child and/or staff who have a positive COVID-19 test result:

- The child and/or staff with a positive COVID-19 test should self-isolate and not attend school. Please refer to the [Self-isolation Instructions](#) on OPH's website.
- Determining when the child and/or staff member can return to the school will be done in consultation with the OPH Outbreak Reporting Line. However, generally speaking, an individual's COVID-19 infection is considered "cleared" after 14 days of isolation provided that for at least 72 hours the individual no longer has a fever and symptoms are improving.
- Once an individual has been cleared from isolation, they are safe to return to school. A test after finishing isolation is not required or recommended because a positive result at that time is just a sign that they had previously been sick.
- Determining closure and re-opening of the school will be done in consultation with the OPH Outbreak Reporting Line.

Child and/or staff who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case:

- A child and/or staff who has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case should self-isolate and not attend the school.
- Discontinuing self-isolation depends on whether they are still in contact with a case of COVID-19 and will be determined in consultation with the OPH Outbreak Reporting Line.

Child and/or staff who are symptomatic and have a negative COVID-19 result:

- Return to school may be based on the school's usual policy and procedure (e.g. 24 hours symptom free without fever-reducing medication, or 48 hours after resolution of vomiting and/or diarrhea).
- For guidance on when children can return to school with illnesses other than COVID-19, please refer to OPH's website.

Each teacher will keep attendance records of classes, including seating charts, and class/school cohorts. The school administrator will keep daily records of any approved visitors to the school, including supply/occasional teachers or custodians and ensure that all records are maintained and readily available to be provided to public health for contact tracing purposes.

Note, Polaris staff will not notify student families or other staff members if a student or staff member becomes ill at home or at school with COVID-19 symptoms or of any confirmed COVID-19 cases, unless directed by OPH. OPH will work with the school administration to determine what actions should be taken. Ottawa Public Health is responsible for contacting positive COVID cases and contacts.

Polaris will have a dedicated contact at Ottawa Public Health and provide families with a list of the locations of the closest [COVID-19 assessment sites](#). While we are waiting to be assigned a contact at OPH staff will contact the Outbreak (OB) Reporting Line at 613-580-2424 ext. 26325, which is open 7 days a week between 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., or 311 outside business hours and ask to speak with on-call public health inspector for further guidance if needed.

Appendix A: COVID Checklist

Polaris School and Centre Screening Checklist

Prior to coming to Polaris, every school day I/we confirm that:

- My/our child(ren) and all other family member in our household, have not been diagnosed with or cared for someone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past two weeks.

- My/our child(ren), and all family members in our household, do not have the following new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19:
 - Cough,
 - fever/chills,
 - runny nose (not related to allergies),
 - difficulty breathing,
 - sore throat,
 - nausea,
 - diarrhea,
 - abdominal pain,
 - lost of taste or smell,
 - unexplained tiredness and/or not feeling well,
 - pink eye.

If your child has a history of allergies or asthma that produces a runny nose or cough, please discuss this with your child's teacher prior to returning to school.

- No one in our household has travelled outside of Canada or been in close contact with anyone who has travelled outside of Canada in the past two weeks. All families who travel abroad are being asked to self-isolate for 14 days.

- I/we confirm that if our child(ren) or anyone in our household begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 that we will notify the school office to inform them promptly.

- I/we confirm that if we are unable to attest to any one of the items above, that we will keep our child(ren) home from school that day and contact the school office to report their absence.

By signing below I/we agree to complete this checklist prior to each school day.

Parent/Guardian signature **Date**

Parent/Guardian signature **Date**