



Return to School Plan 2022-2023

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board is excited to welcome learners back to school. KPR's Return to School Plan 2022-2023 is based on the latest Ontario Ministry of Education's guidance. We continue to be committed to ongoing communication with families to provide important school-level information and board-wide updates. During the school year, classroom teachers and school principals will be your main contact for information about your child and local school programming.

The School Day

The Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario, Dr. Moore, has indicated our schools will be able to operate as they did at the close of the 2021-2022 school year. This means a return to normal school operations in most areas.

COVID restrictions have been lifted in relation to assemblies, cohorting, cafeteria use, extracurricular sports and clubs, in-province field trips, food programs, recess, shared materials and spaces, vaccination attestations, and visitors and volunteers.

In-person Learning

In-person learning, which means learning face-to-face in school facilities, is the ideal learning model for students and the model we value at KPR. Research tells us that the benefits of in-person learning on the overall well-being of children and youth is significant. If you are a returning family, no registration is required to attend a new school year. If your address or contact information has changed over the summer months, please be sure to let the school office know.

Remote Learning

Remote learning means students attend class on-line using a computer or tablet. At KPR, remote learning is referred to as virtual school. We will continue to offer virtual elementary and virtual secondary school this year. The Ministry of Education's [Policy/Program Memorandum No. 164](#) outlines remote learning requirements for school boards, including providing access to remote learning devices and minimum synchronous (live) learning time.

KPR offers specific windows of time when parents and guardians can transfer their child into the virtual schools, or from virtual learning back to in-person learning. Please check kprschools.ca for the latest virtual school information.

Health & Safety Measures at Schools

Schools will use multiple strategies to support healthier and safer environments for students and staff as detailed below. There is not one specific measure that will prevent transmission from occurring in schools; but, rather there are multiple elements that contribute to making schools healthier spaces and reduce the risk of illness for everyone.

Ventilation

Improving ventilation and/or filtration in classrooms and learning environments supports healthy and safe learning environments for students and staff. With financial support from the federal and provincial governments for COVID-related safety improvements, KPR has actively taken the following steps:

- Most KPR schools have centrally controlled air exchange systems, monitored and maintained in optimal condition by qualified staff. At these schools, we installed higher grade air filters (MERV 13 filters). The systems also have alarms so that we can identify and fix problems immediately.
- We upgraded the minimum amount of fresh air in our air exchange systems from 20% to at least 35%.
- We placed over 1200 stand-alone HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter units in classrooms, starting with Kindergarten classrooms.
- Air inside our schools is totally exchanged 1-2 hours before students and staff arrive each day.
- We hired an independent HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning) consultant to review all of our plans and ensure we are taking the best possible steps for the next 5 years.

As a result of these steps, all classrooms in KPR are serviced by either a stand-alone HEPA unit, a mechanical HVAC system, or both.

Our schools will continue to encourage and support outdoor education, and open windows where possible to augment ventilation for classrooms and learning environments.

More information about ventilation is available on our website. Please [click here to visit our website](#).

Screening

All staff, students, and visitors should self-screen daily before attending school, using the provincial [school screening tool](#). Please read through the screening tool content carefully as it is subject to change. Visitors and volunteers will continue to sign in at school offices and should indicate that they have completed screening.

Any staff, student or visitor who does not pass the screening questions should not attend school and should follow the guidance provided in the screening tool.

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Based on the advice of the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, masks are not required for students, staff and visitors in schools, school board offices, or on student transportation.

KPR schools and buildings are mask-friendly environments, where we continue to respect everyone's personal choice about wearing masks. There are situations where masks may still be required, as outlined in the school screening tool - such as after international travel, after illness with COVID-19 symptoms, or after close contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms. We know that masks do reduce the risk of spreading illness, and masking is still encouraged by our public health unit partners, particularly for those who are at higher risk of serious illness.

High-quality masks for students and staff and eye protection for staff, will continue to be provided for use, upon request. Staff and students may also provide their own masks.

Please see [KPR's Mask Protocol](#) for more details.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizing) and respiratory etiquette (covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing and disposing of soiled tissues/masks) are among the most important protective strategies. Schools will continue to remind students of appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, including the use of alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR), and reinforce its use. This may involve scheduling breaks to allow students to wash their hands at appropriate times during the school day.

Hand hygiene should be conducted by anyone entering the school and incorporated into the daily schedule at regular intervals during the day, above and beyond what is usually recommended (for example, before eating food, after using the washroom).

Signage with reminders will continue to be posted throughout schools including;

- Soap and water is preferred when it's readily available.
- Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) can be used by children. It is most effective when hands are not visibly soiled.
- For dirt, blood, body fluids, soap and water should be used.
- Support or modifications will be provided to allow students with special needs to regularly perform hand hygiene as independently as possible.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your used tissue in the wastebasket.

Staff and students will be provided the supplies they need to conduct appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Alcohol based hand rub (ABHR) with a minimum 60% alcohol concentration will be available throughout the school, along with plain liquid soap in dispensers, sinks and paper towels in dispensers. All schools also have hands-free water bottle filling stations.

Cleaning Program

All schools will continue to implement enhanced cleaning protocols, to support healthy, safe school facilities. Cleaning includes the increased cleaning and disinfecting of all high touch surfaces in schools - at least once daily.

At the end of each school day, custodial workers will thoroughly clean schools to ensure a safe environment for students the next day.

As is our established and ongoing practice, high levels of absenteeism due to illness in a classroom, or the entire school, will prompt additional cleaning measures.

Disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer will continue to be available for each classroom.

Student Transportation

School buses and vehicles transporting students will continue to be cleaned and disinfected at least once daily.

Management of COVID-19 in Schools

Absences

KPR schools and the school board remain committed to working closely with local public health units. Schools will continue to monitor daily absence trends to share with local public health units. When levels of absenteeism are more than 30 per cent higher than average daily absence rates, schools will communicate with public health units, who may provide recommendations to the school or for families.

Although the Ministry of Education has discontinued provincial daily attendance reporting, the Board and schools will monitor attendance for sudden increases in absences or unusually high absence rates in a particular class.

At this time, and as part of our ongoing collaboration with local public health partners, if notified of individual COVID cases, schools will not be sending home notifications of possible exposures to classes.

We CANNOT provide information about:

- Individual staff or students. To protect privacy, we will not share personal or personal health information about individual students or staff members. We cannot identify if someone has a confirmed case of COVID-19, has gone for testing, or is self-isolating.
- Students or staff who are ill or absent from school.

Isolation requirements and testing eligibility is determined by the Ontario Ministry of Health and is outlined in the COVID-19 Guidance: [School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management](#).

Illness Protocol

In the event of illness at school, families will be asked to pick up students and keep them home until their symptoms are improving, in accordance with the provincial screening tool. Students who develop symptoms of illness while at school will be distanced from other students as much as possible, and asked to wear a mask until they can be picked up. Schools will no longer have separate isolation rooms.

Rapid Antigen Tests will continue to be available at schools if needed.

Vaccination

KPR will continue to cooperate with local public health units to help make vaccines accessible for eligible students, their families, educators and school staff. Updates and clinic information will be shared directly with families and [posted on our website](#). Contact information for the health units that serve KPR schools is listed in the Additional Resources section at the end of this document.

At this time, there are no vaccination mandates or attestation requirements for staff, volunteers, placement students or visitors in schools.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, please visit: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/covid-19-vaccines-ontario>

Mental Health and Well-being Supports

Student mental health and well-being is foundational in ensuring a welcoming environment that supports learning.

Supports for student mental health and well-being will include the following components:

- Professional learning for system leaders, educators and mental health professionals to support the approach to school re-entry, as well as throughout the school year.
- Collaboration with child and youth mental health agencies to support stronger connections and make the best use of mental health resources and supports across the integrated system of care.
- Increased social work and support staff available for schools, including remote delivery of mental health services, using virtual care platforms, if needed.
- A focus on understanding the needs of students and collaborating with community partners to deliver culturally relevant supports for students.
- Actively monitor student attendance and engagement.

Ongoing Communication

We are committed to continuing to provide families with accurate and up-to-date information throughout this school year.

Please check our website regularly (www.kprschools.ca) for new updates and follow us on Twitter (@kprschools) for the latest information.

Contact Us

For school-specific concerns, please contact your child's school. For all other inquiries, please email us at kpr_info@kprdsb.ca providing as much information as possible, to help us connect you with the correct staff person for response.

Additional Resources

Ministry of Health

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

Travel Advice and Advisories

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>

Durham Region Health Department

<https://www.durham.ca/en/health-and-wellness/novel-coronavirus-update.aspx>

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit

www.hkpr.on.ca/covid-19/

Peterborough Public Health

www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/

Prince Edward Hastings Public Health Unit

<https://hpepublichealth.ca/>