

# COVID-19: Updated: OCS Safe Reopening Plan

August 12, 2020



## Orangeville Christian School

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## INTRODUCTION

On June 19, 2020, the Ontario government released the [Approach to reopening schools for the 2020-2021 school year](#). Since that time, the public health data has changed considerably, with daily confirmed cases significantly declining leading to the release of the [Guide to reopening Ontario's schools](#) on July 30, 2020.

The first version of our [OCS Safe Reopening Plan](#) was distributed on July 2, 2020. Since that time, the release of new information and a significant increase to our enrolment numbers has resulted in the following update to our reopening plan.

As always, we are committed to partnering with our parents, and we encourage you to contact us if you have suggestions or comments about the updated plan. Please understand that this is a living document and that we will continue to maintain open lines of communication in case there are any questions or concerns.

## IN-CLASS, EVERY DAY

The Lord willing, Orangeville Christian School (OCS) will reopen on September 8, 2020 with **adapted in-person learning** designed to allow for physical distancing and cohorts of children. Under this model, we will continue to maintain a limited number of students per classroom at one time and will adopt timetabling that allow our students to remain in contact only with their classmates and a single teacher for as much of the day as possible. If a student must remain at home due to illness, daily assignments will be provided by the classroom teacher using the Google classroom platform.

Since early July, OCS has been committed to providing our students with an in-person education that balances the risk of direct infection and transmission of COVID-19 with the impact of school closures on students' physical, mental, and spiritual health. The Ontario Ministry of Education now agrees that "students are ready to resume their learning in September", and that "all elementary schools should open for conventional in-person delivery of teaching and instruction, five days a week."



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## ADAPTED CLASSROOM SCENARIOS

On July 23, 2020, the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Unit informed private schools that the cohorting maximum classroom size of 15 stated in the *Ministry of Education Approach to Reopening Schools* document would not be enforced by Public Health, and that their recommendation was to be used as an idea of best practice.

Although OCS is not required to maintain limited class sizes, we have chosen to maintain low class sizes to enhance our students’ learning. The Board of OCS has decided not to follow the Ministry of Education’s decision to return to conventional class sizes. This decision will ensure that our students continue to receive exceptional educational learning.

Our visionary [OCS Safe Reopening Plan](#) has been well-received by current and prospective families. Since July 2, our school enrolment has grown from 137 to 148 students. The increase in student numbers has resulted in the following class sizes:

ADAPTIVE IN-PERSON	
Classes	Students
JK	15*
SK	16
1	15
1/2	15
3	15
3/4	15
5	13
6	13
7	13
8	13

*\* 10 full-time; 10 part-time at 50% for a total of 20 students.*

As we continue to plan to safely reopen our school, our class sizes will provide significant assistance as we ensure and maintain effective “physical distancing” and “cohorting” measures for the safety of our students.




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## PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHT UPDATES

**Please note:** Only updates to our [OCS Safe Reopening Plan](#) are included below. Please refer to the first version of the plan for previous announcements.

### Support for Students with Special Needs

In order to ensure that students with special education needs are supported as school reopens, our Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) will be available to provide specialized instruction every afternoon during the week. Our SERT will continue to plan and direct the individual needs of our students, as well as provide specialized instruction to students. This support will include both in-class and withdrawal activities.

### Student Transportation

As stated in the first version of our plan, we would like to encourage families to consider private transportation by parents and caregivers, where possible, to ease pressure on transportation demand.

For those families that require bussing services for their children to attend OCS, we are excited that bussing services will be provided by the Wellington Dufferin Student Transportation Services (WDTs). Our students will continue to ride on the Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Board (DPCSB) buses from points in Orangeville, Dufferin County and parts of Caledon to transfer points at three local catholic schools.

At this time, the WDTs has confirmed that they will be required to increase utilization of buses beyond one student per seat and operate closer to capacity. They have also provided the following information for our parents and students:

- To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of non-medical masks for students in Grades 4-12 will be required on school vehicles.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks on student transportation. Exceptions will be made for students with medical conditions or special needs that prevent masking.
- Students will be assigned seats and a record of the seating plan will be kept to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student or driver contracting COVID-19. Students who live in the same household or are in the same classroom cohort may be seated together.
- Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shields) will be provided for school bus drivers, school bus monitors and student aides.
- Increased disinfecting protocols for frequently touched surfaces (for example, handrails and seatbacks) will be conducted at least twice daily.



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- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available on vehicles.
- Where possible, the seat directly behind the school bus driver will remain empty to maintain physical distancing, and windows will be opened when feasible to increase ventilation.

Specific drop-off and pick-up times will be shared with applicable families once they have been finalized with the bussing company.

## HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATES

**Please note:** Only updates to our [OCS Safe Reopening Plan](#) are included below. Please refer to the first version of the plan for previous announcements.

### Non-medical and medical face masks for students

Ontario's *Guide to reopening Ontario's schools* includes the requirement that all students in grades 4 to 12 wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. The guide also includes the statement that "Private schools should adopt the guidance in this document. They are encouraged to work with their public health unit in developing their school reopening plans."

On July 13, 2020, the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Unit distributed a COVID-19: Public Health School Safety Plan Checklist. Included in Section 11.0: Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), the following statements were included: "Parents may choose to send a face covering (e.g., non-medical mask) to school for their child(ren) to wear. Parents are responsible for the safe use/compliance during the school day and ensuring cleanliness of the face covering."

On July 14, 2020, a Section 22 Class Order (to take effect on July 17, 2020) was issued by Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health for the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health to all persons who own or operate a Commercial Establishment that included the requirement for a face covering to "be worn inside the Establishment at all times, unless it is reasonably required to temporarily remove the face covering for services provided by the Establishment." Schools were listed as an example of those "not subject to this Order even if they would otherwise fall within the definition of a Commercial Establishment."

On July 29, 2020, SickKids released their *UPDATED: COVID-19: Guidance for School Reopening* document. The document provides many recommendations that summarize the considerations for school reopening based on the available evidence, as well as expert opinion. The recommendations are provided for elementary school (Grade K-5), middle school (Grades 6-8) and high school (Grades 9-12) classes/students. One of the categories of consideration is the use of non-medical and medical face masks for students.



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On page 11 of The SickKids report, the following summary is provided:

The use of non-medical cloth masks/face coverings (NMMs) in the school setting is a complex and nuanced issue. Unfortunately, current evidence does not provide clarity on the optimal approach and needs to consider the broad range of student ages and developmental levels, the varying ability to practice physical distancing indoors, as well as the dynamic level of risk associated with community spread at any particular time and within specific communities. Based on current public health guidance recommending or mandating the use of NMMs in indoor public settings, we are currently recommending the use of masks for high school students (with consideration for middle school students) whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (provided there is no contra-indication for developmental, medical or mental health reasons).

At this time, Orangeville Christian School will not mandate the use of masks in grades K-5, and we will continue to carefully consider the use of masks in grades 6-8. SickKids currently recommends that schools consider the use of masks for middle school students whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained. As highlighted above, our class sizes provide every opportunity to maintain physical distancing and cohorting.

We also acknowledge that it will be critical to assess the use of masks on an ongoing basis (including throughout the school year) and adjust accordingly based on the development of further evidence, changes and epidemiology.

## CONCLUSION

We truly appreciate that you have taken the time to carefully read over this update. We are committed to partnering with our parents, and we encourage you to contact us if you have suggestions or comments about the plan.

Please understand that this version of our *Safe Reopening Plan* only includes updates and that the first version [can be found on our website](#).



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