

## Edge Hill School COVID-19 Reopening Policy

*Document Revision History*  
*Approved: August 20th, 2020*  
*Revised: October 14th 2020*

Edge Hill School will return to a full four-day schedule this September with enhanced public health protocols in place. It is our intention to provide a comprehensive program for all students currently enrolled, including distance learning opportunities for students who are absent because of health protocols or vulnerabilities. Our plans could shift based on changes to our enrolment, government-mandated regulations, public health parameters, and our evolving understanding of best practices, Waldorf pedagogy, and the overall well-being of our community.

It is our shared responsibility as a community to ensure that faculty and students are protected by a variety of health and safety measures that help minimize risk for our entire community and particularly the most vulnerable among us. To minimize the spread of COVID-19, daily screening is required for all faculty, students, volunteers, and parents who will be in proximity to other faculty, students, parents or volunteers or the public. It is important for members of our community to stay home when they are sick. The screening tool on our website will continue to be updated with provincial and local guidelines, it is important to screen children daily but only needs to be submitted for absences or symptoms. Staff and faculty are still required to submit a negative screening daily.

The approach is meant to meet operational needs as more parents return to workplaces, as we enable students to return to school, and as we support an increased priority that people stay home when they are sick. The strategy is built on a foundation of awareness, trust, and shared responsibility. Regardless of personal beliefs about various preventive measures, we ask that all members of the Edge Hill School community (parents, staff, students, etc.) follow all Public Health guidelines in their daily lives, both on and off the school grounds. Up-to-date guidelines can be found here: <https://www.grey.ca/COVID-19>. Updates will also be sent out by the school as they become available.

### **Health/Safety Policy and Procedures for Mitigating Risk of COVID-19 Transmission**

We face an important need to sustain human connection and community, while maintaining physical distance or small cohorts. We are committed to upholding this important connection throughout this shift in the way we interact with each other. To support the reopening of Edge Hill School, we will implement protocols to protect the health and safety of our students, faculty, and families. Guidance is provided based on the recommendations from Grey Bruce Public Health and the Ontario Ministry of Education

To maximize our safety, our approach is layered with several measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread and minimize the emotional impact on the children. Our approach focuses on

decreasing the number of interactions our students have with others while increasing the safety of the interactions they do have. As outlined below, we are adapting our school environment, both physically and operationally, to follow distancing measures.

## **1. Cohorting Protocols**

- a. Students will be restricted to their own building for their lessons with no interaction with students in other buildings: Grade 1-2 main building, Grade 3-4 middle building, and Grades 5-6 and 8 in back building. The Kindergarten will operate at a separate location at Greenwood five minutes from Edge Hill School.
- b. Classrooms will be arranged to offer space for as much physical distancing as possible.
- c. Students in each cohort will be given instruction by their classroom teacher on the following protocols:
  - i. Putting on and taking off their mask.
  - ii. Wash hands properly - 20 seconds.
  - iii. Clean and disinfect their desk and lunch areas.
  - iv. Lunch routine - (how it will be particularly important to maintain social distance at this time).
- d. Teachers will also confine themselves to their specific building, with the exception of the French teacher. Specialty teachers will be scheduled for intensive hours with fewer groups at a time (eg. woodworking). Guest teachers will follow all the same protocols as class teachers and will need to sign in and respond to the screening questions available on the school website or upon entry.
- e. Teachers may conduct lessons outdoors (where masks may be removed) and assign specific outdoor areas to their own class in consultation with other teachers. These areas should be distanced from other groups by at least 20 feet.
- f. Students will have recess exclusively with the students in their own building. There will be few restrictions on outdoor play with the children in their cohort as the risks outdoors have been deemed to be minimal. Close contact games may be discouraged in favour of games played without physical contact.
- g. Students will not be permitted to share school supplies, lunches, or drinks.
- h. Students will be required to wash hands and clean their desk before and after lunch and snack, before and after leaving their building, and at other regular points throughout the day.

## **2. School Drop-off and Pick-up/School Operating Hours**

To help provide a healthy daily rhythm for all, please drop off and pick up during the following scheduled times:

- a. Drop-off times:
  - i. Kindergarten at Greenwood 8:30-8:45am
  - ii. Grades 1-8 at Edge Hill School 8:45-9:00am

- b. Pick-up times:
  - i. Kindergarten at Greenwood 3:00-3:15pm
  - ii. Grades 1-8 at Edge Hill School 3:15-3:30pm
- c. Grade 3-8 students should be dropped off at the school driveway and proceed directly to their classrooms, keeping physical distancing with students from other grades.
- d. Grade 1-2 will be met at the road by a teacher or parent volunteer as needed to help them proceed directly to their classrooms.
- e. Kindergarten children will be met at their car by a teacher or parent volunteer to help them proceed to their classrooms.
- f. A volunteer or staff member with a safety vest will be stationed at the road for pick-up and drop-off.
- g. At the end of the school day, students will wait with a teacher from their building, at a designated area, from which students will proceed directly to their (parental/guardian) vehicle, while keeping physical distance from students who are not in their cohort (including siblings).
- h. For drop-offs and pick-ups that occur outside of regularly scheduled times, parents should leave a message in advance with the school office or contact the class teacher by text or telephone to arrange a safe transfer. Parents are asked to avoid the school grounds or entering any of the classrooms.

### **3. Daily COVID-19 Screening**

- a. On a daily basis, parents are asked to screen their children and submit the questionnaire for all absences (symptoms or otherwise). A paper version is available as well. Children will not be able to attend school if the screening checklist is positive in any category. The updated screening tool does allow for symptoms due to pre-existing conditions.
- b. Faculty and administration staff on-site will also be required to complete the health screening and submit it daily even when it is negative.

### **4. Policy for Covid Symptoms and Case Reporting (periodically updated via GBHU)**

- a. Sick policy for students and teachers:

If any student or teacher develops any COVID-19 associated symptoms while at home or at school, an initial assessment is made to determine whether it is a pre-existing condition for which they can attend. The process for symptomatic students has expanded to identify students who may have situational symptoms. This then means that children who have one symptom (such as a sore tummy from overeating or a headache due to stress) will be given a **24 hour observation period** to see if the symptom resolves. If it resolves, they can then return to school the next day. If the symptom remains, worsens or more

symptoms develop, they may return when one of the following criteria has been met:

- i. Negative swab test and has been symptom-free (of all listed COVID-19 symptoms) for a minimum of 24 hours.
  - ii. Has stayed at home for 14 days and has been without COVID-19 symptoms for 24 hours.
  - iii. Has been diagnosed by a healthcare provider or assessment centre that symptoms are not due to COVID-19 and documentation is provided.
- b. If a student develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school, the student will be isolated from other students and parents will be asked to come pick up as soon as possible.
  - c. If a teacher develops COVID-19 symptoms while at school, school administration will endeavour to find a substitute teacher as soon as possible and the teacher will take additional precautions to be physically distanced from students until he or she is relieved of duty or it is the end of the day.
  - d. If a COVID-19 positive case occurs within the school population (attending students or staff), the GBHU will contact the staff/student (parent/guardian) to conduct a risk assessment and provide instruction to contacts as well as to the school for infection prevention & control measures and will determine if an outbreak will be declared. In addition, Grey Bruce Public Health will be providing guidance on further steps that could include closing the entire school (Edge Hill Grades Location and/or Edge Hill Kindergarten location) for a period of 2 weeks or 14 days. The school would reopen and all students would return when able to demonstrate an affirmative condition for section 4a or (whether sooner or later) at the direction of Grey Bruce Public Health.
  - e. If a family member of a student or faculty member is sick, it is the responsibility of each family and faculty member to notify Edge Hill School immediately if that person, or anyone he or she has been in close contact with, exhibits symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19.
  - f. Communication: the school will contact Grey Bruce Public Health, which will provide case management and guidance within their robust protocols while maintaining privacy measures.

**5. Response to missed classes due to individual sickness, short-term closure caused by an outbreak, or longer-term closure mandated by the government.**

- a. Teachers are planning ways to ensure that any students unable to attend school, particularly because of increased absences that may be caused by precautions required by covid policy, be provided with methods to work from home. These may include calling in live to the classroom, picking up work or, as time permits, phone calls, e-mails, or online tutoring assistance.
- b. Teachers are developing, in consultation with parents, contingency plans should there be a need to close the school for a short term (covid outbreak) or longer term

(government-mandated). These plans will be developed to support all families in an age-appropriate manner and, where possible, to meet individual family circumstances.

These plans could include the following:

- i) Online lessons using programs such as Google Classroom and Zoom, supplemented by other online applications to support skills development; these lessons could be extensive in terms of daily hours or minimal, or offer a choice for families.
- ii) Deliveries, telephone calls, and individualized zoom meetings as are feasible.
- c. The Kindergarten faculty will support kindergarten families remotely with phone calls, craft packages, and class e-mails which will include stories, songs, and activities.

## **6. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

- a. Washrooms and other more frequently touched surfaces and areas will be cleaned and disinfected twice a day at minimum.
- b. Each bathroom will have a spray bottle, paper towels and a large garbage disposal.
- c. A botanically based, combined cleaner and disinfectant approved by Health Canada will be used; examples include Benefect Decon 30 or Concrobium.
- d. Handwashing Stations: each building has at least two sinks, soap, and paper towels as well as open wastebaskets (or pedal-type opening). There will be hand sanitizer at each entrance. Students and faculty will be required to wash their hands when they enter and exit a classroom as well as before and after snack and lunch.
- c. Outdoor surfaces: high-touch surfaces made of metal will be cleaned with soap and water daily. Cleaning of wooden surfaces is not recommended by Public Health.
- d. Shared objects: use of shared objects (balls, toys, games, art supplies) will be limited when possible or cleaned between each use.

## **7. Visitors to the School**

- a. All visitors (including parents) are asked to avoid entry.
- b. For situations where entry is necessary (speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, inspections), we require visitors to wear a mask or face covering and refresh hand hygiene.
- c. Parents will check in with their class teachers and all other visitors must check in at the office.
- d. All visitors must complete a health screening form which can be picked up at the office.
- e. A record will be kept of all visitors

## 8.1 Masks

- a. Teachers will be required to wear masks when in the classroom. Teachers are permitted to remove their masks during story-telling or direct instruction time providing they take precautions to maintain physical distance from the students.
- b. We will follow the recommendation of the current provincial government mandate requiring masks for students in Grade 4 and up. Grey Bruce Public Health recommends the use of non-medical masks for children in Kindergarten to Grade 3 indoors (at parents' discretion).
- c. Masks will be made available for teachers and school staff.
- d. Students will be encouraged to wear their own reusable masks (following our dress code policy avoiding logos and commercial characters) and non-medical masks will also be made available for students.
- e. Efforts will be made to increase the amount of teaching that takes place outdoors where students will not be required to wear masks. This will include constructing several dedicated outdoor learning spaces that offer protection from the elements.
- f. The policy around masks will be revisited on a monthly basis to make sure these measures are necessary and consistent with recommendations for schools from leading infectious disease experts.

## 8.2 Mask Exemptions and PPE

- a. Following guidance from Grey Bruce Health Unit (GBHU) Edge Hill (EH) requires that all students in grade 4 and higher wear masks while indoors on school property, unless an approved exemption applies. The request for exemption may be granted where a dated medical certificate or note supports the request. Medical notes are to be submitted to Admin. Only notes issued by an MD licensed by the CPSO will be accepted. Medical notes from other Canadian provinces will also be accepted provided that the student requesting the exemption has recently moved to Ontario from another province and does not yet have a doctor in Ontario. The MD providing the note must be licensed by their provincial licensing body.
- b. EH takes the lead from GBHU as to medically approved reasons for a mask exemption. Please see here for the most currently accepted reasons: <https://www.publichealthgreybruce.on.ca/COVID-19/Schools-and-Childcare-Centres/Schools/Return-to-School-FAQ>  
Please scroll down and click "+Mask"
- c. While individuals may choose to not wear a mask, it is important to understand the impact on the health and safety of others in our community. The risk to public health and safety is an important factor that will be

considered when dealing with exemption requests. Due to the unique constraints of the school, EH reserves the right to consider as many options or alternatives as possible to try to maximize the fulfillment of both human rights and the right to a safe working and learning environment. Protecting the students/families and staff who are at high risk for COVID-19 will be considered in relation to assessing the appropriateness and nature of a mask exemption and will be done on a case by case basis.

- d. A working group comprised of the teacher of the child for whom the exemption is sought, two board members and a member of administration will determine whether accommodations can be created for the student.
- e. If the working group decides that accommodations can be made for exemption request, the class teacher will inform the parents of the class of the exemption and that the accommodation will come into effect within 4 school days or longer if there are significant accommodations required.
- f. In the case of an approved exemption and in addition to the wearing of a face shield, supplemental measures such as clear plexi-glass study carrels and enhanced cleaning will be required. Other infection prevention and control measures may also be implemented as they relate to unique situation of EH. Mask exempt student(s) will still be required to wear a mask when entering, exiting and moving within any school building. When seated at their desk, mask exempt student(s) may replace their mask with a face shield.
- g. The class teacher may wish to rearrange their seating plan to separate a mask exempt student from any higher risk students/staff. Exempt student(s) will not be isolated or placed further from other students than the non mask exempt students.
- h. Notwithstanding any of the above, if EH has any reason to believe that the risk to the health and safety of others in the school or building outweighs the needs of the person seeking or who qualifies for an exemption, EH reserves the right to make additional inquiries, place additional measures, or modify its decision as necessary, retroactively or otherwise.

## 9. Financial Considerations

- a. Annual tuition expectations will continue as normal with the following exceptions:
  - i. Deposit will be returned if withdrawal is requested by August 24th, 2020.

- ii. If the school is closed for longer than 12 scheduled consecutive school days due to COVID-19 AND the board determines that an adequate program of distance learning cannot be delivered (eg. Kindergarten), tuition would be reduced by 75% for the days during the closure.
  - iii. In order to maintain the school's financial well-being, no refunds will be offered for shorter-term closures.
- b. Tuition assistance continues to be available for temporary emergency needs.
- c. If any members would like to withdraw based on this amendment or any future Covid Policy amendments, the 30-day withdrawal notice will be waived.

## **10. Community Expectations**

- a. Staff will commit to active social distancing in their personal lives and to Ministry of Education and Health Unit mandates and guidelines.
- b. School families are asked to commit to social distancing and to meet provincial and Health Unit guidelines and mandates. Up-to-date guidelines can be found here: <https://www.grey.ca/COVID-19>.
- c. Community members with questions or concerns about this policy document are asked to contact Administration who will connect you with a member of the Edge Hill School COVID Policy committee.

***Should there be discrepancies between documents, this policy supersedes other School Handbook guidelines for the 2020-2021 school year.***

*Here is a link to our current COVID-19 health screening form to be used at the school:*  
<https://parents.edgehillschool.org/screening/>