

SJA Back to School Plan: 2020-2021



First, please know that we care about our students and staff deeply. I have received many emails with questions and concerns that come from the unknown and love of family, friends and community. Know that we have completed all safety measures outlined by Public Health and will continue to work to make changes as needed.

Monitoring Your Child's Health

Our shared health is our shared responsibility. We need families to monitor the health of their student each day before they come to school using the COVID-19 Daily Checklist. A copy of the checklist can be accessed at <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Daily-COVID-checklist-en.pdf>. Please keep your child at home when they are ill, even if their symptoms are mild, and contact 811 if needed.

There are no exam exemptions this year, nor will students lose credit if they are home due to illness. The HRCE will be removing attendance-based awards or incentives this school year because we do not want students coming to school when they are sick. By monitoring daily, you are doing your part to protect our shared health.

Hygiene

Frequent hand washing and using hand sanitizer are public health measures we can all practice both at home and at school. We will be emphasizing the importance of hand hygiene, throughout the day specifically when entering school and classrooms and before and after eating. Hand sanitizing stations have been installed at entrances, in hallways, and there will be hand sanitizer in all classrooms.

We will also be working with students on the importance that “no sharing is caring” in a pandemic. Students will not be able to share individual school supplies, nor will teachers be able to provide supplies to students. A simple supply list was send home in the last communication. Students will receive additional supplies if needed from their teacher. We also understand that some families maybe struggling financially to buy supplies – please contact school administration or one of our school counsellors for assistance. We will also not be collecting school fees this year.

The sharing of equipment, including technology will be limited. Any equipment that is being shared will be cleaned after each use. Students are permitted to bring their own laptop or Chromebook. Please note that students will be responsible for their device.

Facemasks

All students must wear their masks when entering the school and in any areas where they are not able to social distance by 2 metres (including in hallways, classrooms and other common areas).

Please know we understand that wearing a mask for long periods is not ideal. With this, teachers will be as creative as possible to provide breaks and/or opportunities for students to have breaks from wearing a mask while ensuring safety. Some examples for breaks would be conducting classes outside, student work rooms, space created in classrooms, and going outside. There are also a few classes that will be

SJA Back to School Plan: 2020-2021



able to create the required social distance in labs, the gym and a few larger classes, where mask will not be required.

Masks may be removed when students are eating and drinking or taking part in indoor/outdoor physical activity. Masks are not required during outdoor activities.

We will provide each student with two cloth facemasks on the first day of school. We will also have a supply on hand if a student forgets or loses their mask during the day.

Public Health has encouraged all of us to practice the wearing of masks as a measure to protect our collective health. Here is a link to a video that you can watch with your student before the first day of school: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/video/covid-19-wear-non-medical-mask-face-covering-properly.html>

Under the Back to School plan, schools will be limiting outside visitors in the building to essential visitors only, including parents/guardians. This means you will not be able to enter the school to drop off or pick-up students. Students sign in and out of school in the student services office. We ask that parents/guardians please call in students when they are absent or need to leave early – our automatic call system will call home if we do not receive a call from home.

What to expect the first day of school? (September 8, 2020)

Arriving at school

- Students who are being dropped off or take their own car are asked to please arrive as close to 9:15 as possible. This will help with large groups entering the school at once.
- Limited student parking is available on a first come basis with a school parking pass. Students complete a form from the office and receive a pass at no charge.
- Arrivals and Dismissals - It will be important that we all do our part to limit congestion/crowds from gathering at the start and end of the day.
- Students are not permitted to enter or park in the staff/guest parking – spots are assigned to staff, operations, subs and visitors.
- ***No cars are permitted to enter the bus loop during school hours, including lunch hour***
- All bus students are required to wear a mask to take the bus

Arrival: First Bell 9:20 – First class starts at 9:25

- Students are required to wear their own mask the first day of school. All students will be provided with two cloth masks in their “A” block class. Disposable masks will also be available to those students who forget their mask during the school year.

Arrival – Tuesday, September 8: when students arrive at school they will be directed to go to their first period class (We are following a Monday schedule of A,B,C,D) – “A” block. Students who have a free “A”

SJA Back to School Plan: 2020-2021



block class are asked to go to the cafeteria.

- Students may stay outside while social distancing until the first morning bell. No large groups please. We will have extra staff on duty each morning.
- Students entering the school MUST go directly to their first class. Teachers will be in their class starting at 9:05. All students please use the hand sanitizer located between each main entrance door.
- Student schedules can be found on their student portal. Teachers have emailed their class the course and room number of the first class – “A” block. Those who do not have the information can go to the library where a staff member will be there to help.
- During “A” block, teachers will go over our new procedures and expectations for safety. Teachers will have conversations with students about the new school year, changes and what that means to them. There will also be time to answer, to the best of their ability, any questions students may have and also have conversations/discussions about the current impact of Covid on our new reality.
- As a school, we will use directional flows and use multiple exits, to minimize traffic from entering/exiting the school. The main entrance is the only point of entry to the building. The remaining doors are exit only.
- Hand sanitizer is placed throughout the school, we have increased daily cleaning throughout the building with increased hours of current caretakers and have hired an additional caretaker.
- All staff have been trained in WHMIS for use of cleaning materials.

Changing of classes

- Students will follow their daily schedule of A,B,C,D. Bell schedule can be found @ <https://sjm.hrce.ca/sjm/general-information/bell-schedule>
- Students will exit classes and follow the directional arrows leading to their next class. Students are to go directly to their next class. Staff will be in the hallway to ensure flow.

Lunch - 12:00-12:45

- Currently we do not have cafeteria service. Opening is delayed until further notice – we are currently working on a plan to re-open ASAP.
- Students will not be congregating in large numbers in the cafeteria to limit interactions among cohorts and social gatherings.
- We will have limited seating available in the cafeteria and library to eat. Students will have time to eat their lunch, and then are required to please put their garbage in the garbage bins and leave the area; tables will be cleaned, allowing the next group of students to enter. Additional areas are available if needed. Hand sanitizer is available and students are asked to use it after they finish eating.
- **Please note: As directed – microwaves will not be available for student use**

SJA Back to School Plan: 2020-2021



- Students can remove their mask to eat in these areas that are set up to meet the requirements of social distancing
- Students are encouraged to eat their lunch outside when possible
- Once students have eaten, they will be asked to go outside, social distance, and keep groups to 10 or less.

As the days progress, we will look at opportunities for students to participate in clubs and/or find other areas throughout the school they can be with their friends with ensuring safety and following the Public Health safety guidelines.

- When the bell rings, students will follow the arrows to go directly to their afternoon class.

Dismissal

- Like lunch, students will follow the arrows and exit through the closest exit door. When exiting the building all stairs are down.
- Students will not be permitted to remain in the building in an attempt to avoid crowds. Attending extra help with teachers as arranged is permitted.

School/Classroom Design

Non-essential furniture has been removed from classrooms and desks/tables have been spaced out as much as possible to allow students to have maximum physical distance. A few classrooms were able to create the required distance where students are not required to wear masks.

Some classes were able to create a space where students can go for a break to remove their mask that are safe for all.

All classrooms have created a “green” teaching space, where students are not permitted to enter. The green space is a 6-foot space where teachers are able to give instruction.

Classes will be set up in single rows with all classes having assigned seats. This allows for tracking if any students contract the Covid virus. Teachers will be able to give names of surrounding students. Likewise, all Chrome Books and textbook will be assigned.

With either social distancing or wearing masks, teachers will be able to plan for group work of 3 to 4 students or students working in pairs at times.

Students will notice additional signage including directional signs to control flow in hallways, common areas, and outside spaces. Signage includes traffic flow arrows, physical distancing reminders, maximum capacity and designated Entrances & Exits.

Lockers will not be in use for the 2020-21 school year.

SJA Back to School Plan: 2020-2021



An essential part of the Back to School Plan is to maximize time spent outdoors. More classes (including Physical Education) will be held outdoors, when possible, to encourage physical movement and support our students' well-being. Please ensure you arrive at school prepared to go outdoors.

Breakfast Programs

We know how important a healthy breakfast is to starting the day off right. We are working on a plan to ensure our students continue to have access to our breakfast program while ensuring health guidelines are in place. We hope to have our breakfast program available ASAP. We strongly encourage students to eat a good breakfast before arriving at the school; this always sets students up for a successful day.

Illness at School

If a student feels unwell or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 they will be escorted to our isolation room in the school, a guardian/parent will be called and the student will stay in the room until a parent/guardian can pick them up. The family will be advised to call 811. Unless otherwise advised by 811, the student should remain home until they are symptom free for 24 hours. **It is very important to ensure that your contact information and other emergency contacts for your child are kept up to date with the school during the school year.**

If your child exhibits COVID symptoms, contact 811 to receive advice from Public Health on what to do next, including if/when the child can return to school.

If a COVID-19 case is identified, Public Health will collect information from the school, then provide direction to the school and HRCE on communicating with families and the next steps.

Extra-curricular Activities

We know how much students value the opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. We are looking at what in-school clubs and activities we can offer that are deemed safe and feasible, and follow public health guidelines. We will share more details as they are finalized.

The Nova Scotia School Athletics Federation has created guidelines for school sports consistent with Sport Nova Scotia guidelines approved by Public Health. The most up-to-date information can be found on the NSSAF website at: <https://sites.google.com/gnspes.ca/nssaf/covid-updates>

Water Bottles

We strongly recommended students bring a full water bottle each day to reduce the sharing of water sources in the school as well as to limit interactions among cohorts and social gatherings. Bottle filling stations with safe water are available; our fountains are not to be used.

Technology

Students are able to bring their own device to school for educational purposes. Students who do not have access to a personal device will be provided with one when needed. School-based devices will be cleaned after each use.

SJA Back to School Plan: 2020-2021



Q&A

What are the options for this school year?

Three Possible Scenarios:

- **Full Opening (Scenario A)** - In-school classes resume for all students, with additional measures to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. This is the plan for September 2020. If COVID-19 conditions require a change during the school year, full opening will resume as soon as conditions allow.
- **Partial or Blended Learning (Scenario B)** - This response plan will be implemented at the direction of public health for the school or schools requiring this level of response. Students in grades PP–8 will have in-school learning. Students in grades 9–12 will have primarily remote learning, with partial in-school programming for some students. Reduced class sizes, two-meter social distancing, and “cohorting” or “grouping” will be used for those attending in person. Students learning at home will be supported with access to devices, some scheduled in-school classes, attendance for students requiring internet access, and the ability to book in-person time with teachers and support staff at schools. It is possible that some job assignments will change to address the needs in the different situations. All staff will work from schools.
- **At Home Learning (Scenario C)** - This plan responds to direction from the Chief Medical Officer of Health. The plan delivers remote teaching and learning for all students affected. It includes support for students who are learning at home. In response to 28,000 parent and student surveys, a framework will be released that establishes parameters for teachers, learning devices, and support services.

For Scenario “A” will there be opportunity for students to stay home and receive online learning or learning packages

We are currently in the Scenario “A” plan for back to school. No online learning or packages will be available to students during Scenario “A”. Only students identified by the IWK with medical documentation can be given alternative educational delivery. The schools’ student services team will work with both the IWK and families to develop a plan for these students.

I do not want to send my child to school because we live with an immunocompromised family member. What supports will the school be providing so I can keep my child at home?

We understand this question comes from a place of concern for your family’s well-being.

Nova Scotia’s Back to School plan was developed in consultation with Nova Scotia Public Health and medical experts from the IWK Health Centre. Their advice is that the best place for most children – to support their physical, social, and emotional well-being – is in school. This would include children who live with an immunocompromised person.

SJA Back to School Plan: 2020-2021



The school has enacted many public health measures here at the school to support all students in their return to in class learning. These include:

- All students will be required to wear a mask when travelling on the school bus.
- All students Grades 4 to 12 will be required to wear a mask when in school if they are unable to social distance
- We are using multiple exits and one way flow to minimize gatherings
- Students will be frequently encouraged to wash their hands and use hand sanitizer, specifically when entering school and classrooms, before, and after eating.
- We will be maximizing time spent outdoors
- There will be signage throughout the school reminding students of importance to follow public health measures
- There will be signage that directs student traffic on and between floors
- There will be enhanced cleaning protocols in place in school and on school buses
- We will be limiting visitors in the building, including parents and guardians
- Along with other measure we see as we progress through the year

We hope this provides you with an indication of the measures we will have in place to support a successful return to school for students.

If you choose to have your child learn at home due to a family's members health concerns, home schooling is a possible option. **If your child is in high school**, another option could be correspondence studies. You can find more information about these options at www.ednet.ns.ca/homeschooling and www.csp.ednet.ns.ca/index.shtml.

We will continue to update and make changes needed to provide safety to both students and staff. We are looking forward to seeing our students and having an amazing year at SJA.

Our student council will be sending out information on upcoming school spirit weeks, events and much more.

Go Flames!



Be well
Ms. D. Fitzgerald
Principal