



École J.H. Sissons at École William McDonald School Re-Opening Information for Parents August 19, 2020

Introduction

I would like to welcome our returning staff and students to our school, and to welcome those of you who are new to our community. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to Jeff Seabrook, principal of William McDonald School for the warm welcome. While École J.H. Sissons will operate as its own school at William McDonald, Jeff is largely responsible for the preparation of the building site to receive us. It is thanks to him and our district's Maintenance Department team that the school will be ready to receive our students and staff on August 31st, 2020.

We are well aware that the school will not be returning fully to "business as usual" this year. A number of our school routines and procedures have had to change in order to keep students, staff and community members safe. With that in mind, we are still committed to ensuring your child is exposed to the best of learning opportunities. We are working very hard to ensure that their experiences are positive and meaningful. We also are working to ensure the same for you as parents. We appreciate your patience and understanding as we adapt and learn together.

I am looking forward to as full a resumption of classes as possible, with the possible expansion of programs and opportunities as those opportunities present themselves.

Graham Arts
Principal

Key Dates to Remember

Ongoing – We are still taking registrations for all grades.

August 24th – School grounds visit for JK, K and Gr. 1

August 25th – School grounds visits for Gr. 2 & 3

August 26th (evening) – Emails sent to families advising of classroom placements

August 27th (tentative) – Publication of school walk-through videos

August 28th – School grounds visits for Gr. 4 & 5

August 31st – First Day of Classes for all students (there is no staggered entry for JK/K students)

September 7th – School closed for Labour Day holiday

School Timetable and Courses, Arrivals & Departures

Our School timetable is running the same times as it did last year. We are offering all regular academic and specialist subjects, including Music and Physical Education. Special adaptations are being made to these courses in response to the requirements of the Chief Public Health Officer (CHPO). Here is the schedule for this year:

8:00 – 8:15 – Drop off for JK students. Parents park and bring students to the portables (maps to be published soon).

8:10 – First buses arrive and will continue to arrive until just before 8:30. Students remain outside unless directed to go to class.

8:15 – 8:30 – Children arrive on foot or by drop-off. Students remain outside unless directed to go to class.

8:20 – Warning Bell – Students gather in their classroom bubbles and wait to be directed into the school. Students will enter by class bubble. Students entering the school must wear masks while in all common areas of the school, as directed by a staff member, or whenever they cannot respect 2m social distances.

8:30 – Start of the instructional day.

10:00 – 11:20 – Staggered outdoor morning breaks – Students will be sent out in groups of 3 or 4 classes (depending on age level) for 20 minutes

11:20 – 13:10 – Staggered outdoor lunch breaks (classes sent out in same groups). Students eat meals before or after going outside, depending on the time they go out. *William McDonald students will not be outside at the same time as those from J.H. Sissons.*

13:10 – 14:30 – Staggered outdoor afternoon breaks

15:00 – 15:20 – Junior Kindergarten pickup by parents

15:10 – 15:20 – Kindergarten to Grade 5 students are dismissed in class groups and meet parents outside, youngest being dismissed first. Bus students are dismissed as buses arrive.

15:20 – Remaining students dismissed outside to await pick-up or buses. Students who walk home must leave the grounds.

2020/2021 Sissons Staff List

**Indicates a staff member new to our school*

M. Graham Arts – Principal
M. Jeff McConomy – Assistant Principal
Mme. Heidi Boudreau – Intermediate
Mme. Jolyane Cool – Intermediate
Mme. Chrystel Souren – Intermediate
*Mme. Jasmine Marianayagam – Intermediate/Primary
Mme. Stéphanie Rondeau – Primary
M. Fabien Rioux – Primary
Mme. Rachell Simmons – Primary
*Mme. Jessica Bannister – Intermediate
*Mme. Gabrielle Demers – Primary
Mme. Emma Ambury – Primary
Mme. Jacqueline Béland – Kindergarten
Mme. Kayla Rideout – Kindergarten
Mme. Savannah Elaco – Junior Kindergarten
Mme. Jordan Dowe – Junior Kindergarten
Mme. Dankia Jobin – Program Support Teacher
*Mme. Audrey Cavanaugh – Program Support Teacher
Mme. Melanie Bourque – English/Music
*Mme. Julie Downes – English/CEPA
M. Stéphane Sévigny – Physical Education
Mme. Sylvie Hayotte-Rourke – Library
Mme. Manon Radford – Educational Assistant
Mme. Marie-Ève Côté-Simard – Educational Assistant
Mme. Angèle Rosa – JK Educational Assistant
Mme. Danika Dépôt-Bernier – JK Educational Assistant
Mme. Laura Reitsma – Finance & Admin

At this time we are still confirming who our custodians will be for 2020/2021

Come See the School and Portables!

Work is continuing on the school and the portables. We are very confident that all will be ready for students on August 31st, but there is still work to be done. Our ability to invite you into the school is also limited by health considerations, as the custodians are hard at work making sure the building is clean and ready for our students and staff. Nevertheless, we are inviting students and their families to come have a look at the grounds. In order to keep groups to a manageable size, we ask that you come on the day that is set aside for your grade level. All visits will run from 6:00 to 7:00 PM at William McDonald School. Mr. Arts will be there, and we hope to have some members of the school staff as well in order to say 'hi' and answer any questions you may have. Please remember that even though we are outside, social distancing is still important. Here is the schedule:

Arrival on and Pick-Up the First Day

The first day of school will be a regular full day and will follow our times as given above. Please use our arrival and pick-up procedures as given in this newsletter as of day one. Should any changes become necessary, we will let you know via e-mail, our website, Facebook and Twitter.

Supervision Before and After School, and During Breaks

We are implementing supervision routines that are very similar to those we have used in the past. Supervision for arriving students will start at 8:00 in the morning. Students may not arrive earlier as there is no supervision available. Similarly, students during staggered breaks will be supervised as they would normally during recess and lunch hours, with the additional expectation that they respect social distancing as much as possible. Finally, there will be supervision outside starting at 3:10 to ensure the safety of students dismissed by class, or in order to catch their buses. Just as was the case last year, after-school supervision ends when the last bus does its pick-up (last year, this was at 3:45, while the time this year remains to be confirmed).

Before and After-School Care

YK1 has partnered with the YWCA in order to provide a similar number of after-school care spaces as we had last year. We expect that there will be five different groups. While we have confirmed the program and have a general idea of where students will be, we are still working with the YWCA in order to confirm details. We will share those with you as soon as they are available.

Special Family Considerations

Our school is running a full-time program while also following all of the requirements put in place by the Territories' CPHO. At the same time, we recognize that parents may have unique circumstances they may wish to discuss as they make decisions for their families. If you have a question about your child's program, or their experiences at school, we encourage you to email us at jhs@yk1.nt.ca, or to reach out to us on our Facebook page.

Building Layout

While we are housed at William McDonald, J.H. Sissons students in Grades 1 through 5 will be on the second floor of the school. Classes will be in rooms 201 through 207, and 210 through to 212. Room 208 will be our PST Room, and if the situation arises, it can also serve as a temporary isolation room for students who develop symptoms of COVID while at school. Student washrooms are also on the second floor. Teachers will take their classes around the school on the first day in order to help students become familiar with the building's layout.

We are running PE classes, and they will be offered in the school gym on the first floor or outside (wherever possible). If we are indoors, the gym's barrier will be lowered allowing us to run classes while safely sharing the space with William McDonald

The school's temporary office is located opposite the top of the main stairs on the second floor, where we expect it to remain for the duration of our stay at William McDonald.

Entry and Exit from the Building, and Direction of Travel

Entry to and exit from the building for students in Grades 1 through 5 will always be through the main doors of William McDonald. Entry and exit for Kindergarten and Junior Kindergarten students will be through the main doors to the portable module at the back of the school.

When in the main building, circulation on the top floor is one-way only. All travel, whether for students, staff or visitors, must follow the arrows. Generally speaking, once arriving at the top of the main stairs, turn right. The upper floor is a big circle and following that direction will eventually return you to the main stairs.

Direction of travel in the portables will be the same as it is for street traffic. Travel in the hall is done with the right shoulder closest to the wall. Teachers in Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten will practice with students to ensure they adjust to the new routine.

Expectations for Non-Medical Masks

Masks are required whenever in common areas of the school (hallways, washrooms, and when entering or exiting the school). The expectation applies to all students and staff. Visitors are only permitted with prior notice and only in the event of emergency. Any visitor to the school will also be expected to set an example for our students by following our mask expectation.

Students will be encouraged to respect social distancing as much as possible at all times. Whenever this cannot be achieved, students will be expected to wear masks, including within their classrooms. This follows the recommendation of the CHPO that anyone over the age of two is encouraged to wear a non-medical mask.

Re-usable masks will be provided to staff and students by the YK1 school district. Temporary, disposable non-medical masks will be available should they be required for staff and students.

We also encourage staff and students to get creative and wear bright and colourful masks. Make a fashion statement!

Late Arrivals

We always encourage students to arrive on-time. Students arriving late miss out on important learning, and their arrival can disrupt the activities that are already underway. Further, health screening is done as part of the regular morning routine. All late arrivals, regardless of grade, enter through the school's main doors. Students arriving late MUST report to the main door of the J.H. Sissons office on the second floor and line up while respecting the 2m social distance. Once screened and cleared, they will be allowed into class. Late-arriving JK/K students screened at the office will be escorted in small groups to the portables to ensure their safe arrival.

Daily Screening for Symptoms of COVID

Prior to the start of school, we will share a screening tool developed collaboratively with the CPHO. Once you receive it, we ask that you use it daily in order to ensure that your children are healthy and can attend school. As part of the normal routine first thing in the morning, the teachers will also conduct screening of the students in their classrooms. Working in partnership with the school, parents and staff can keep themselves, community members and students safe.

In addition to screening of students, all staff will be screened upon arrival at work in the morning to ensure that they are also ready for the workday. Our current 'no visitors' policy will limit the number of people in the building. However, if a visit has been approved (only likely in the event of an emergency), visitors must also be symptom-free and/or not be currently in self-isolation.

Hand -Washing and Sanitization

As part of the teaching and learning, teachers will regularly review hand hygiene with their students. Wherever possible, students will have access to sinks with plenty of soap. Hand sanitizing stations will also be placed at entrances and throughout the school. They will also be in each classroom.

Isolation Procedures for Suspected COVID Cases

Students and staff members who develop symptoms consistent with COVID will immediately be sent home. While awaiting pick-up, should they not be able to get home on their own, students and staff members developing symptoms will be sent to our designated isolation room (Room 208). We ask for your cooperation in ensuring the quick pick-up of a student who has developed symptoms.

Students and staff members who have developed symptoms may not return until they have medical clearance to do so. This clearance must be presented to the school prior to the student or staff member being allowed back into the building.

Outdoor Learning and On-the-Land Learning (CEPA)

Teachers are encouraged to take their classes outside, even at times outside of their regular staggered breaks. Outdoor and on-the-land (CEPA) learning is an important part of our school's programs and offering. We are pleased to have Mme. Julie Downes as our CEPA teacher, and her role will be to support teachers as they deepen their understanding of this program, and the approaches to meeting curriculum outcomes while outdoors.

Our wall tents are still on the J.H. Sissons site at the moment. One of them is in great shape and the other is likely in need of replacement. Our plan is to move the former to William McDonald once other projects wrap up, and a proper site is prepared for it. The second will likely be replaced and we are currently making plans for that to happen as soon as it can be managed.

Learning Support for Students

School Assemblies

Until further notice, school assemblies are not permitted under our re-opening rules. Once we get into our new routines, we will explore the possibility of virtual assemblies using our existing SmartBoards and projectors (all of our rooms at William McDonald will be equipped with them).

Support for Students

For those of you who were with us last year, you may have heard of our "Salle 15". This was home base for our Program Support Teachers (PSTs). Often, our PSTs would work with students throughout the school. At times, they would get together in Salle 15. This year, additional support for students will only be offered in their classrooms, and not in Room 208. Support may be given to students at (near) their desks, or in a designated area purposely set up in the classroom. We want to make sure all of our students succeed!

Child and Youth Care Counsellors (CYCCs)

As a result of an initiative through the Ministry of Health, our school will receive a dedicated Child and Youth Care Counsellor this year. We understand that someone has been hired and designated for our school, but we have yet to learn their name. The process for accessing services through the CYCC is not yet finalized but will likely be through the PSTs or the school's administration. As with other new initiatives, we will forward further information to you as it becomes available.

Did we leave anything out?

There is a lot of information to share, but we hope that we have been able to give you what you need to get your year off to a good start. If we have left something out, please email us at jhs@yk1.nt.ca or reach out to us on our Facebook Page. If it's a question of general interest to our community, we will post an update to our information online.

École JH Sissons @ William McDonald

50 Taylor Rd, Yellowknife, NT X1A 3X2

JHS Phone: (867) 873-3477 (not active yet)

WMS Phone: (867) 873-5814 (only for emergencies)

Email: jhs@yk1.nt.ca

Web: jhs.yk1.nt.ca

Facebook: www.facebook.com/yk1jhs