



**YELLOWKNIFE EDUCATION  
DISTRICT NO. 1**

P.O. Box 788, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N6  
Tel: (867) 766-5050 • Fax: (867) 873-5051

**ADMINISTRATION SCOLAIRE DE  
DISTRICT N° 1 DE YELLOWKNIFE**

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[www.yk1.nt.ca](http://www.yk1.nt.ca)

**August 11, 2020**

Dear staff, students, parents/guardians and stakeholders:

**Re: Return to School Planning for the 2020-2021 School Year**

Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1) would like to thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to navigate COVID-19. It's been a challenge working around this pandemic but staff, students and families have demonstrated remarkable flexibility and adaptability. Much has been learned during this time and will continue to be learned over the coming months, and we appreciate your support throughout this uncertain period.

As you know, YK1 has been working closely with other NWT education bodies, the GNWT's Department of Education, Culture and Employment (ECE) and the Office of the Chief Public Health Officer (OCPHO) on a plan to reopen schools safely for the 2020-2021 school year. All schools have submitted re-entry plans to ECE and the OCPHO, and all have been approved. Schools will share their specific plans with families by **August 14, 2020**. We have every intention of starting the school year on time and in-person on **August 31, 2020**.

As we get ready to welcome back staff and students, our priorities will be:

- Maintaining the health and safety of students, staff and families:
  - Ensuring all health and safety measures as required by the CPHO and the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission are effectively implemented
  - Promoting practices to reduce transmission of the virus and to be responsive and flexible in response to changing health circumstances
- Maximizing in-person instruction and delivering quality programs to the degree possible
- Ensuring learning continues for all students, regardless of circumstances
- Providing remote learning opportunities and maintaining regular contact with students who cannot attend school in-person (to be arranged with the school's principal)

**Increased Health and Safety Measures**

- Parents will be asked to monitor their children daily for symptoms and to not send them to school if they are sick. A screening process will be developed, and people who are sick will not be allowed in school. If students become sick at school, they will be quickly isolated, parents will be contacted, and the student will be sent home
- Students will be required to wash their hands frequently, including before coming to school. They will have regular access to hand sanitizer when hand-washing is not available
- Schools will be disinfected more frequently, including classrooms and high traffic areas
- Schools may stagger drop-off and pick-up times and modify lunch, recess and break times to limit gatherings and promote physical distancing
- Schools will have designated entrances and exits, and restrict/manage flow in hallways and common areas with floor markings and/or physical barriers
- Students will be asked to label personal items and to not share (including food)



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- There will be no assemblies and there will be limitations on gatherings
- There will be changes to student transportation in line with recommendations from the OCPHO. Every student must wear a mask on the bus, and there may also be scheduling changes
- Parents, guardians and visitors will have limited access to schools to reduce potential exposure
- There will be changes to emergency evacuation procedures, fire drills and lockdown procedures
- Students will get frequent reminders to minimize physical contact with their friends as much as possible
- Some classrooms and instructional time will also look different, with:
  - Increased spacing between desks and other furniture
  - Physical distancing measures for Grades 7–12 students
  - Possibly more time spent learning outside
  - Non-medical masks for students whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained
  - Face shields for teachers and other school staff
  - Changes to school schedules and hours of instruction

### **Education Delivery by Grade Level**

Recommendations from the OCPHO lay out different public health advice and restrictions depending on a person's age. Younger children are seen to be at a lower risk for contracting and spreading COVID-19, which is why there are fewer physical distancing requirements for elementary students than there are for junior and senior secondary students. JK–6 students won't have to practice physical distancing while in their classroom "bubble", but will have to take additional precautions outside of it. While situations will vary from school to school, the following section explains how education delivery will generally look based on grade level.

#### **JK–Grade 6**

- Full-time, in-person instruction
- No physical distancing inside the classroom "bubble", but students must maintain a physical distance of one to two metres outside of the classroom
- Changes to classrooms to maximize safety, such as the removal of materials that cannot be easily cleaned (toys, sand or water tables) and modifications to gathering circles etc.
- Use of non-medical masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained, which includes in the hallway and on school busses
- Assigned doors for exit and entrance
- Changes in the school, including sanitation stations for hand cleaning, additional signage and physical barriers as necessary

#### **Grades 7–9**

- Full-time, in-person instruction as much as possible
- Physical distancing of one metre between students and two metres between staff
- Assigned doors for exit and entrance



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- Changes in the school, including sanitation stations for hand cleaning, additional signage and physical barriers as necessary
- Students will be encouraged to keep personal items with them to limit locker access
- No communal food or student spares, and staggering of breaks, exits and entry times
- Use of non-medical masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained, which includes in the hallway and on school busses

**Grades 10-12**

- Full-time, in-person instruction as much as possible
- Physical distancing of two metres between students and staff
- Assigned doors for exit and entrance
- Changes in the school, including sanitation stations for hand cleaning, additional signage and physical barriers as necessary
- Students will be encouraged to keep personal belongings with them to limit locker access
- No communal food or student spares, and staggering of breaks, exit and entry times
- Use of non-medical masks when physical distancing cannot be maintained, which includes in the hallway and on school busses

**Contingency Planning**

As you might expect, YK1 schools are preparing to move between in-person, distance and blended learning at a moment's notice as the pandemic dictates. Staff, students and families should be prepared for learning to change quickly in response to evolving circumstances. These circumstances include, but are not restricted to, multiple teachers becoming ill, a possible or confirmed outbreak at a school or if territorial rules around physical distancing become more strict. This is why we are taking such a flexible approach with all 2020-2021 planning.

Should there be a case of COVID-19 at a school, parents should be prepared for their child(ren) to be sent home quickly and for contact tracing to be done before schools can reopen. Should a child develop symptoms at a school, they will be isolated safely and parents will be contacted to pick them up. If a number of school staff are impacted by COVID-19, school closures may become necessary. If schools cannot be open full-time, JK-6 students will be prioritized for full-time, in-person schooling, along with Grade 12 students so that they are prepared for post-secondary opportunities.

YK1 is committed to providing regular updates about re-entry plans as the 2020-2021 school year approaches. We will continue to work with all of our educational partners so that we can provide quality education programs in a safe and healthy manner. Our hope is that you will continue to support us as we move forward with these plans. We look forward to sharing more information with you soon, including school-specific plans by **August 14, 2020**.