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Friday January 7th, 2022

Dear Families,

Happy New Year! I hope that you had an opportunity to enjoy the holiday season. I'm writing to share what to expect, as students return to full in-person instruction next week on Monday January 10.

Functional Closures

As you may have heard in the news this week, the Provincial Health Officer has warned businesses to expect as much as a third of their staff to be off sick with COVID-19 at any given time. Schools reflect what is happening in the community and – as Superintendent Gina Niccoli-Moen shared in her [message to families last week](#) – there is a possibility that, at some point, schools may not have enough staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, and/or custodial support to ensure the health and safety of students. If that happens, after consultation with the District, we may have what's called a functional closure.

We will do everything we can to keep our school open. If we do have to call a functional closure, I will be reaching out to let you know. Please ensure you are checking your email messages from the school, as depending on when we learn of staff booking off sick, it is possible you will receive a message in the morning impacting that same school day.

If there is a functional closure, we will endeavor to move to remote learning as quickly as we can, however depending on available staff, that may not happen the next day.

I recognize that the pandemic has once again thrust a period of uncertainty on us all. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation. You can learn more about functional closures on the front page of the district website [here](#).

Health and Safety

Please read and review with your child the following health and safety measures that all students and families are expected to follow.

Preventing Crowding

In order to further reduce crowding in our school, we have adjusted some of our procedures, including reinstating a Staggered Start/Dismissal Time, and Staggered Lunch and Recess.

We will welcome children back to school on Monday, January 10th, using our new schedule:

	Daily Schedule	Lunch	Recess
Staggered Schedule Div. 1- Ms. Borgenstrom Div. 3- Ms. Van Essen Div.4- Ms. Yapp Div.5- Ms. Noble Div.6- Ms. Cole	Start Time: 8:45am Dismissal: 2:45pm (1:45pm on Wednesdays)	Outside play: 11:30-11:50 Eat Lunch: 11:50-12:10	1:30-1:45
Regular Schedule Div. 2- Ms. Hollingworth Div. 7- Ms. Hinestrova Div. 8- Ms. Dyczkowski Div. 9- Ms. Berezowski BCSD	Start Time: 9:00am Dismissal: 3:00pm (2:00pm on Wednesdays)	Eat Lunch: 11:30-11:50 Outside play: 11:50-12:10	1:45-2:00

In addition to implementing the staggered schedule above, we will also be continuing to ensure our assemblies and gatherings are held virtually. Other measures, such as one-way flow in our hallways and stairwells, and one-at-a-time in the bathrooms will continue to be reinforced. Children will continue to use their designated door when entering and leaving the building.

Other Considerations at School

Please be reminded that we will continue to head outside for play time at both recess and lunch, including on rainy days. Please ensure your child is dressed for the weather so that they enjoy their time outside and are safe. A warm rain jacket, gloves, toque, and boots, along with a spare change of clothes will help your child be prepared.

Visitors in Schools

We are limiting access to the building once again to students, school staff, and essential adults who are directly supporting activities benefitting student learning and wellbeing. Please contact the school office should you wish to arrange a virtual appointment.

Masks, Maximizing Physical Distance, Hand Hygiene and Cleaning

The following remains important:

- **Masks.** A reminder that students in **all** grades and **all** staff are required to wear a mask indoors at school.
- **Physical Distancing.** We will continue our practice of maximizing physical distance where possible. At this stage in the pandemic many are understandably experiencing fatigue, and we thank you in advance for continuing to model physical distancing with other families while on school grounds.
- **Hand Hygiene.** We will continue to encourage students to wash and/or sanitize their hands frequently.
- **Cleaning.** Surfaces are cleaned and/or disinfected at least once a day.

Daily Health Check

It remains critical that people continue to do the daily health check (found [here](#)) each morning to determine if they should come into the building that day. Please do not come to school ill. If a student

becomes sick while at school, as previously, the office will contact you for immediate pick up of your child.

School Notification Process and Rapid Tests

As you may have heard in the announcement from the Provincial Government today, public health is no longer providing individual COVID-19 exposure notifications regarding schools. They shared that public health has transitioned to individual self-management (that is, individuals caring for themselves and engaging with health care providers when needed.) We are awaiting information about the role schools may play in public health's rapid antigen testing strategy.

We are looking forward to welcoming your student back.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Holliday". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "L" and a long, sweeping tail.

Lindsay Holliday

Principal, South Slope Elementary

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