

Welcoming Students Back Rapid City School : Top 10 (+2) Things Families Need to Know!

August 31th / 2020

Dear Rapid City School families,

I want to thank you for your patience and understanding in awaiting our school specific plans for the upcoming school year. Things are going to be different this year and we want everyone back at school healthy and safe.

As we get ready for the return to in-class learning next week, our current Pandemic situation requires a number of changes to school procedures and routines in order to comply with Public Health Regulations. You should all have seen our divisional plan on the RRSD Website page and email . Our complete Return to School Plan will be available on the school website this week.

Considering busy family situations, I have developed a "Top 12" List of Key Items parents need to know for the beginning of the **2020/ 2021** school year.

- 1. As per Public Health, the use of non-medical masks is mandatory in all schools for students in grades 4 to 12, staff and visitors when physical distancing is not possible. Grade 3 students who are in a grade 3-4 multi age classroom are encouraged to wear masks as well.**
Note: grade 3 students in multi-age classrooms will be provided non-medical masks for voluntary wear when social distancing (2 metres) is not possible. Students in grades K-2 can wear a mask if they so choose. Outdoor activities (Recess some phys-ed classes) can be a "mask break" during the day as long as physical distancing can be maintained. Our first few days will be focused on building our class communities and teaching students how to participate in school safely.
- 2. Recess periods and lunch breaks have been staggered as per Public Health Directives.** Students will be assigned to recess cohorts of smaller numbers (to support contact tracing), and will play in designated playground areas. **All students from K-8 will be going outside for recess and lunch breaks (weather permitting).**
- 3. Student entry and exit from the school at the beginning and end of the day will be structured.** There will be no entry to the school prior to 8:45am, except for bus students who will enter the school when they arrive and go directly to their classroom. In the morning we will have no outdoor supervision, students are encouraged not to arrive at school until 8:45. Afternoon dismissal will be gradual, with town kids leaving first followed by the bus students.
- 4. Parent and public access to the school will be restricted.** Parents are asked to remain outside of the school and use the intercom system if you require access to the school at the North entrance
- 5. Lunch – Our milk program will be suspended for 2020/ 2021 the school year. There will be no access to microwaves, so students will need to pack food items that do not need to be heated.** No sharing of food will be permitted. Eating outside will take place weather permitting.

6. **All classrooms have been configured to allow for a minimum of 1 metre spacing of student desks.** Other areas of the school have been adapted to provide for additional, supervised, learning spaces. We will have cohorts of students who will be kept together throughout the school day to minimize contacts within the school day.
7. **Student supplies and personal belongings need to be kept secure and not shared amongst students.** Staff will support the development of students' organizational skills to ensure items are not shared. Students are discouraged from bringing personal toys, stuffed animals, etc. to school, as they cannot be adequately monitored by staff. Teachers will be clearly labeling all student specific supplies. Anything coming from home along with personal items (Lunch kit, backpack, boots, etc.) should be clearly labeled if possible.
8. **Phys-Ed classes will be outside as much as possible.**
9. **As it is deemed a non-essential service, there will be no school photos for the 2020-21 school year.**
10. **Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the school to get answers and clarify expectations. Staff will be in the schools starting Sept 2nd.**
11. **A "virtual tour" of Rapid City School is being developed.** The tour will provide information and shows a few model classrooms so parents and students can visualize how their classroom will look next week. The video link will be shared once that is ready.
12. **In-person tours of Rapid City School for parents and children will be offered prior to September 8.** If there are other students experiencing a heightened sense of anxiety about the return, Appointments can be made with teachers on **Sept. 3rd and 4th.** The tours will take place between 11:00 am and 3:30pm. **These tours will be arranged through Mrs. Kolesar– please call the school to schedule a tour; no "walk up" tours are available... prior bookings are required.**

Please know that we continue to be responsive to the current Public Health directives and will communicate any updates/ adjustments to our plans as directed by the school division in response to Provincial guidelines. Your flexibility and understanding are greatly appreciated.

We look forward to a different, but safe and exciting start to the 2020/ 2021 school year.

Kindest Regards,

Jeff Maxwell, Principal Rapid City School

