



# Welcome Back to School

Dear Skwo:wech Families,

We are delighted to be welcoming our new and returning families to school next Tuesday; we are thrilled to be opening our doors for the first time under our new name, Skwo:wech Elementary. Our staff has been busy preparing for the first day of school on Tuesday and are very excited to be back after a lovely and restful summer. A big thank-you to our custodial team who have our school sparkling and ready for our first day. We have missed our students and are delighted to be welcoming our school family back to school. We hope that your family is relaxed, recharged and ready to start a new school year after the summer break. We are all very grateful that you are part of our amazing learning community. We welcome and value your positive energy and dedication to excellence in education, and we look forward to working with you and your children. This week our staff has been engaged in professional learning and working on our developing plans for the year ahead. I look forward to sharing highlights of those plans in the weeks to come! An important calendar change to note is that our school and District will be closed for students and staff on September 30<sup>th</sup> to honour the newly legislated recognition, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Please also look for a second email with the subject “2021/2022 Important First Day Information” that will tell you the name of your child’s teacher, their division, and where to line up on Tuesday. There will also be a link to view a slideshow. Please read through this slideshow with your child(ren) to help them be ready for Tuesday.

Please see the notes below to guide you in a smooth start up for your family, including highlights of the return to school COVID 19 plan.

## COVID-19 Updates:

Many of the precautions that were in place when we left school in June will continue to be in place, while a few things have been adjusted. Our shared experience with COVID has taught us that flexibility is important as well as timeliness of information. We will continue to keep you informed about any potential changes to protocols as they occur. We are all looking forward to being able to return to many aspects of our school life; we will make these shifts slowly and gradually as we return to some more ‘normal’ aspects of school life. Please see key summary highlights below of practises which we will be continuing and those which we will gradually reengage with. Please refer to the message sent to families on August 24<sup>th</sup> by our Superintendent Karim Hachlaf for more detailed information about our return to school plan.

#### Continuing reminders:

- Mask mandate: continues for all students in grade 4 and 5 as well all adults in the building. Students in K-3 are encouraged to wear a mask when possible.
- Students and staff will be asked to continue following the daily health check
- Students and staff will be asked to stay home when feeling unwell
- We will manage the flow of movement in the building with signage
- We will continue to provide two recess and two lunch times to provide children with more space outside
- Teachers will continue to plan for increased outdoor learning opportunities
- Students will be reminded to respect personal space
- Students will be asked to wash/sanitize frequently and practise good hand hygiene
- Pick up and line-up locations will be spread across our campus to ease congestion in the morning and the afternoon; all students will be met outside by their teachers at 8:50 and dismissed from the same location
- We will continue to have high touch surfaces cleaned twice daily

#### Changes:

- Water fountains will be available; water bottles will continue to be encouraged
- Small school gatherings will be possible (student assemblies)
- We are no longer restricted to the cohort system (this allows classes to be together in the building, for example buddy classes may resume)
- Field trips will be possible
- We will be able to have visitors to the school; visits will be logged for contact tracing
- We will have a single start time for all students at 8:50

#### **Further Back to school information:**

##### **New Staff**

Each year brings positive change which includes a few additions to our staff. We are delighted to welcome the following:

Erin Kenny - counsellor

Mackenzie Stevens - sharing Gr 4/5 with Mr. Elves

Erica Bloom - sharing Gr 3 with Ms. Lange

Adriana Harnagea - EA

Sharon Pearce - EA

Teresa Knodel - EA

Mason Meghji - Child Care Worker

Rachita Tiwari - NH supervisor

## **Facility Update**

We are thrilled to share with you that our new school building has continued to make amazing progress over the summer months and continues to be on track for our opening in 2022. You may have noticed that our parking area on the west side of the building is now gravel. We continue to ask that children and parents do not walk through the parking lot, but walk through the fenced area that provides safer access. Visibility in the parking lot is very challenging.

## **Student Placement**

A great deal of time, effort and thought has gone into the process of student placement for school year ahead. Classes have been developed by our teachers with careful consideration given to creating balance both academically and socially. Unfortunately, at this time it is not possible to receive requests to have placements changed as our school is very full and at this time moving students is difficult without creating imbalances and inequities.

All of our staff are committed to ensuring that your child has a very positive school year and we thank you for helping your child understand that sometimes it may not be possible be placed with a preferred friend or teacher and for helping them to understand that sometimes it takes a few weeks to adjust to a new teacher or peer group. These stretches help our children build their resilience muscle! If challenges continue beyond the first few weeks, please as always, connect with your child's teacher to create a plan.

## **Communication and Connection:**

We are committed to continuing to provide timely updates and information about school life at Skwo:wech! We will be sending a school newsletter approximately every two weeks early Friday evenings to share and celebrate happenings from around our building and our upcoming calendar. Urgent matters will be sent in a timely manner. If a concern arises related to your child, please contact your child's teacher first; they are always your first point of contact for problem solving any concerns that you might have.

With only a few sleeps to go, I wish your family a lovely long weekend and I eagerly look forward to greeting everyone back on Tuesday. It remains an honor and privilege to serve as your principal; please drop by and say hello and be sure to check out the new school building. Together, I know we have so much to look forward to this year and it will be filled with amazing growth, joy and achievement for all children.

With gratitude,

Kathleen Chad  
Principal Skwo:wech Elementary