



Aurora Preparatory Academy COVID-19 Response Procedures and Protocols for the 2020-2021 Academic Year: Reviews and Updates

Introduction

Everyone at Aurora Preparatory Academy is extremely excited about the upcoming resumption of in-school classes for the majority of our students. Teachers have been working tirelessly to ensure their classrooms are as warm and inviting as possible, and also as conducive to learning. For those of you who don't know, we have introduced the following changes in order to make our school as safe and risk-free as possible:

- A firm limit of 15 students per class (most have fewer than 15);
- Medical-grade air purifiers in each classroom;
- Twice-weekly fogging of the entire building;
- Daily fogging of the bathrooms;
- The hiring of additional staff to clean and sanitize throughout the day;
- Touchless water filling stations;
- Handwashing stations throughout the building;
- Touchless soap and paper towel dispensers;
- Sensor-operated water faucets;
- Touchless sanitizer dispensers throughout the building;
- The creation and maintenance of cohorts that stay together the entire school day;
- The staggering of schedules;
- Extension of our class periods to one hour each to allow for easier transitions and sanitization;
- Lunch in classrooms rather than the lunchroom to avoid the mingling of cohorts;
- Longer recesses in the morning and afternoon to allow for extended transitions that incorporate social distancing;
- Live streaming of lessons to allow students who are unwell to remain at home while remaining on top of their studies.

Below, families will find a list of reminders and updated procedures and protocols particularly relevant for the 2020-2021 academic year. Rest assured, we have spent a significant amount of time reimagining the way in which we do things at Aurora Prep, consulting government agencies and other private schools to adhere to regulatory obligations and best practices. Most of these changes in procedure are the result of Aurora Prep being required to follow specific protocols. We ask that you review them in some detail. If you have any comments or questions, we invite you to contact us.

In Preparation for September 8, 2020

1. As we mentioned in our Town Hall and at various other times, we are all partners in ensuring the health and safety of our students. APA Staff, administration, families, and the students themselves - in addition to extended families - all play a part in keeping our children safe. In this light, it is critical that families begin preparing their children for either in-school classes or at-home learning. The processes of social distancing, respiratory etiquette, handwashing, wearing a mask, etc. should all be part of everyone's daily routine by now. These concepts should not be

unfamiliar to students when they arrive in September. Similarly, for those students participating in at-home learning, families are advised to have devices ready for each student, in addition to a specific area in which studying will take place and availability to follow the daily schedule. Please note teachers will send weekly schedules once initial staff meetings are complete and all allocations are finalized. You should expect to receive a copy of the schedule along with a general welcome letter by the end of next week.

2. Should a student develop symptoms at any point during the day, our mandate is to isolate and contact parents for immediate retrieval. If your choice is to send your child to school, please be readily available for pick up throughout the day.
3. We are recommending four masks per day so students may swap them out as they are used and become soiled. If families wish to send more than four to be safe, we certainly would not discourage this practice.
4. We have replaced our water fountains with touchless water stations. As a result, students are required to bring a reusable, clearly-labeled water bottle to use these devices.
5. Recognizing the sensitivities of some of our students to traditional hand sanitizers, we are allowing families to send their children with their own preferred brand, provided they contain at least 70% ethyl alcohol and are scent-free.
6. Parents are reminded we are discouraging the transfer of supplies to and from school. As a result, the ones each student will be provided in class will remain in class, while families should have their own set at home in order to complete homework and assignments.
7. A reminder that, in order to use Google Classroom, students need a valid Gmail account. Students under the age of 13 are free to create a shared account or use their parents' account, if necessary.
8. We are strongly discouraging any midday visits from parents, either to pick up or drop off students or to transport forgotten items such as books or lunches. Please take a moment or two to remind your son or daughter to be as mindful, responsible, and independent as possible in the organization of items each school day.
9. School dismissal begins at 3:30 every day and we are encouraging as many families as possible to pick children up at this time in order to facilitate social distancing and expedite our pick-up procedure. Further details regarding this process are outlined under *Pick-up Procedures*, below.

Drop-off Procedures

1. As part of the Contact Tracing efforts required by York Region Public Health Unit - and to manage what will certainly be more fluid attendance this year - we are requiring families to complete an *APA Daily Attendance Log*, which will indicate that your child will be in attendance for the day and that you have checked for some of the more common COVID-19 symptoms before sending her/him to school. Please note this form must be completed by 8:00 am each day for a student to be admitted to the school. It takes only 15-20 seconds to do so and goes a long

way to ensuring a rapid dissemination of critical information should YRPHU require it.

2. Rather than have parents drop off children and, in some cases, escort them to class, we will be using the similar “Kiss and Ride” procedure we typically employ at the end of the day. Students will be processed on a first come, first served basis as cars arrive at the main entrance of the building. When students enter the building, we will do a quick temperature check and assessment of symptoms, and then require their hands to be sanitized. Parents are expected to remain in front until APA staff gives the all clear. In order to enter the building, every adult and all students from Grade 3 to Grade 8 *must* be wearing a mask properly.
3. In the event a student shows a fever, or symptoms are observed by APA staff, students will not be allowed to continue to class but must return home. In this case, families might consider having the student tested for COVID-19. Even without a test, however, the student will be required to be symptom-free for at least 24 hours before returning to school. In this case, she/he should participate in at-home learning as much as possible. *Please note YRPHU and the Ministry of Education are both requiring that schools adopt a “low threshold” when watching for symptoms. In other words, if there is any detection, we will require the student to return home.*
4. We ask that families be patient. Not only have we departed from our usual way of conducting drop-off in the morning, but we also recognize we’ve been out of practice with this process since March. With a number of new families joining us this year, ones who are unfamiliar with any drop-off procedure at APA, patience will be the word of the day for the next little while. September will certainly bring its challenges but we are confident that, with a little understanding and consistency in practice, things will smooth out quickly.

While Students are at School...

1. We are asking families to refrain from any midday visits with students unless absolutely necessary. Please encourage them to have all their materials with them when they arrive at school, including masks, water bottle, and homework. In addition, we are strongly discouraging the delivery of lunches, and have even suspended our own hot lunch programme for the time being. Finally, we are continuing to promote litter-less lunches to cut down on the waste being disposed of in each classroom garbage bin.
2. As usual, parents are asked not to contact their children directly through instant messaging or cell phones but, rather, contact the office if a message needs to be relayed. We also ask you to avoid responding to correspondence from your children, as students are expected to use the main office to initiate contact with parents throughout the day.
3. Our teachers will continue communicating regularly with parents through agendas, email, and telephone. If a one-on-one conference is deemed necessary, it will take place by appointment via Zoom.
4. In the event we have a situation at the school, either as a whole or with an individual student or cohort, we are mandated to act quickly and communicate efficiently. Please be readily available to pick up your child(ren) at any point in the day, should such a measure be necessary.

5. Our teachers have been working tirelessly to resume classes for our students. Not only are they committed to providing the best possible education, they are also learning new ways of teaching – particularly managing both in-class and at-home students simultaneously – all while contending with their own family situations and individual perspectives with respect to COVID-19. Rest assured, they are fully committed to all our students and are eager to ensure a successful year for everyone.

Pick-up Procedures

1. Just a reminder that, if you decide to park to pick up your child, please do not park in the Marquee parking lot (businesses on the south side of the median) and please do not block any parking spots of the Newpark daycare, located at the back of our building.
2. Pick up times will be as follows:
 - a. 3:30 – 3:45 – First Dismissal (Families are encouraged to pick up at this time)
 - b. 3:45 – 4:25 – Individual Activities (with homeroom teacher in cohort)
 - c. 4:30 – 4:45 – Second Dismissal
3. In an effort to avoid congestion, we will be utilizing two exits when dismissing students. The K – 3 students and any of their siblings will exit from the front door, while Grades 4 to 8 will do so at the south doors, at the bottom of the hill beside the daycare.
4. In another effort to avoid any kind of congestion and to encourage staggering, we are now permitting ongoing dismissal between 3:45 and 4:25. Parents are encouraged to pick their children up at any point during these afterschool activities, *from the front door only*.
5. We anticipate longer waits during our pick-up times, similar to the additional time it takes to grocery shop or do any activity amid this pandemic. Please be patient. Messaging your child to indicate you are in line is not helpful in expediting our dismissal process. Please know we will summon your child to his/her exit as soon as you are within a safe distance from the doors. To help in this process, please remind your child not to dawdle once she/he is called.
6. As usual, we will be offering our aftercare programme from 4:45 to 6:00 p.m. at an additional cost for those families that require it. Please note, we will not be able to maintain separate cohorts during this time, although we will certainly have students masked and/or socially distanced.