

Hello MMS families - On Friday, Hanover School Division sent communication to all families with regards to the lifting of public health restrictions in schools on March 15. [Click here to review that communication.](#)

The purpose of this notice is to provide you with specific information about changes at Mitchell Middle School in response to this lifting of restrictions. While the lifting of the restrictions allows us to make immediate changes in a number of areas, we will be delaying some of those changes until after Spring Break, to give our staff, students, and families time to make adjustments as necessary.

While many of us welcome the lifting of restrictions, and look forward to a Term 3 at MMS that will feel more familiar than in the past two years, others of us may view the lifting of restrictions with apprehension and uncertainty. In either event, whether excited or apprehensive, these feelings are entirely normal and our students are encouraged to display kindness, understanding and empathy towards each other as we enter the next “new normal”.

MMS wishes to remind our community that our ability to retain the planning and lifting of restrictions is dependent on public health orders. While we anticipate the changes communicated in this document to be long lasting, we are aware that the public health situation could continue to change. MMS is committed to following all public health orders that are required of us.

The changes that are listed below are gathered into two groups: those that will be in effect at MMS as of Tuesday, March 15, and those that will be in effect at MMS as of Monday, April 4.

Changes That Will Be In Effect on Tuesday, March 15

Masks

- Mask wearing in public places, including schools, is recommended, but no longer required
- Staff, students, and visitors are still able to wear a mask if they choose to do so

Hand Sanitizing

- Regular sanitizing and/or handwashing is still highly recommended as a good and sanitary health practice. Sanitizing will not be required upon entry to new or shared spaces.

Physical Distancing

- Respecting others' personal space remains a common expectation at school
- A minimum distance between students in the classroom is no longer required, and desks may be moved closer together to create groupings (teacher's discretion)

- Teachers will be aware that some students may not be comfortable working closely in groups without masks, and will adjust as necessary

Doors Used for Entry and Exit

- All students will continue to use the assigned doors for their grade to enter and exit the school throughout the day
- This has proven to be a good change in routine that has improved our ability to provide supervision for our students
- Students who arrive late to school in the morning (after 9:00), or when returning from lunch (after 1:20) will continue to use the front doors of the school to sign in at the office
- During the recess breaks, all Grade 5 students will share the rear main entrance with the Grade 7 students in order to help them get to the playground faster
- When arriving before 8:50 in the morning, students will continue to be expected to report to their assigned muster points as they have all year. Assembling away from door areas allows for safe entry into the school

- **Cohorting**

- Cohorting requirements have been lifted
- Students are able to interact freely with students in other grades
- However, our students are encouraged to remain in the hallways of their own grades during the day and interact with their grade level peers

- **Morning and Afternoon Recess Breaks**

- The playground will remain divided in half to allow assigned areas for our students to play in
- Our students will be expected to stay in their assigned areas
- Morning Recess
 - Grade 5s and 6s on the “Playground” side
 - Grade 7s and 8s on the “Baseball Diamond” side
- Afternoon Recess
 - Grade 5s and 6s on the “Baseball Diamond” side
 - Grade 7s and 8s on the on the “Playground” side

- **Lunch Break**

- Students will be able to eat in their classrooms without a minimum distance between each other
- All students in a classroom will be able to have lunch together and be able to go outside together at the same time
- Staggered Lunch Recess
 - We will continue to use a “Staggered Lunch” model
 - Having a fewer number of students on the playground at one time has had a number of benefits that we would like to continue
 - allowed our lunch supervisors to supervise more effectively
 - Fewer student conflicts and behaviour concerns

- The Lunch Recess will be organized as follows:
 - 12:20 - 12:45
 - All Grade 5 and 6's eat in their homeroom classrooms
 - All Grade 7 and 8's are outside and have access to the whole playground
 - 12:45 - 1:15
 - Grade 5 and 6's are outside and have access to the whole playground
 - These students will be dismissed from their classroom by a supervisor at 12:45
 - Grade 7 and 8's eat in their homeroom classrooms
 - Students going home for lunch are reminded that the afternoon homeroom period begins at 1:15 pm.

Washroom Use

- Reducing the number of students permitted in the washroom at one time has allowed us to better manage misbehaviour in the washrooms (such as graffiti, minor vandalism) as well as students hiding in washrooms to avoid going outside
- Hockey stick indicators will continue to be used to indicate the number of students in the washroom
 - The number of students permitted in a washroom will generally be limited to the number of fixtures in that washroom. Each student washroom has 4 fixtures, which means that generally, **4 students will be permitted to use a washroom at one time. This is an increase from 2 students.**
- Assigned washrooms
 - Grade 5 and 6 washroom will remain for grade 5 and 6 student use only
 - Grade 7 and 8 washrooms will be available for use by all Grade 7 and 8 students

Grade 5 and 6 Student Travel To Music and Phys Ed

- Grade 5 and 6 students will begin to travel to Music and Phys Ed classes without a teacher escorting them
- All students remain expected to move quietly and respectfully in the hallways, while respecting the personal space of others

Changes in place as of April 4 (first day after Spring Break)

Microwaves

- Microwaves will again be provided for student use at lunch time
- Parents, please remember to send a fork or spoon to school with your child. Do not send knives.
 - Please prep food in advance so that it does not need to be cut at school.

Dismissal

- With the removal of requirements related to cohorting and managing student movement in the hallways, we will be adjusting our afternoon to regain some additional structure and learning purpose to the end of our school day
- Afternoon Break
 - Will run from 2:45 to 3:00 (currently 2:45 - 2:55)
 - 5 minutes added
- Period 8
 - Will run from 3:00 to 3:40 (currently 2:55 - 3:30)
 - 5 minutes added to this period
- Dismissal
 - 3:40 - walking students will be dismissed from their Period 8 class
 - 3:45 - bus students will be dismissed from their Period 8 class
 - 3:50 - all buses will leave MMS by 3:50 pm
- Students walking/being picked up by parents
 - Students who are walking home should use the sidewalk at the front of the school to make their way home. Those walking home along Morley Ave are asked to use the walking corridor that will be marked with pylons on the North side of the bus loop
 - Buses normally start arriving at MMS around 3:37 pm
 - For their safety, students will not be permitted to cross the bus loop between 3:35 and 3:50
 - A crossing guard will be stationed at the entrance to the bus loop facing Morley Ave to assist students in crossing the entrance to the bus loop to reach their parent's vehicles

Phys Ed Changerooms

- The Phys Ed Changerooms will be open to students who want to change clothes for Phys Ed
- Changing clothes for Phys Ed will be optional for students for the rest of this school year

Canteen

- The canteen will fully open
- Hot lunch days will resume - watch for further communication in regards to menu options
- The canteen will continue to use the credit system that has been used successfully this year.
- Watch for announcements and info in Warrior Weekly

Special Events/Assemblies/Learning Trips

- Our teachers are beginning to plan learning trips and activities for Term Three, including Activity Day at the end of June.
- A Drama production is underway and performances are scheduled for May 18 and 19

- A Spring Music Concert is scheduled for the evening of June 9
- As other events are scheduled they will be added to our school calendar and communicated via the Warrior Weekly

We hope that the information shared in this document clearly communicates our planning as it relates to the lifting of public health restrictions in schools. If you have questions or wish to clarify any of the information found in this notice, please contact us at the school.

Yours in Education,

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