



# Bluewater District School Board

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**\*Updated March 15, 2021**

## **Return to School – Q and A Program and Instruction**

In accordance with the recent announcement from the Ministry of Education, Bluewater District School Board (BWDSB) is preparing for a full return to school for both elementary and secondary students in September 2020. The board team has been working hard over the summer creating plans to support the return of students and staff. Below are questions and answers designed to support families in the transition back to school. This Q and A will be updated as the board receives further information from the Ministry of Education.

### **Blended Program – Remote and face-to-face learning**

**Q. Can families opt for a combination of face-to-face and remote learning?**

**A. No.** Families will need to choose either face-to-face or remote learning.

### **Switching programs from face-to-face to remote learning**

**Q. Can families opt to change from face-to-face learning to remote learning after the school year has started?**

**A. The transition timelines have passed for elementary.**

**Secondary** students may transition at the designated dates at the beginning of each quadmester (e.g., November 12, February 3, April 21).

**Q. What are the final dates in each quadmester when secondary students must notify their school if they plan to move back to either their home school or transition to the remote learning school?**

**A. Quadmester 4 – by 4 p.m. March 29, 2021.**

### **Cohorting**

**Q. Will elementary students be divided into cohorts?**

**A. Yes.** Grades K to 8 cohorts will be the students in their homeroom. Interaction with other classes and teachers will be limited. Teachers who support class instruction, providing teacher preparation time (e.g., French, Phys. Ed., Music), will move between classrooms rather than students rotating through rooms. Students will have designated times and areas of the playground they can access.

**Q. Will secondary students be divided into cohorts?**

**A. Yes.** Secondary schedules will be divided into quadesters so that students are connected to only two groups of students per quadester. Please note the slight change in dates below to the end of the third and beginning of the fourth quadesters.

Quadester	Dates	Instructional Days	Exam Day(s)
1 - Periods 1 and 2	Sept 8 - Nov. 9	44	Nov. 10 and Nov. 11
2 - Periods 3 and 4	Nov. 12 - Jan. 28	45	Jan. 29 and Feb 1
3 - Periods 1 and 2	Feb. 3 - April 15	44	April 16, 19, 20
4 - Periods 3 and 4	April 21 - June 23	44	June 24, 25, 28

Exam dates for Quadester 3 have changed to April 8, 9, 20 following the move from the March to April break.

**Q. Will secondary students take one course per day?**

**A. Yes.** Each quadester, students will take two courses. However, the schools will be on a bi-weekly schedule (Week 1 and Week 2). Each week, the students will take one of their courses for the full day each day (e.g., Week 1 – Period A, Week 2 – Period B). This allows for students to be in one cohort per week. [Click here](#) for the calendar.

**Q. If the province makes the decision to close schools again, will learning continue?**

**A. Yes.** BWDSB has developed detailed plans for full remote learning and for part week attendance should we need to pivot to one of those models.

**Learning Program**

**Q. Will my child be taught the full Ontario Curriculum?**

**A. Yes.** However, instruction may look different. Staff will be focusing on expectations that limit student contact and reduce the risk of exposure (e.g., Music classes will focus on theory and music appreciation rather than singing, Physical Education will focus on individual fitness activities rather than team contact sports, teachers may do demonstration lessons rather than have student perform experiments). Teachers will be encouraged to utilize the outdoors where practical.

**Q. Will the Kindergarten program follow the ministry program?**

**A. Yes.** However, the mode of delivery for the program may look different due to protocols that need to be followed for health and safety reasons.

**Q. Will classroom resources be cleaned between use?**

**A. Yes.** Where possible students will be provided with their own individual resources (e.g.,

math manipulatives, sports equipment, etc.). Where students are required to share equipment, students (age appropriate) or staff will be asked to wipe down the materials before and after use (e.g., computer, shop tools, textbooks, etc.).

**Q. Will libraries and common areas be open?**

**A. No.** Access to common areas, such as libraries, will be limited. Books from the library will be brought to the classroom.

**Q. Will secondary students be able to participate in co-op placements?**

**A. Yes.** Where there is a placement available, students will be able to participate. Students will be required to follow the health and safety protocols established in the placement environment. Monitoring by staff may be done virtually in some cases.

**Q. Will students be taught health and safety routines?**

**A. Yes.** Lessons about proper hygiene and physical distancing will be taught through the curriculum areas (e.g., Health and Physical Education, reading material for English, subject specific safety measures and hygiene).

**Q. Can students take an e-learning course in the quadmestered face-to-face model?**

**A. Yes.** BWDSB e-learning courses will be quadmestered. However, some consortium e-learning courses may be semestered. Guidance staff will work with students on their timetables.

**School pictures**

**Q. Will school pictures be taken this fall?**

**A. No.** School pictures have been postponed until further notice.

**Mental health supports**

**Q. Will students continue to have access to mental health supports?**

**A. Yes.** Mental health workers, paraprofessionals, and other professional staff remain available to students to support those who have a current support plan during this difficult time.

**Special Education**

**Q. Will secondary students who receive more than 50% of their programming in a self-contained classroom be integrated into other courses?**

**A. Yes.** Secondary students can be part of one (self-contained classroom) or two cohorts (self-contained plus one integrated course or two integrated courses).

**Q. Will I be able to participate in an IPRC meeting for my child?**

**A. Yes.** IPRC meetings will be scheduled and will be held virtually or by conference call.

**Q. Will student Individual Education Plans (IEPs) be adjusted to reflect changes resulting from pandemic protocols?**

**A. Yes.** Individual Education Plans (IEPs) will be reviewed and revised to incorporate changes following the usual process to support student success.

**Q. Will children who require it have access to assistive technology?**

**A. Yes.** Assistive technology will be available as per the regular board process. It will be cleaned between use.

**Q. Will children who require it and have had access in the past, continue to have access to community partners and itinerant support staff?**

**A. Yes.** Internal and external essential support staff (e.g., rehabilitation therapists, speech and language pathologists, psychologists, teacher of the blind and low vision, etc.) will follow protocols to ensure they can safely interact with students.

**Q. Will Educational Assistants (EAs) be available to provide supports as needed following the board special education plan requirements?**

**A. Yes.** Schools will work to schedule EAs to support students with special needs according to the board special education plan requirements. EAs will wear appropriate PPE determined by the level of support they are providing.

**Q. Will students in a self-contained setting be enrolled in co-op programs?**

**A. No.** Co-op placements for students in self-contained setting have been put on hold until further notice.

## **Assessment, Evaluation, and Reporting**

### **Elementary**

**Q. Will my child receive a mark for each of the five mathematics strands?**

**A. No.** The Grades 1-8 mathematics curriculum was revised. Further, the assessment, evaluation, and reporting has also changed. Your child will receive one overall mark for mathematics and comments will reflect the learning across the strands.

### **Secondary**

**Q. Will students receive a mid-term mark with the quadmester system?**

**A. Yes.** Teachers will share a “mark-to-date” at the midpoint of the course. Parents/guardians will have an opportunity to request a virtual meeting with the teachers each quadmester if they wish.

**Q. Will my child’s secondary school mid-term report card include comments and learning skills?**

**A. No.** Due to the ongoing impact of COVID-19, Bluewater District School Board secondary schools have scheduled courses in quadmesters. Only marks are being reported on mid-term report cards.

**Q. Will my child receive a mid-term report card for alternative programming outlined on his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP)?**

**A. No.** Mid-term report cards for alternative curriculum will not be provided for students. A mid-term mark will be provided for credit classes only. Parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the teacher for an update or to receive information about progress. A final report card will be provided.

### **Course Withdrawal**

**Q. Are there specific dates in each quadmester when students in Grade 11 and 12 courses must indicate they are withdrawing from a course if they do not wish to have it recorded on their Ontario Student Transcript?**

**A. Yes.** The following chart indicates the date in each quadmester that students in Grade 11 and 12 courses must indicate they are withdrawing:

Quadmester	Course			
1	A	Oct. 23	B	Oct. 28
2	C	Jan. 18	D	Jan. 12
3	A	Mar. 19	B	Mar. 23
4	C	June 3	D	June 9

## Community Involvement Graduation Requirement

**Q. Will students graduating in 2021 be required to complete 40 hours of community service?**

**A. No.** For students graduating in the 2020-21 school year, the community involvement graduation requirement will be reduced to a minimum of **20 hours**.

**Q. Is there some flexibility with regards to how students can accumulate their community service hours this year?**

**A. Yes.** Students may wish to consider virtual volunteering, such as connecting with seniors, organizing virtual fundraising events, and facilitating discussions with newcomer youth. Outdoor volunteer opportunities could include, for example, picking up litter.

## Community Service Hours – Grades 9-11

**Q. Are secondary students in Grades 9 - 11 required to accumulate their 40 community service hours?**

**A. Yes.** Students may have the option of completing their community hours virtually. Bluewater District School Board students will no longer be provided with a booklet to track hours; students will be asked to record their hours using the online platform available through Brightspace. Visit this [link](#) to learn more.

## Post-Secondary Applications

**Q. Will colleges and universities be adjusting their admissions processes to align with boards that are quadmestered?**

**A. Yes.** Most colleges and universities will make conditional offers of admission on a rolling basis using a combination of Grade 11 and available Grade 12 marks.

**Q. Will teachers assess student learning at the beginning of the year to determine if there are gaps resulting from the school closure?**

**A. Yes.** Teachers will perform diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the year to identify gaps and develop a plan to support students.

## **Remote learning**

### **Q. Will remote learning be the same as it was in the spring of 2020?**

**A. No.** Full remote learning will be far more structured. The expectation of students engaging in remote learning will be that they are online, engaged, and present. The table below outlines the minimum amount of time per day that students, depending on their grade level, will be provided with synchronous learning as part of their scheduled or timetabled learning.

#### **Daily Minimum Synchronous Learning Time**

Division	Grade Level of Students	Requirement*
Elementary	Kindergarten	180 minutes
	Grades 1 to 3	225 minutes
	Grades 4 to 8	225 minutes
Secondary	Grades 9 to 12	The higher of 60 minutes for each 75-minute class period** or 225 minutes per day for a full course schedule

\* This is in addition to asynchronous learning time.

\*\* The synchronous learning time requirement for any period that is not 75 minutes should be adjusted to reflect this ratio.

Note: The above times are synchronous minutes the teacher will timetable. However, the time for students to engage in synchronous learning will fluctuate based on the mode of delivery within the schedule that the teacher will create and share with students and families. For example, a teacher will plan whole and small group activities. The student will be part of the whole group activities and part of a small group that will rotate through the synchronous learning time.

### **Q. Will synchronous learning time include different modes of instruction?**

**A. Yes.** Synchronous learning time may include students working independently and in small groups while engaged in a virtual classroom with the teacher overseeing their learning and available for questions.

### **Q. Does the synchronous learning time have to be taught in a continuous block?**

**A. No.** The synchronous learning time requirements outlined in the table above may be divided into shorter periods throughout the school day. For example, a child in Kindergarten may participate in an opening exercise for 10 minutes with their whole class, as well as a combination of whole-group and small-group sessions throughout the school day, and a 10-minute closing exercise with their class at the end of the school day. The teacher will outline the schedule and share it with students and families.

**Q. Can a student be exempt from synchronous learning?**

**A. Yes.** Exemption from synchronous learning may be requested by parents/guardians or by students who are 18 years of age or older, and students who are 16 or 17 years of age but have withdrawn from parental control. Requests for an exemption must be made in writing using the BWDSB Synchronous Learning Exemption form. This form can be obtained from the remote learning teacher.

**Q. Will there be an alternative program if my child/I am exempt from synchronous learning?**

**A. Yes.** Alternative learning approaches will be put in place for all exempted students – for example, correspondence, print, or broadcast media instruction that is based on the individual student's needs and circumstances.

**Q. Will parents/guardians be able to communicate with the remote learning teacher?**

**A. Yes.** Teachers will communicate with parents/guardians through a mutually agreed upon mode (e.g., telephone, virtual platform).

**Q. Will elementary students who elect to do remote learning be taught by their regular class teacher?**

**A. No.** Virtual classrooms made up of students from across the district in similar grades will be attached to a teacher who will deliver online instruction.

**Q. What learning platform will staff use in teacher-led learning with their students?**

**A.** Staff will use either Brightspace or the Microsoft Suite.

**Q. Are there instructions on how to use and access Brightspace and Microsoft Suite?**

**A. Yes.** Videos to support students in setting up and using Brightspace and Microsoft Suite will be posted on the board website at this [link](#).

**Q. Will secondary students be taught remote courses by a Bluewater District School Board subject specialist?**

**A. No.** Secondary students who decide not to attend face-to-face will be asked to sign up for available existing online learning options (e.g., courses offered through the Ontario eLearning Consortium or BWDSB). Furthermore, students may complete independent learning courses. A teacher will be assigned to support students working through independent learning courses.

**Q. Is there someone I can contact for more information about remote learning?**

**A. Yes.** For general inquiries, please contact the office manager for the Remote School at 519-363-2014, ext. 2021.

**Q. Will specific courses be offered within the secondary remote learning program?**

**A. Yes.** [Click here](#) for Bluewater District School Board remote learning secondary courses that will be offered where there is sufficient enrolment.

**Q. Will students who opt for remote learning continue to be on the register at their home school?**

**A. No.** Students will be taken off the register at their home school and transferred to the remote learning school.

**Q. Will secondary students who opt for remote learning continue to be registered for the courses on their timetable at their home school?**

**A. No.** Secondary students will be removed from courses they registered for at their home school for the first semester (i.e., Quadmester 1 and 2). Students who opt to return to their home school at the beginning of the second quadmester will be placed in courses where there are seats available. Secondary students can remain pre-registered for courses in the second semester (i.e., Quadmester 3 and 4).

**Q. Will secondary remote learning courses be quadmestered the same as the conventional schools?**

**A. Yes.** Remote learning courses will follow the same pattern as the conventional classroom with one course for the entire day for a week, and the second course on the alternate week.

**Q. Are there eLearning options available for secondary students?**

**A. Yes.** BWDSB belongs to the Ontario eLearning Consortium. This means that empty seats in eLearning courses offered by BWDSB can be filled by students from other boards, and that BWDSB students are able to access empty seats in eLearning courses from other boards. These courses are offered asynchronously (e.g., not face to face) and may be on either a quadmester (four terms per year) or semester (two terms per year) model. Guidance staff can assist students who wish to access these courses.

**Q. Will Bluewater District School Board be offering any synchronous (live) online learning courses?**

**A. Yes.** It is not possible to offer all of the available secondary courses online. Once pre-registration survey data is complete, the results will be reviewed, and courses will be

established to meet student needs. The offerings will focus on compulsory courses (e.g., Maths, English, Sciences, Social Sciences). Guidance staff will support students in finding the courses that best meet their needs.

**Q. If our family does not have access to a computer device and/or internet, will support be provided?**

**A. Yes.** As in the spring term, BWDSB is able provide one device per household for families electing to do online learning. Internet sticks that connect to telephone towers can be made available to families who do not have an internet connection. Parents/guardians will need to contact their local school for support after August 24, 2020.

**Q. Will my child(ren)'s/my work be assessed and evaluated in the remote learning program?**

**A. Yes.** During periods of remote learning, teachers will employ assessment *for, as, and of* learning (including diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment), as required. The teacher will provide daily opportunities for each student to receive meaningful feedback.

**Q. Will there be a role for me as a parent/guardian if we choose full remote learning for our child(ren) in elementary school?**

**A. Yes.** Parents/guardians will need to:

- Support their child(ren) in accessing and using the online platform;
- Support their child(ren) in scheduling their learning and supervise their use of the computer while students are online;
- Support their students in monitoring, completing, and submitting independent assignments;
- Provide their child(ren) with an adequate workspace that is free from distractions;
- Communicate with the teacher related to questions and concerns.

**Q. Will elementary students have regular learning expectations if we choose remote learning?**

**A. Yes.** Elementary students will need to:

- Be present and participate in daily scheduled learning opportunities, and daily attendance will be monitored;
- Complete and submit regular assignments in all curriculum areas. Achievement in all subject areas will be assessed and reported on;
- Follow expectations for responsible digital citizenship and district and school code of conduct.

**Q. Will daily attendance be taken within the remote learning program?**

**A. Yes.** Student attendance will be taken daily at the elementary level and per course at the secondary level.

**Q. Will there be a role for me as a parent/guardian if we choose full remote learning for our child(ren) in secondary school?**

**A. Yes.** Parents/guardians will need to:

- Support their child(ren) in getting set up in an independent study or elearning course;
- Support their child(ren) in scheduling learning time to ensure regular progress;
- Support their child(ren) in monitoring, completing, and submitting assignments;
- Provide their child(ren) with an adequate workspace that is free from distractions;
- Communicate with the designated teacher(s) related to questions and concerns.

**Q. Will secondary students have regular learning expectations if we choose remote learning?**

**A. Yes.** Secondary students will need to:

- Complete and submit regular assignments in the courses they are enrolled in;
- Achievement will be assessed and reported on;
- Check in with their designated teacher(s) during available office hours to address any questions and concerns;
- Follow expectations for responsible digital citizenship and the district and school code of conduct.

**Q. Will secondary students be able to transition from face-to-face instruction into remote classroom instruction and from remote back to classroom instruction?**

**A. Yes.** Secondary students may transition between remote and face-to-face classroom instruction at the beginning of each new quadmester (e.g., April 21).

**Q. Will special education supports be available for students with an IEP who choose remote learning?**

**A. Yes.** Remote learning teachers will follow the expectations within the IEP. BWDSB will attempt to provide continued access to assistive technology, including Special Equipment Amount (SEA) equipment, where possible, to support students with special education needs as they participate in remote learning. In situations where access to assistive technology is not feasible, educators will work with students and parents/guardians to determine workable solutions on an individual basis.

**Q. Will mental health supports be available for students who choose remote learning?**

**A. Yes.** Virtual mental health supports will be available for students who have a current support plan.

## **EQAO**

**Q. Will students in Grade 9 be required to complete the Grade 9 Education Quality and Accountability (EQAO) Mathematics Assessment?**

**A. No.** Grade 9 students will not participate in a mathematics assessment this year.

**Q. Will students in Grade 12 who have not completed the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) be required to complete it to graduate?**

**A. No.** The literacy graduation requirement will be waived for all students graduating during the 2020-21 school year.

**Q. Will non-graduating students write the OSSLT?**

**A.** The ministry will offer a field test of the online OSSLT in spring 2021, which could allow the opportunity for non-graduating students to write the test and have successful attempts counted on their transcript.

**Q. Will primary and junior EQAO assessments be administered?**

**A. No.** Primary and Junior Reading/Writing/Mathematics EQAO assessments have been cancelled for 2020-2021.

## **Dual Credit programs**

**Q. Will dual credit programs be offered?**

**A. Yes.** Courses will be offered alternatively with remote and face to face learning for 13 weeks (e.g., Week 1 at the college, Week 2 - alternating for 13 weeks). The Lifestyle Management night course will be offered remotely.

## **Specialist High Skills Major programs (SHSM)**

**Q. Will SHSM programs be offered?**

**A. Yes.** Program delivery may be somewhat modified, depending on the program. Students may complete some of their training online.

## **Adult Education**

**Q. Will adult education night courses continue?**

**A. Yes.** Night classes will be offered. Participants will be expected to wear a mask and maintain physical distancing.

**Q. Will adult education co-op work placements be able to continue to accumulate hours?**

**A. Yes.** Participants who are able to obtain a placement will be expected to follow the established health and safety protocols. Staff monitoring may occur virtually.