

**COVID-19**  
**Health and Safety Protocols**

**2022-2023**

**REVISED August, 2022**



**The Mabin School**

*Our community is depending on everyone's participation to minimize risk for our students, staff, and their families.*

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# Introduction

The health, safety, and wellbeing of students and staff is a top priority as The Mabin School plans to reopen for the 2022/23 school year. We are committed to following and exceeding Public Health guidelines, while ensuring that students are in school and learning through play and inquiry as much as possible.

## The Importance of In-Person Learning

As the [Science Table COVID-19 Advisory for Ontario](#) reported in July, 2021:

*“In-person learning is essential for the learning and overall well-being of children and youth. Therefore, barring catastrophic circumstances, schools should remain open for in-person learning.”*

With your help and cooperation, our aim is to keep students at school all day every day as much as possible for the duration of the pandemic. As the Science Table advises, “In-person learning is optimal for the vast majority of students because it enables access to a wide range of academic and social-emotional learning opportunities, promotes play, positive peer relationships, physical activity, and positive mental health.”

In-person learning remains our priority, although we are prepared to move to remote learning when required.

# The Big Ideas of our Strategy

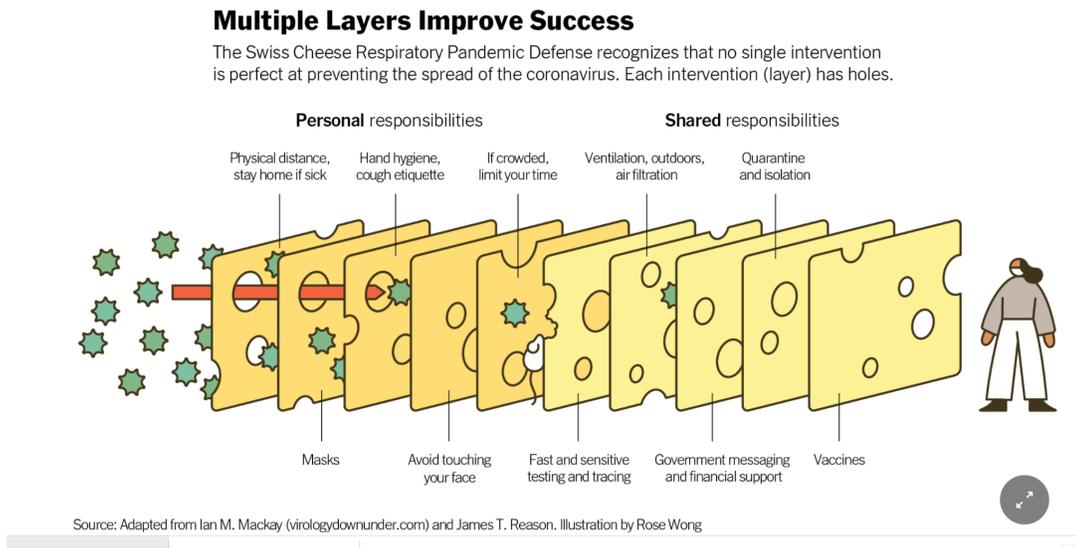
In order to ensure that students will be able to attend school in-person, it is vital that we have a layered approach to health promotion and COVID prevention. With that in mind, there are several “big ideas” to our strategy:

## 1. Vaccinate, vaccinate, vaccinate

All staff are required to vaccinate, subject to medical exemption. Parents are encouraged to do the same. We have a mandatory vaccination policy for staff and students. Eligible students are expected to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by August 15, 2022. Students under the age of 5 are expected to get vaccinated as soon as possible, with a first shot by January 1, 2023, and a second shot by March 1, 2023. Vaccination is our number one protection against COVID-19.

## 2. Prevent, prevent, prevent

We have a number of measures in place to prevent spread of the virus. No one measure will do the job, but by adopting the [“Swiss Cheese Model of Pandemic Defence”](#) we minimize risk.



## 3. Keep COVID-19 out of our buildings

By screening staff and students each day, we can ensure that symptomatic people stay home until they are well. Parents can use Ontario’s [School Screening tool](#) which is always updated with Public Health’s most current recommendations.

## 4. Enforce Public Health Measures

In particular, we will focus on:

- a. A mask friendly approach
- b. Hand washing and sanitizing
- c. Air filtration and outdoor learning

Staff and students are invited to wear a mask when inside, based on their comfort level. Community members who have been recently exposed to COVID-19 are encouraged to mask when inside. All staff and students will be asked to carry a mask for moments when needed and to mask according to public health policy.

## 5. Follow and exceed Ministry of Education Guidelines

We will continue to work closely with Toronto Public Health to keep our community safe. Guidelines change frequently, and we will always use TPH guidelines as our starting point.

## Statement About Risk

*The Mabin School recognizes that no human interactions are without risk, whether it is cold and flu season, chicken pox, or other childhood diseases that are commonly spread in school settings. These risks are magnified in a pandemic such as COVID-19, but the principles remain the same: stay home if ill, and maintain strong hand hygiene and clean environments. Risks increase with the number of social interactions and, for small children, with the sharing of toys and learning tools. Our Health & Safety Protocols have taken into account as many situations and risks as possible, but we cannot entirely prevent an infection, including flu, colds and COVID-19.*

Further details about our specific Health & Safety Protocols for the 2022-2023 academic year follow.

## **Our COVID-19 Board Advisory Committee**

*Our Board's COVID-19 Advisory Committee consists of members of all adult stakeholder groups at The Mabin School. Included are medical experts, lawyers, educators, and business leaders. This committee meets regularly to discuss issues of concern in regards to COVID-19, and to advise school staff. Many thanks to our **COVID-19 Board Advisory Committee** for their guidance in creating this document:*

### **Chair:**

*Emily McKernan*

### **Members:**

*Dr. Lisa Brooks*

*Jamie Campbell*

*Bianca Auciello*

*Dr. Sloane Freeman*

*Rachel Mathews*

*Heather Pettigrew*

*Chris Russell*

*Nancy Steinhauer*

### **IMPORTANT NOTE**

***Health and safety recommendations may change as scientists learn more about COVID-19. We will follow the guidance of Toronto Public Health in determining and implementing protocols to minimize risk for our students, staff, and their families.***

## Section 1 - Vaccinations

According to the [Science Table](#), “Immunization is the single most effective preventive intervention and its widespread uptake will dramatically reduce infection rates even among unvaccinated people, including children.” 100% of our staff members have been fully vaccinated. Now that a vaccine has become available for students, we have a policy of mandatory vaccination for eligible students. We strongly recommend that all parents be vaccinated. Our goal, as a school, is 100% vaccination.

## Section 2 - Screening

Some people may be infected with COVID-19 and contagious for days before they get sick, while other infected individuals may never develop symptoms. Both of these groups have the potential to spread the virus to the community at large.

With this information in mind, The Mabin School expects families to screen their child(ren) for symptoms on a daily basis, prior to leaving for school. Parents may use [Ontario’s School Screening Tool](#) which is updated regularly to reflect the most current guidance.

If the screening tool indicates that attendance at school is not permitted, we ask that the student or staff member self-isolate and follow current Toronto Public Health guidelines.

If a student or staff member tests positive on a COVID-19 test, we ask that the student/staff member communicate that with the school and follow the direction of Toronto Public Health.

We will continue to communicate to Toronto Public Health and the community when a confirmed case of COVID-19 is reported to the school.

## Section 3 - Masking and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff and students are invited to wear a medical mask indoors. Our approach is “mask friendly.”

The Mabin School provides interested staff members with medical-grade masks for their use as well as eye protection, when desired.

At this time, we are asking that all students from JK-6 carry a mask with them in a portable pouch, should a situation arise where the teacher deems masking to be necessary. Students should bring a clean mask each day, along with hand sanitizer.

We recommend that students bring an N95 or medical-grade mask whenever possible. A cloth mask made of three layers of tightly woven fabric is also acceptable.

All adults dropping off or picking up their child(ren) are welcome to wear masks when on, or around, campus.

## **Section 4 - Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette**

### **Handwashing**

Handwashing or the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers helps prevent infections.

- Handwashing with soap for at least 20 seconds is the single most effective infection control intervention.
- Students and staff will be expected to wash their hands and/or use hand sanitizer frequently:
  - After blowing nose, coughing or sneezing
  - After using the restroom
  - Before eating or preparing food
  - Before and after using shared equipment
  - Before and after touching face/mask
  - Before as well as after going outside for outdoor playtime
- Upon entering The Mabin School, at both school sites, children and staff will sanitize their hands at a hand sanitizing station near their entrance.
- Hand sanitizing stations, sinks, and handwashing stations will be located in classrooms and in various locations throughout each building.

### **Respiratory Etiquette**

Sneezing or coughing into a tissue, which is then immediately disposed of, (or if no tissue is available, sneezing or coughing into the crook of the elbow) and immediately performing healthy hand hygiene, also reduces the risk of transmitting droplets that may contain the virus.

Teachers will spend time teaching and reteaching these skills and routines at the beginning of each term and as required.

## **Section 5 - Cleaning and Disinfection**

Designated staff will conduct enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day.

- Each day will start with newly sanitized classrooms and common areas.
- Designated site staff will clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces and objects at least once a day or when visibly dirty.

## **Section 6 - Lunch Protocols**

- Students will eat in the gym this year, but each class will have its own tables and be distanced as much as possible from other classes.
- The gym will have a high-quality air filter running.
- Each student is required to bring their own drink bottle that is labeled and keep it with them during the day.
- As always, we request that all food that comes in the building is tree-nut and peanut free. If there are other serious allergies in your cohort, we will let you know.
- Use of shared microwaves/kitchen space is permitted for staff only, with sanitizing protocols in place.
- Students are encouraged to bring a litterless lunch and to take any garbage/food waste home with them.
- Students will bring their own lunches, unless they are participating in The Lunch Mom service or Pizza Lunch.
- Staff and students will perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating.
- Each student should bring a snack each day.
- Food will not be shared.
- Water bottles will be required to be filled rather than students and staff drinking directly from the mouthpiece of water fountains. Please encourage your child(ren) to fill the water bottle without touching the mouthpiece of the bottle to the mouthpiece of the water fountain.
- Students will not have access to refrigerators.

## **Section 7 - Assemblies and Integration**

Assemblies and Integration are vital parts of our school program. We continue to have assemblies and integration every Friday at 2:00 pm, and on an ad hoc basis during the week.

## Section 8 - Visitors

We love visitors at The Mabin School, and often rely on them to deliver interesting parts of our curriculum. We are looking forward to having, “in-person” visitors back in the building.

- Any visitors to school are required to self-screen and show proof of vaccination to visit inside the school. We encourage them to wear a mask while inside the school building.
- Visitors will sign-in at the reception area.
- All guest teachers, volunteers, and third-party providers will be fully vaccinated and will follow all of our COVID protocols.

## Section 9 - Ventilation

- The Mabin School will encourage staff to open windows and allow for the flow of fresh air in the building whenever possible.
- Air purifiers have been provided for classroom use.
- [Jade Units](#) have been added to large spaces for additional air purification.
- Teachers will be encouraged to take learning outside whenever possible.
- Filters will be changed regularly in portable air purifiers

## Section 10 - What if a Possible Case of COVID-19 is Identified at School?

- If a student is identified with potential COVID-19 symptoms, they will be taken to a “designated waiting area” to be assessed.
- If the student is deemed symptomatic, an office staff member will contact the parent, guardian, supporter or emergency contact, who will pick up the symptomatic child within a maximum of 60 minutes at the reception desk.
  - While waiting to be picked up from Mabin, a student whose health is in question will be given a medical-grade mask to wear.
  - Any staff member dealing with the student will be provided with full PPE (medical mask, face shield, gown, gloves).
  - The students will be removed from where other students are, and their workspace will be sanitized.
  - The parent, guardian, supporter or emergency contact will be required to follow TPH guidelines with regards to isolation and testing.
- Current Guidance: Individuals who are vaccinated, as well as children under 12 who have symptoms of COVID-19 will be required to isolate for five days following

the onset of symptoms. These individuals can end isolation after five days if their symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours, and all public health and safety measures, such as masking and physical distancing, are followed.

- Public Health Guidance changes frequently. We will always follow (or exceed) the most up-to-date guidelines.

## **What if a Confirmed Case of COVID-19 is Identified?**

- The Mabin School will immediately contact Toronto Public Health and follow Toronto Public Health guidelines, and inform the Mabin community.
- The student or staff member must remain in isolation, away from Mabin, for the recommended period of time.
- Toronto Public Health measures change frequently, so all decisions about testing and isolating will be guided by current public health measures.
- Toronto Public Health will provide further advice about information that should be shared with other staff and parents/guardians in the event there is a case or outbreak of COVID-19 in the setting.
- The school will continue to communicate when there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the staff or student community, while also protecting the privacy of the individual(s) affected.

## **Section 11 - Responsibilities**

### **i) Leadership and Administration Teams**

- Establishing The Mabin School's Health & Safety Protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and inform our community of these protocols, including daily self-screening of all employees
- Training all staff members on new protocols
- Reporting confirmed cases of COVID-19 to Toronto Public Health
- Cooperating with Toronto Public Health, if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 related to Mabin staff or students

### **ii) Faculty and Staff**

- Adhering to The Mabin School's Health & Safety Protocols
- Self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to attending in-class sessions
- Staying home when sick
- Teaching students about COVID-19 and Mabin Health & Safety Protocols
- Role modelling infection control behaviour
- Reminding and facilitating student adherence to Mabin Health & Safety Protocols
- Maintaining accurate attendance records daily
- Reporting a suspected case of COVID-19 as soon as possible

### iii) Students

- Self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms prior to attending in-class sessions
- Adhering to The Mabin School's Health & Safety Protocols
- Role modelling infection control behaviour for peers
- Respecting others (e.g. wearing a 3-layer cloth mask, medical-grade mask, or N95 whenever teachers or Public Health require it; supporting family's individual choices about mask wearing)

### iv) Parents/Guardians

- Informing The Mabin School and providing medical documentation of student's pre-existing health conditions
- Adhering to The Mabin School's Health & Safety Protocols
- Providing all students with a suitable mask each day and a portable pouch
- Ensuring daily self-screening and screening of students for symptoms of COVID-19 before leaving for school
- Keeping the student at home if COVID-19 symptoms are present, and reporting symptoms to their physician, Toronto Public Health, and The Mabin School
- Picking up student promptly (within 60 minutes) if identified as unwell
- Reporting before school each day, if a student is not attending for any reason
- Informing The Mabin School (office@mabin.com) of any student positive COVID-19 test results
- Following Toronto Public Health Guidelines outside of school
- Getting vaccinated if able, and vaccinating any students who are eligible for vaccination

## Conclusion

As public health guidance changes, our protocols will change too. In the meantime, we are counting on everyone in our community to cooperate so that we can keep each other safe.

We take our responsibility for your children's safety very seriously, and we hope you will join us in doing everything you can to keep our students, staff and their families healthy for the duration of this pandemic.

Thank you for helping us make sure we can give your children the best year of learning yet. We look forward to the time when COVID-19 is a distant memory, or at least a small inconvenience. Who knows? One of our little changemakers might just invent a cure.