



Matthews Hall

Established 1918

Tuesday, June 30, 2020

Dear Parents:

As you take time to recover from a challenging school year, I hope you will have the opportunity to relax with friends and family and that everyone in your life is safe and well. On behalf of the entire faculty and staff, thank you for your partnership this year, but most especially for your patience and support during the winter and spring months. Your understanding, flexibility, and pragmatism during personal hardships and pandemic restrictions have been very important to our community's stability during unprecedented educational and public health challenges.

In terms of the fall, the Premier and the Minister of Education announced on June 19, 2020, that schools across Ontario are in the process of generally planning for three potential learning models for classes in September. This will allow for a flexible approach based on the Covid-19 situation in Ontario at the time.

As we finalize our own plan over the summer at Matthews Hall, we will be referring to the recently released government guidelines [Approach to Reopening Schools for the 2020-21 School Year](#) and the [Recommendation for School Reopening](#) published by *Sick Kids Hospital*.

Our approach will be **flexible** and **responsive** taking into account the advice provided by Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, our own public health authority, and the unique needs of our students and families here in London.

We are excited about the prospect of returning in September to the opening of our **new** and **improved school addition** – the most significant facility improvement in our school's history! Our new building will offer several practical advantages that will assist us in responding to the needs of **community safety** and **public health concerns**.

To begin with, our class sizes and grade cohorts are typically **small**. This should allow us to comply with provincial directives for managing **daily student contact** without having to implement a more complicated alternating day/week schedule. In addition, our new building, with **modern air circulation, sinks in each classroom, touchless washrooms, and larger instructional spaces** will assist with **physical distancing** and **hygiene requirements**.

While our daily routines and procedures may require modification from those of a typical fall, we are confident that the measures we will have in place will allow us to meet the needs of our students within the structure of a predictable Monday to Friday school week.

What will be required for our September re-entry plan? In a word, **flexibility**.

While we are aiming for the resumption of full-time classes in September, we are aware that local circumstances may require adaptability in the fall or throughout the year. To this end, Matthews Hall is actively preparing for three fluid scenarios that will ultimately be driven by provincial, federal, and local regulations.

We are working hard to prepare for all scenarios, including the possibility of a changeable school year that requires adaptability between the following three models:

MODEL A: Regular school week with enhanced public health protocols

Regular operations will be characterized by physical distancing and health measures in place; Screening of staff and students; frequent supervised handwashing; class size restrictions; cohort management, so that students do not mix beyond their class groupings; minimization of movement of students; reporting of positive cases and enforced self-isolation of students or staff who become sick; staff training; flexible accommodation for students who may need to remain home **OR** for students whose parents may choose to keep them home.

MODEL B: “HiFlex Model” involving reduced in-person attendance and blended learning with a combination of “in-person/remote learning”

Modified school day with smaller class sizes and some form of alternation (TBD)

MODEL C: Full-Time Enhanced Remote Learning with *Co-Curricular Programming and regular daily timetable* for all students

Google Classroom platform using a blend of synchronous and asynchronous learning; published **regular full-day schedule of virtual lessons (daily) and recorded lessons**; at-home learning with enhanced learning at a distance; staff training; regular access to teachers throughout the full school day. We will be working with our families to ensure that all children and MH homes have the necessary technology to support the participation and learning of all students.

Again, our goal is to operate according to **Model A** in September; however, if circumstances change and we must adapt, our staff is committed to providing a rich, flexible, and engaging program in the interim. Like all schools, we have learned a lot from our experience this spring and have begun investing in **ongoing teacher training**, along with **additional equipment** required to enhance remote our learning scenarios.

In addition to assessing provincial plans for the coming fall, we have been conferring with our independent school networks (CAIS and CIS Ontario) and will continue to do so over the summer, as we work with students and families to ensure the best possible year. The perspectives and contexts of independent schools are quite different and our ability to adapt nimbly to meet our students' needs is an advantage.

At this point, we have plans in place for student bussing; however, procedures and protocols related to this service will be finalized over the summer once transportation companies receive direction and clarification from the appropriate authorities.

As you might expect, we are also in the process of developing a workable plan for our Extended Day service in the fall. The mixed-class/cross-grade nature of the program is a challenge we are hoping to overcome and address safely. Information about both bussing and extended day will be circulated over the summer when details and decisions are finalized.

Whatever modifications may be required during the 2020-2021, we are committed to making the experience a responsive and robust one for kids and families!

In the meantime, we are monitoring the Ontario Government's emergency orders to ensure our plans are safe, ready – and fully compliant with the law.

Thank you for your ongoing support and collaboration, as we work through this unique moment in time together.

We will get there in partnership with you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ric Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ric" being particularly prominent.

Ric Anderson
Head of School