



# Matthews Hall

Established 1918

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

## RETURNING TO SCHOOL SAFELY

The health, safety and well-being of students and staff is our top priority as Matthews Hall plans to reopen for the 2020-21 school year. Guided by the [SickKids Hospital](#) and the [Ontario Provincial Government](#), we have developed planning criteria for a safe return to school.

According to medical experts, students *should* ideally return to school, if we can structure a safe learning environment (though parents should be given a choice about whether to send their children to school).

At Matthews Hall, you have the option to choose whether your children learn entirely at home OR return to the School for their class time. Families will need to inform the School by **Monday, August 24, 2020**, if they intend to keep their children at home. Re-entry to regular in-school classes will only be permitted at certain points and there will be a limited number of re-entry points throughout the school year.

Students learning from home under these circumstances will receive all of the same assignments through Google Classroom, as well as regular check-ins from their teacher. Our full "Learning At Home" program will only be available, if the School must close as a result of directives from the Ministry of Education or our health authority.

### Two key principles for the safe return to school:

Provincial criteria emphasize two guiding principles to ensure that students and staff are safe:

1. **Physical Distancing:** As much as possible, the School will ensure all people on campus maintain a two-metre distance from one another. To provide for appropriate physical distancing, Matthews Hall is limiting the number of students in a classroom to 15 at a time with one teacher.
2. **Classrooms/Cohorts:** To limit the number of people with whom students and staff interact, the School timetable will be structured to ensure limited group sizes.

## ARRIVING AT SCHOOL

This section outlines the procedures for coming to school, including how to enter and exit the building/campus and the screening and self-assessment processes that Matthews Hall will implement.

Health and safety protocols will require that only Matthews Hall students and staff will be permitted to enter our school buildings. Essential visitors and maintenance calls will be screened and kept to a minimum.

Parents will not be permitted to enter the building except for emergencies.

### **STUDENT ARRIVAL, DROP-OFF, AND PICK-UP**

Students will arrive between 8:40 AM and 9:00 AM and enter the School independently through an assigned door (based on the location of their class). Students are expected to go directly to their classrooms. Teachers will be in the classrooms to supervise. Students must not arrive before 8:40 AM.

Kindergarten students will be assigned staggered arrival and dismissal time slots and will come to their classroom door with ONE parent. A door for entry and one for exit will be designated. Parents must drop their child quickly and exit the building efficiently. Only one parent/student will be permitted at the classroom door at a time. Designated waiting spots will be marked in the corridor.

### **PICK-UP**

Dismissal will be between 3:45 PM and 3:55 PM.

Students must exit the building efficiently and proceed to meet the bus or their ride. They must wait outside and maintain physical distance from others. Teachers will supervise to ensure physical distancing is maintained at the West Gate pick-up zone.

### **DAILY SCREENING AND SELF-ASSESSMENT**

All families and staff members are required to sign the attached **Screening Form** (Appendix A) before the start of the school day and complete a daily [self-assessment](#) before attending school.

A staff member or student with any COVID-19 symptoms **MUST** stay home.

Staff members who suspect they have COVID-19-related symptoms will get tested immediately and notify the School of the results.

### **CLASSROOMS**

Matthews Hall is limiting the number of students in a classroom to 15 in order to mitigate risk. Classrooms can accommodate 15 student work spaces with two metres of space between them. All desks will face the same direction.

The following measures will be in place to adhere to provincial guidelines and minimize health and safety risks:

- Only Matthews Hall staff and students will be permitted in classrooms;
- Classroom layouts will promote physical distancing and students will be expected to sit at the same assigned seat for each class;
- Students will spend the majority of their day in the same classroom. As much as possible the same teacher will remain with the class. If a different teacher is required, the teacher will come to the classroom, so student movement is minimized. If students are required to relocate classrooms for some subjects, movement in the corridors will be restricted to the class in question with physical distancing safeguards in place.
- If a space is shared with other cohorts, it will be sanitized between uses.
- For our youngest students, where the nature of a primary program makes physical distancing and long periods of time in desks particularly challenging, there will be an increased focus on infection prevention and control practices such as hand hygiene (close contact may be unavoidable at times).

Students will be required to:

- Remain in their assigned classroom during the school day (other than for washroom or recess breaks) or for classes that require relocation (e.g., physical education, etc.).
- Eat lunch in their classrooms, overseen by their homeroom teacher.

### **HAND-WASHING IN THE CLASSROOM**

All classrooms at Matthews Hall have sinks (or access to sinks) with soap dispensers for regular, supervised hand-washing. All rooms and school entrances will also have alcohol-based hand sanitizer available for staff and students.

Students in each classroom will be designated a specific route for travel when arriving and leaving the school, which includes being assigned an entrance based on the location of their classroom.

The number of children allowed in the washrooms at any one time will be monitored based on the size of the washroom.

## **HALLWAYS**

Students and staff will be expected to follow COVID-19 protocols, keeping to their designated paths through the building, not loitering in halls, and avoiding shortcuts or other actions that affect the safety of others.

Students will be required to follow a specific route from their assigned entrance to their classroom, as well as to the bathroom.

Signage will clearly mark all travel routes.

## **PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Students and staff will be required to reduce the personal items they bring to school to the essentials.

All personal belongings should be clearly labelled with the student or staff member's name.

Students will bring their personal belongings to their assigned classroom and keep their belongings with them at their seat or cubby, with no sharing of personal belongings. Use of locker space will include appropriate distancing measures, staggered use, and supervision.

Each student will have a set of necessary school supplies. Learning materials, tools, and manipulatives will be sanitized regularly.

Staff members will have an assigned desk/office and will keep their personal belongings in their assigned space. Teachers will not congregate before arriving in or returning to their classrooms.

## **LUNCHES AT SCHOOL**

All students will wash their hands in their classroom before lunch and snacks under teacher supervision. Students will eat at their own desks. Each student will clean his or her desk after eating.

Students will be required to eat lunch in their classroom to minimize chances for contact and transmission. There will be no sharing of food or drinks.

## **RECESS**

The School is currently reviewing the logistics of outdoor recess times, which may be staggered to ensure appropriate physical distancing measures are in place.

Outdoor play structures will not be cleaned. Children will wash their hands after time spent outdoors.

## **SCHOOL CLEANING ROUTINES AND EXPECTATIONS**

High-touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected twice daily (at mid-day and the end of day) by caretaking staff, including: countertops, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, touchscreens, handrails, photocopiers and toilet fixtures and faucets in washrooms.

All classrooms and office/working spaces will be equipped with alcohol-based sanitizing fluid and paper towels, as well as lid-free, lined garbage bins to facilitate cleaning routines.

Students and teachers will be required to clean their own desks, computers, keyboards, and other devices at the end of each day.

Classroom teachers will frequently clean high-touch surfaces in their designated areas throughout the school day.

All staff members will be expected to regularly clean high touch surfaces within their own workspaces and nearby common areas.

## **HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE**

Hand hygiene refers to hand-washing or hand-sanitizing to remove or kill a virus and is the most effective way to reduce the transmission of organisms.

Respiratory etiquette aims to reduce the risk of transmitting droplets that may contain the virus directly onto other surfaces where they may be picked up by others.

Instructions on hygiene will be provided.

Staff and students will be provided with targeted, age-appropriate education in proper hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette including posters and signs placed around the school, and through modelling by teachers.

## **SINKS AND ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB IN CLASSROOMS**

Staff and students will have the supplies they need to conduct appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. These supplies will be easily accessible in every classroom and throughout the School.

All classrooms at Matthews Hall have access to sinks with soap dispensers for regular, supervised hand-washing.

All rooms will also have alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) available for staff and students and everyone will be expected to clean their hands when they arrive and depart from the class (either with soap and water or ABHR).

### **REGULAR HAND-HYGIENE BREAKS**

Teachers will be required to have regularly scheduled hand-hygiene breaks and will remind students to wash and disinfect their hands whenever they enter and leave the room.

Anyone entering the School must conduct thorough hand hygiene.

### **MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS**

Students in Grades 4 to 8 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes. Outdoor times like recess can be used as opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks within their “cohort”.

Masks will not be required during outdoor play or physical education.

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will not be required to wear masks in indoor spaces.

Students are encouraged to practice wearing masks and learn what type of mask is most comfortable for them. Students may wear their own non-medical masks and Matthews Hall will also make non-medical masks available for students.

Reasonable exceptions or accommodations may be made with regards to the requirement to wear a mask.

Matthews Hall will instruct students and staff to follow recommendations of Public Health Ontario about how to use non-medical masks and face coverings, including putting on and taking off PPE.

### **STAFF AND MASKS**

Staff members will be expected to follow guidelines issued by local health authorities, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.

All school-based staff will be required to wear masks, with reasonable exceptions for medical conditions. School-based staff who are regularly in close contact with students will be provided with all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as medical masks and face shields.

Teachers will be reminded that the Ministry of Health guidelines state that wearing non-medical masks is not a substitute for physical distancing in the workplace.

During any prolonged activity where physical distancing of at least two metres cannot be maintained between staff and other staff or students (e.g., tutorials, 1:1 student – teacher instruction, etc.) requires ALL teachers and students to wear masks. Goggles or face shields are also recommended.

When cleaning, and especially where there is potential contact with bodily fluids, disposable gloves are required and will be readily available in every classroom.

### **SAFETY "KIT" AVAILABLE IN THE EVENT OF ILLNESS**

A “kit” will be available for a student, staff member, or essential visitor who becomes ill while at the School. Kits will include alcohol-based hand rub, disposable gloves, masks, eye protection, and a gown. Instructions on proper use of PPE will be included.

### **PROTECTING VULNERABLE STUDENTS AND STAFF**

Matthews Hall is taking every precaution to ensure the safety of students and staff. Our reopening plans for September are based on:

- Recommended physical distancing and cleaning/hygiene procedures
- Cohorts of 15, so students minimize contact and exposure with other students
- Strict exclusion of students and staff who exhibit any symptoms of COVID-19

All these steps implemented together will ensure the greatest degree of safety for all students and staff by making our school a safe working and learning environment.

For students and staff who are immunocompromised or have other medical conditions that make them vulnerable, Matthews Hall will provide accommodations.

For students, these accommodations may include learning from home throughout the year with a hybrid teaching and learning model. Accordingly, families will have a choice whether their child(ren) will attend school in person.

### **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR VULNERABLE STUDENTS**

Some students may be at higher risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19 infections due to underlying medical conditions such as immunocompromised states or chronic medical conditions such as cardiac and lung disorders.

Students with underlying conditions may attend school as they normally would; however, it is important for parents to work with their child’s healthcare providers to make an informed decision.

## **HEALTH PROCEDURES AND SUPPLIES**

This section outlines the health procedures in place, the supplies that will be available, and other strategies to ensure the safety of students and staff at Matthews Hall.

### **ISOLATION ROOM**

An Isolation Room has been designated at Matthews Hall in the room adjacent to the front office, with supervision provided by our school secretary. This space will be available for any staff member or student who becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms while at school.

Such individuals will be separated and placed in this room and monitored by our secretary, who will be trained in proper PPE use and effective infection control.

The Isolation Room will be equipped with kits that include all the required PPE to mitigate any potential spread of the virus and to protect staff and students.

The Isolation Room will be sanitized after each use.

### **POSITIVE CASE PROTOCOL**

Protocols will be in place to ensure the local public health unit will be notified of any positive case of COVID-19 at the School. Matthews Hall will work with the local public health unit to identify close contacts and will follow recommendations regarding next steps around communication, contact tracing, closures, additional testing, self-isolation, and cleaning.

**MATTHEWS HALL WILL HAVE A STRICT EXCLUSION POLICY IN PLACE FOR SYMPTOMATIC STUDENTS AND STAFF.**

Matthews Hall will notify parents/caregivers/guardians, if their child begins to show symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, and families will be expected to plan for **immediate** pick-up by a family member or caregiver.

### **STUDENTS WITH SYMPTOMS**

When a student begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending school, they will be immediately separated from others and placed in the Isolation Room, where they will be monitored by the School's secretary until they can be picked up.

## **STAFF MEMBERS WITH SYMPTOMS**

If a staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms, they will be directed to return home and self-isolate immediately. If they cannot leave immediately, the staff member will be isolated in the School's Isolation Room until they are able to leave.

Environmental cleaning/disinfection of areas and items used by the individual will take place immediately after the School is notified of possible contagion.

## **TESTING AND CONTACT TRACING**

For testing and contact tracing, Matthews Hall will follow the recommendations of the current [provincial testing guidelines](#).

Matthews Hall will consult with the local Public Health Unit for guidance on steps to take where an individual tests positive for COVID-19.

Matthews Hall will maintain comprehensive records regarding who is in the School, including a list of all possible contacts.

To support successful case and contact management, Matthews Hall will maintain up-to-date contact lists, including support staff, and essential visitors.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY SUPPLIES AND PREPAREDNESS TO DATE**

Matthews Hall has ordered PPE for all staff members, including masks, disposable gloves and gowns, and face shields.

Hand soap and paper towels are in all classrooms with sinks and in all washrooms. All classrooms and offices have hand sanitizer. Hands-free sanitizer dispensers are placed at each entrance.

Matthews Hall has prepared kits containing masks, gloves, a protective shield, and gowns to manage those who present with symptoms.

The School has an infrared thermometer to safely check the temperature of any staff or student showing symptoms.

Barrier screens will be in place for high-traffic desks.

Matthews Hall has created signs and arrows to direct traffic in halls and common areas, and installed pandemic response plan signs for the main doors and in other strategic locations.

Matthews Hall has rearranged staff workspaces to ensure physical distancing.

Increased cleaning and sanitizing schedules are in place.

Drinking fountains are only to be used as water bottle fill stations. No other use will be permitted.

## **RECORD-KEEPING**

Teachers will maintain attendance records for all students, whether they are participating onsite or online. A record of classroom seating charts will be kept.

Matthews Hall will keep daily records of everyone who enters the building for the purpose of contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak, which includes their name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, and screening completion.

Maintenance staff who need to enter the building to complete repairs will also complete a COVID-19 assessment, provide contact details and have a record logged for their arrival and departure.

## **THE 2020-21 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Matthews Hall will adopt a learning model prioritizing cohorts that will reduce contact between students and teachers.

This will allow all of our students to attend school for a full 5-day schedule each week.

Families have a choice about whether they want their child to attend in person at the school OR only learn at home.

School will start at 9:00 AM and end at 3:55 PM

Each day of classes will include staggered breaks scheduled to minimize traffic in the halls and allow teachers and students an opportunity to refresh.

## **STAFF TRAINING**

Matthews Hall is committed to ensuring that all staff and faculty are trained in all of our COVID-19 health and safety protocols, including hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, proper use of PPE, environmental cleaning and the importance of physical distancing and symptom screening. Time will be dedicated in August to review all school policies and expectations.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

As a result of physical distancing expectations, transportation planning is especially challenging for this school year due to the reduction in vehicle capacity. Matthews Hall is working with Murphy's Bus Lines to resume our contracted bussing services for families that require it, but we acknowledge this service is not guaranteed, and we strongly encourage families to plan for other options. If bussing is available, all required safety protocols will be in place.

## **EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM**

Our "Before and After School Care program" will continue with limited numbers in place. Only registered students will be permitted to attend. Hand hygiene will be required and will be monitored when students enter the program and before students go to their classes to start the school day. The program will be held outdoors as much as the weather permits. Students are asked to avoid eating during program. The program base location (the school library) will be cleaned each morning after the program is dismissed and each evening after the program closes.

## **MUSIC**

Vocal and instrumental music classes will continue with increased physical distancing in place. Music teachers will wear a face shield while teaching and conducting. Instruments will not be shared under any circumstances.

A variety of delivery options is being considered to meet our music program's overall expectations. This may include fully-distanced learning, in-person teaching, and instruction with lower-risk performance opportunities (e.g., in-school instruction in larger spaces, restricting the type of instruments in a group setting), or in-person teaching and instruction with no live performance.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

As much as possible, physical education classes will take place outdoors and activities will be planned to allow for physical distancing and that limit shared equipment. Students will wash their hands before and after each class and all appropriate safety measure will be enforced for changeroom procedures. Capacity in changerooms will be limited

## **CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAM**

Matthews Hall recognizes that these activities are an integral part of the school experience. We are committed to continuing as much of our co-curricular program as we are able to do safely. Some activities will resume in a phased approach and others will require creative modifications.

For athletic programs, modifications to game play and rules may be required, and spectators may be limited or not permitted. The resumption of inter-school sports will be dependent on local athletics protocols.

Our priority will be to re-introduce low risk individual-based fitness and recreation activities. Sports with a high degree of physical contact will be postponed.

Large indoor assemblies will be cancelled for the immediate future. We will be using outdoor options and creative technology to help keep our student-staff community connected.

### **ABOUT THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL PLANNING PROCESS**

The back-to-school planning process was guided by a thorough review of current research, including the Ministry of Education Approach to Reopening Schools, consultation with our local Public Health authority, input from our staff and faculty, and regular meetings of our Leadership Team.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON SCHOOL REOPENING**

We also followed recommendations with respect to evolving guidelines for school reopening from the following:

- Law firm of Borden Ladner Gervais (BLG), Toronto, Canada
- Conference of Independent Schools of Ontario (CIS Ontario)
- Canadian Accredited Independent Schools (CAIS)

We are focused on continually fine-tuning our health and safety procedures and pandemic response planning as guided by emerging directives and recommendations from the Province, the Ministry of Health, and other agencies.

This is a draft plan which will continue to evolve with new information and any changes required or recommended by the Provincial Government. The provincial government may make additional announcements throughout the remainder of the summer regarding additional protocols for the return to school for students in Ontario. We will be watching this carefully.

Matthews Hall will update our Back-to-School Plan as needed to be in-line with new directives, and will inform parents, guardians, and students regarding such updates. Matthews Hall is committed to regular and open communication with our families throughout the school year.

*We wish everyone a safe and happy return to school, and look forward to seeing you in the fall!*



## APPENDIX A

### PARENT/GUARDIAN DAILY SCREENING

Matthews Hall (the “School”) has arranged to re-open operations at 1370 Oxford Street West, London, Ontario, on September 8, 2020.

The health, safety and well-being of students and staff is a top priority as the School plans to reopen for the 2020/21 school year.

The School appreciates and requires your cooperation in reopening. The School is commencing reopening based on the assurance that all persons entering School premises have taken proper precautions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

As you are aware, the best understanding of the present evidence is that COVID-19 can be transmitted by persons who do not exhibit symptoms. There is no guarantee that COVID-19 will not be contracted by persons entering School premises.

We request that you screen your child **prior to arrival** at the School each day. In addition to daily active screening, please note that all students will be monitored at School for possible signs or symptoms of illness.

As a Parent/Guardian, you must prevent the spread of illness by keeping your child home from School if you or your child experience **any** of the following signs or symptoms:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- Chills
- New or worsening cough
- Barking cough, making whistle noise when breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Runny nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- Stuffy or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)

- Lost sense of taste or smell
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Headache that is unusual or long lasting
- Digestive issues, such as nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain
- Muscle aches that are unusual or long lasting
- Extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- Falling down often
- For young children, sluggishness or lack of appetite

If your child experiences any of the symptoms while at the School, staff will contact you or one of your emergency contacts to pick up your child **immediately**. While your child waits for you or your designate to arrive, s/he will be separated from the other children.

As a Parent/Guardian responsible for my child, I agree to the following:

- I have read and understood the above information.
- I understand the risk of illness associated with placing my child in the School.
- Neither my child, nor anyone in my child's household, nor anyone with whom a member of my child's household has been in close contact, has tested positive for COVID-19 or had any of the symptoms in the last 14 days. If such symptoms or positive test for COVID-19 occur after submitting this form, I will **immediately** exclude all of my children from School, and my children will not attend the School until a minimum period of 14 days has passed after the positive test results or the children receive a medical report that they can return to School.

Note: close contact includes living with, providing care, or otherwise having close prolonged contact (within 2 meters) with another person.

- Neither my child, nor anyone in my child's household, nor anyone with whom a member of my child's household has been in close contact, has traveled to or had a layover in any country outside Canada in the past 14 days. If such return from travel occurs after submitting this form, I will **immediately** exclude all of my children from School, and my children will not attend the School until a minimum period of 14 days has passed after the date of return to Canada.

- I agree to the screening requirements and to accurately carry out the daily screening. Misrepresentation regarding the information provided to the School could result in exclusion of the child from the School.
- Upon request by the School, I consent to providing copies of my child’s COVID-19 test results to the School.
- This agreement remains in effect for the duration of the 2020/21 school year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Student  
 (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of Birth

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Parent/Guardian  
 (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Parent or Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of Parent/Guardian  
 (Please Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Parent or Guardian