



District School Board  
Ontario North East

# 2021-2022 COVID Response Plan

Last updated on January 13, 2022

## Living Document

This is a living document, which will be updated based on guidance and direction from the Ministry of Education, the Porcupine Health Unit, and the Timiskaming Health Unit.

## Strategic Priorities

All work in DSB1 is grounded in our three strategic priorities of Innovation, Culture and Equity. This includes the implementation of this plan for all our schools and board offices.

## Guiding Principles

In addition to our strategic priorities, the following guiding principles will guide our work as we return to school and work.



**Prioritize health and safety**



**Support well-being**



**Ensure equity of access for students, staff and families**



**Foster innovative learning opportunities**



**Be adaptable and flexible**



**Be financially sustainable**

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# Health and Safety

## Layers of Protection

- Daily [screening](#) by all staff, students, and visitors.
- Limiting the number of contacts in schools and workplaces.
- Maintaining as much physical distance as possible, at all times.
- [Proper and frequent handwashing](#) and [hand sanitizing](#).
- Proper wear of medical/procedural masks and eye protection by staff.
- Proper wear of non-medical masks by **all students in Kindergarten to Grade 12**.
- Enhanced cleaning protocols.
- Implementation of an immunization disclosure process for staff and frequent school visitors.

## Mandatory Daily Screening

- All families/students (Kindergarten to Grade 12) must complete the [screening tool](#) **each** day before attending school and **follow the direction** provided in the tool.
- Staff must complete the [screening tool](#) **each** day before attending work and **follow the direction** provided in the tool.
- **Students and staff must provide evidence that they have successfully completed the screening if attending in-person.**
- **Visitors must complete the [screening tool](#) each day before coming into the school and follow the direction provided in the tool.**
- Any student, staff or visitor who does not pass the screening must not come into the school.
- **All visitors will be required to sign-in upon entering the school**

## Limiting contacts

- Elementary students will be cohorted by class.
- Secondary students will follow a **quadmester schedule, until January 27, 2022**, where they will attend two classes each day for an average of 45 days.
- **Beginning January 31, 2022, DSB1 will follow a semester schedule. Students will attend 4 classes each day until June 24, 2022.**
- Students may work in small groups with students from other cohorts/classes to support learning, such as special education supports.
- Schools will limit the number of staff coming into a classroom. Staff schedules will be organized to limit the number of contacts.
- Up to two staff members may carpool for board business. Staff will be required to maintain physical distance and wear their PPE in the vehicle (i.e., mask and eye protection).
- Staff who reside in different households and carpool to and from work are strongly encouraged to follow public guidance and put in place the following layers of protection:
  - Masking
  - Eye protection
  - Physical distancing in the vehicle (passenger sitting in the back and opposite side of the driver), where possible
  - Open windows, when possible
- Staff meetings will remain virtual at this time.
- Schools will not host assemblies at this time.

## Physical Distancing

- As much distancing as possible between students, between students and staff and between staff members must be always maintained, both indoors and outdoors.

## Personal Protective Equipment

### Staff

- The board will provide the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to staff.
- Staff will be provided medical/surgical masks and an optional alternative of non-fit-tested N95 masks
- Non-fit-tested N95 masks are not to be worn outside. Please use the medical/surgical masks.
- Staff must always wear a board-issued mask while indoors. Masks can be removed while eating and drinking. A minimum of two meters of distance must be maintained while consuming food/drinks.
- Staff must wear eye protection (i.e., safety glasses, goggles, or face shield) indoors if they cannot maintain two meters of distance from others. Staff are expected to work alongside students and will be required to wear eye protection at times in the classroom.
- Staff must wear a board-issued mask and eye protection while outdoors if two meters of distance from others cannot be maintained.
- A staff member who is not able to wear a mask due to medical reasons must inform Human Resources.

### Students

- All students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 must always wear properly fitted non-medical masks while inside, except while drinking and eating.
- Students will be provided with high quality three-ply cloth masks. These will be available to students and encouraged to be used.
- Masking is required while engaging in physical activity indoors. Activities will be modified to ensure masks can be worn safely.
- Students are not required to wear masks outdoors. Distance between cohorts/classes will be maintained while outdoors.
- All students (Kindergarten to Grade 12) must wear a mask while on the bus.
- Students with previously documented sensory and breathing issues may request an exemption from wearing a mask. Families must contact the school's Principal to discuss a mask exemption. Medical documentation is required to consider mask exemptions. If medical documentation is already found in the student's IEP, further documentation is not necessary
- Schools will work with families requesting a mask exemption to implement additional layers of protection to ensure the safety of other students and staff in the school.
- Approved mask exemption forms will be shared with the Transportation Supervisor.

## Handwashing and Hand Sanitizing

- Proper and frequent handwashing is the preferred method to ensuring hand hygiene and limit the spread of the virus.
- Time to allow proper hand hygiene will be built into the school day. For example:
  - Upon arrival at school
  - Before and after nutrition breaks
  - Before returning to the classroom from outdoors or other areas in the school
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available at school, gym entrances and in classrooms to facilitate hand hygiene.

## Shared Items

- Sharing items to support learning is permitted.
- Centres may be in place in classrooms.
- Students are required to wash their hands before and after engaging in centres or utilizing shared materials.

## Enhanced Cleaning Protocols and Ventilation

- At least one custodian will be in the school when students are present.
- Increased cleaning and sanitizing measures will be in place. This includes more frequent cleaning of high-touch surfaces and washrooms.
- Playground equipment will not be cleaned every evening.
- Isolation rooms will be cleaned after each use.
- Ongoing optimization of air quality in schools through improved ventilation and filtration. The Board Ventilation Profile Report is found [here](#)

## Visitors

- Appointments will be made for family visits to the school, on a limited basis.
- Limited visitors, such as service providers (e.g., NEOFACS), will be permitted in our schools.
- Local protocols with service agencies and the guidelines found in Appendix E will be in place.
- Visitors must wear a medical mask while inside the school or workplace. One may be provided to them by the school.

## Classroom Set Up

- Desks will be assigned to students and will allow for as much space as possible between each student and with seats facing the same direction, where possible.
- Plexiglass may be in place for Kindergarten to Grade 3 classrooms that have tables.
- Classroom set up will be modified to limit the amount of furniture in the class.
- Teachers are required to remove all personal furniture and decorations to maximize classroom space. Professional resources may remain in the classroom.

## Movement in Schools

- Schools will create efficient designated routes for students to get to and from classrooms.
- Floor decals or signage will be present in high-traffic areas such as school entrances and main offices.
- Student pick-up and drop-off will take place outside of the school.
- Elementary students will wait in their identified area of the school yard when they exit the bus or are dropped off.
- Elementary teachers will greet their students outside and escort them to the classroom when the bell rings.
- Secondary students will go to their lockers (if needed) and directly to their morning class when they arrive at school. Hallway Monitors and potentially other staff will be supervising students.
- Breaks will be staggered to ensure students remain with their classmates as much as possible.
- Secondary students will take their 10-minute breaks in the classroom or near the class in the hallway.
- Elevators will be limited to one person at a time. For students with special needs, two people will be permitted (student and staff member).
- Schools will encourage students not to congregate in groups before and after school.

- Staff will always maintain a minimum of two meters of distance in the staff rooms while eating. Capacity limits will be posted on staff room doors. Excess furniture will be removed to support physical distancing.
- Emergency procedures (fire drills, lockdowns) will be modified to ensure physical distancing between students, where possible.
  - As per regulation, there are to be three fire drills in the fall and three fire drills in the spring.
  - Evacuation of individual classrooms will ensure physical distancing.
  - Where a fire alarm sounds outside the scope of a planned fire drill, the total evacuation of the school shall proceed as per procedures outlined in the approved school Fire Safety Plan.
  - As per regulation, a minimum of two lockdown drills must occur each school year. The way they are conducted may be modified for the 2021-2022 school year.
  - Lockdown drills and other emergency and crisis response drills will be aligned with public health advice and measures regarding physical distancing. Staff and students will continue to wear appropriate PPE and perform hand hygiene as appropriate.

## **Washrooms**

- The number of people using a washroom will be limited. This will be facilitated by posting signs on washroom doors, staggering washroom times and only allowing one student to leave the classroom to use the washroom at a time. Every second urinal will be closed in boys' washrooms to ensure distancing.

## **School Photos**

- School photos may proceed, with enhanced safety protocols in place.
- Class photos will not take place.
- Schools will confirm safety protocols with contractors prior to the photo sessions.
- Students engaged in remote learning may come to the school to take their photo, by making an appointment with the school.
  - The student must confirm they have completed and passed the [screening tool](#) upon entry. Students will show the green checkmark on a device or provide a completed copy of the screen.
  - The student must sign-in at the front entrance.
  - The student must always wear a mask while inside the school, except while seated to take their photo.
  - The student must always maintain a minimum of two meters of distance from others.

## **Staff and Student Attendance**

- All staff and students are expected to complete the screening tool prior to attending school and are required to stay home when ill.
- Students or staff who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell will be sent home immediately. If the staff member is a teacher, the class will be covered by a staff member or occasional staff member.
- If an employee is required to self-isolate, they will follow the applicable language in their collective agreement.
- When staff are absent, casual, and occasional staff will be hired, where possible.
- DSB1 will limit the number of staff members who work in more than one school. If staff are required to be in more than one school within one day, they will be required to change their mask before entering a new location.

- Staff who work in multiple locations will be scheduled in a way that limits the number of locations in which they work during a week.
- Any employee who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 that is believed to have originated from the workplace or who believes they have been exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace, must report this to Human Resources by completing the [COVID WSIB forms on DocuShare](#) and submit them directly to Sue Holmes at [sue.holmes@dsb1.ca](mailto:sue.holmes@dsb1.ca).

## **Learning Environments**

### **General Learning Environment Strategies**

- Educators will focus on overall and specific expectations.
- Schools will emphasize outdoor learning when the weather permits.
- All students will engage in 300 minutes of instruction per day.
- Students will not be sent to the office except in cases related to symptoms of COVID-19. School Principals and Vice-Principals will be asked to come to the classroom for discipline issues, if necessary. Teachers and support staff are asked to manage discipline issues as much as possible.
  - Cooperative Education:
    - In-person community placements will be arranged, where possible.
    - All placement arrangements will follow the relevant provincial requirements under the [Reopening Ontario Act](#).
  - Music:
    - Music programs are permitted in areas with adequate ventilation.
    - The use of wind instruments is permitted indoors within a cohort/class, if two meters of distance can be maintained.
    - The use of wind instruments is permitted outdoors in mixed cohorts/classes, if two meters of distance can be maintained.
    - Singing is permitted indoors with masking.
  - Health and Physical Education:
    - The use of gymnasiums, swimming pools, change rooms, weight rooms, indoor physical education equipment and shared outdoor equipment are permitted with distancing.
    - Capacity in changerooms will be limited, ensuring distancing is maintained.
    - Masking is required while engaging in physical activity indoors. Activities will be modified to ensure masks can be worn safely.
    - Students can remove their mask outdoors, within their cohort/class, with as much distance as possible.
    - Students can remove their mask outdoors in mixed cohorts/classes, with as much distance as possible.
    - Students will be required to wash their hands before and after participating in physical education. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be available at gym entrances to facilitate this.
  - Computer Labs, Makerspaces and Technology Education:
    - Students will wash their hands before and after the use of these spaces.
    - High touch surface areas will be cleaned daily.
    - Students will maintain as much distance as possible.

- Field Trips
  - Field trips are permitted and must follow the relevant provincial requirements under the [Reopening Ontario Act](#).
  - Field trip plans will be reviewed by the School Principal, Superintendent and COVID-19 Lead.
  - Field trips will be organized by class. Field trips may not involve more than one class at a time.
  - All staff and students must be screened upon arrival.
  - Students will be cohorted with their classmates throughout the duration of the field trip.
  
- Extra-Curricular Activities - **Currently paused until further notice**
  - School-based clubs, activities, sport teams, bands and extra-curriculars will gradually resume this fall.
  - Schools will not bring more than one team together at a time. (e.g., A junior team cannot have a shared practice with a senior team.)
  - Indoor high-contact sports (e.g., basketball), where students are vaccinated or engaging in twice weekly rapid antigen testing,
  - Students and staff must wear a mask indoors while not engaging in a high-contact sport (e.g., while entering the gym, sitting on the bench)
  - Masks are not required while playing a high-contact sport, such as basketball and hockey.
  - High contact sports may take place outdoors.
  - Students may remove their mask outdoors when engaged in a high-contact sport. Students will be masked outdoors while waiting for their turn to play.
  - There will be no spectators, including DSB1 staff. Only coaches may be present at practices and games.
  - All layers of protection and academic program requirements apply to extra-curricular activities.

## Elementary Learning Environments

- Elementary students will be cohorted with their classmates and homeroom teacher. A cohort may have limited contact with other subject teachers for classes such as French, Arts and Health and Physical Education.
- Rotary classes may be in place, on a limited basis.
- Materials will be provided by the board to students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 based on the materials they use in the classroom.
- Families may choose to send their child(ren) with their own materials. Items sent from home will have to be clearly identified.
- Cloakrooms will be in use. All hooks and cubbies will be clearly identified with student names. All student items must also be identified.

## Secondary Learning Environments

- Secondary schools will follow a quadmester model **until January 27, 2022**. Students will engage in two courses each rotation.
- The use of culture rooms and resource rooms will be permitted.
- The community service requirement has been modified to 20 hours for students graduating in June 2022.
- The literacy graduation requirement for secondary students has been removed for students graduating in June 2022.

- Lockers may be in use. Schools will be required to maintain an updated list of locker assignments and combinations. The school will not be responsible for students' items left at school. Schools will communicate this with families.
- The school year will be divided into **two rotations until January 27, 2022**. Students will engage in two classes at a time.
  - Quadmester 2: November 10, 2021, to January 27, 2022
- **As of January 31, 2022, secondary schools will move to a semester schedule. Students will engage in four classes each day from January 31, 2022, to June 24, 2022.**

## Hybrid Model

Please read [this information sheet](#) for more details.

## Special Education

- Additional transition time for students with special needs may be put in place to ensure a smooth transition.
- Some integration of students will be permitted to support learning, with the approval of the Special Education Team.
- Secondary students with special needs who are timetabled into a mainstream course will attend school following the secondary model.
- Student support meetings, case conferences and IPRC meetings, will continue. These will be held virtually where possible.
- Schools will ensure that IEPs are developed and implemented in collaboration with the school team and parents.
- SERTs may bring small groups of students together, with the approval of the Special Education Team.
- District support services (Behaviour and Autism Consultants, Blind and Low Vision, Deaf & Hard of Hearing) will continue to support students both in-person and remotely. The established referral process will remain in place.
- Assessments and therapy sessions will continue and will follow agency policies.

## Mental Health and Well-Being

Returning to school will require time to address students' social and emotional needs.

All staff have a role to play in supporting students' mental health and well-being. Schools will continue to implement a tiered approach to mental health that will support all students. Schools will continue to work collaboratively with community agencies for students requiring more intensive supports.

The Mental Health and Well-Being Team will provide a blended model of support with both in-person and virtual services in the following areas:

- Class-wide social and emotional learning programs
- Support for student lead initiatives such as calm clubs, Gay Straight Alliances, Jack Chapters and more
- Regular in-school and virtual office hours
- Individual and/or group services
- Suicide Assessment and Intervention
- Crisis support

- Resources and strategies for educators to help support student social and emotional needs in the classroom
- Warm referral to secure community support services for students and families as needed
- Facilitate access to community support services being offered remotely
- Involvement of Attendance Counselors for students who are not attending school and/or stop engaging in distance learning.

## **Student Transportation**

- Bus drivers and monitors must complete the [screening tool](#) **each** day before attending work and follow the direction provided in the tool.
- Frequently touched surfaces on buses will be cleaned twice daily.
- Medical masks and eye protection will be provided for school bus drivers and school bus monitors.
- Non-medical masks will be required for all students (Kindergarten to Grade 12) while on buses unless a medical exemption has been granted by the school principal.
- Families who choose not to have their child wear a mask for non-medical reasons will make alternate transportation arrangements for their child(ren).
- Students will wash or sanitize their hands before getting on the bus at the end of the day.
- Students will be assigned to buses as in the past. As a result, there could be 72 students on a bus.
- Students will be assigned seats and a record of the seating plan will be kept. Students who live in the same household will be seated together.
- Where possible, the seat directly behind the bus driver will remain empty to maintain physical distancing.
- Windows will be opened, when possible, to increase ventilation.
- If a student becomes symptomatic at school, they will not take the bus at the end of the day.

## **Food Preparation and Nutrition Breaks**

- Staff and students will perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating.
- Elementary students will eat lunch in their classroom or outside. The use of cafeterias is not allowed for students in Kindergarten to Grade 8.
- Students will be expected to clean their own space after nutrition breaks.
- Secondary students will be encouraged to go home on their lunch break, if possible.
- Secondary students will be assigned a table with their morning class.
- A minimum of two meters will be maintained between classes in cafeterias.
- Larger schools will establish capacity limits in cafeterias.
- Microwaves in cafeterias and classrooms may be used.
- Nutrition programs will be limited to pre-packaged items. Pre-packaged means that volunteers may have packaged items into Ziplock bags. These items will have to be pre-packaged in an approved kitchen at the school.
- Handwashing stations will not be used for washing dishes or food preparation.
- Students may bring their own labelled water bottle and keep it with them for the entire day. Water bottles will be required to be filled rather than students and staff drinking directly from the mouthpiece of water fountains, which are closed.
- Schools will not plan non-instructional activities that involve students in preparing or serving of food.

- Cafeterias are open for food service of individually packed servings and schools without food service will remove all self-serving food items.
- Nutrition programs may still be supported by limited volunteers in the schools. The goal continues to be healthy and nutritious snacks.
- Breakfast program foods will be delivered to individual classrooms.
- “Pizza Days” and other special food days may be organized in schools. No volunteers will come into the school to help administer special food days.
- Elementary milk programs may continue to run if the milk is delivered to the individual classrooms by monitors or staff.

## **Graduations, Ceremonies and Special Events**

- Schools will not host in-person assemblies at this time.
- Schools will plan for in-person graduations and celebrations in June 2022, unless the local COVID-19 context does not allow it.



## Student Mask Exemption Form

The District School Board Ontario North East (DSB1) COVID-19 Response Plan indicates the following:

- All students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 must wear properly fitted non-medical masks while inside, except while drinking and eating.
- Masking is required while engaging in physical activity indoors. Activities will be modified to ensure masks can be worn safely.
- Students are not required to wear masks outdoors. Distance between cohorts/classes will be maintained while outdoors.
- All students (Kindergarten to Grade 12) must wear a mask while on the bus.
- Students with previously documented sensory and breathing issues may request an exemption from wearing a mask by contacting the school's Principal.
- Medical documentation is required to consider mask exemptions. If medical documentation is already found in the student's IEP, further documentation is not necessary.
- Schools will work with families requesting a mask exemption to implement additional layers of protection to ensure the safety of other students and staff in the school.

<b>Student Name</b>	
<b>School</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	
<b>Name of Parent or Guardian</b>	

**Reason for exemption request. Medical documentation must be attached to this form for consideration.**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal or Vice-Principal Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



## **DSB1 Photos and Videos Guidelines**

District School board Ontario North East (DSB1) and its schools create a sense of community and pride by sharing photos and videos of students and staff on websites, social media, blogs, and other digital platforms.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for DSB1 to be a role model in our communities. The visuals shared with families and communities will reflect all layers of protection listed in our [Return to School Plan](#) and public health guidance at all times.

The below guidelines will support schools and educators in sharing appropriate and positive visuals during the current pandemic.

- Staff wear a medical/procedural mask and eye protection.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 wear a properly fitted non-medical mask.
- Staff and students maintain as much distance as possible and avoid direct contact with others, including wrapping arms around another person.



District School Board  
Ontario North East

## Community Agency Guidelines

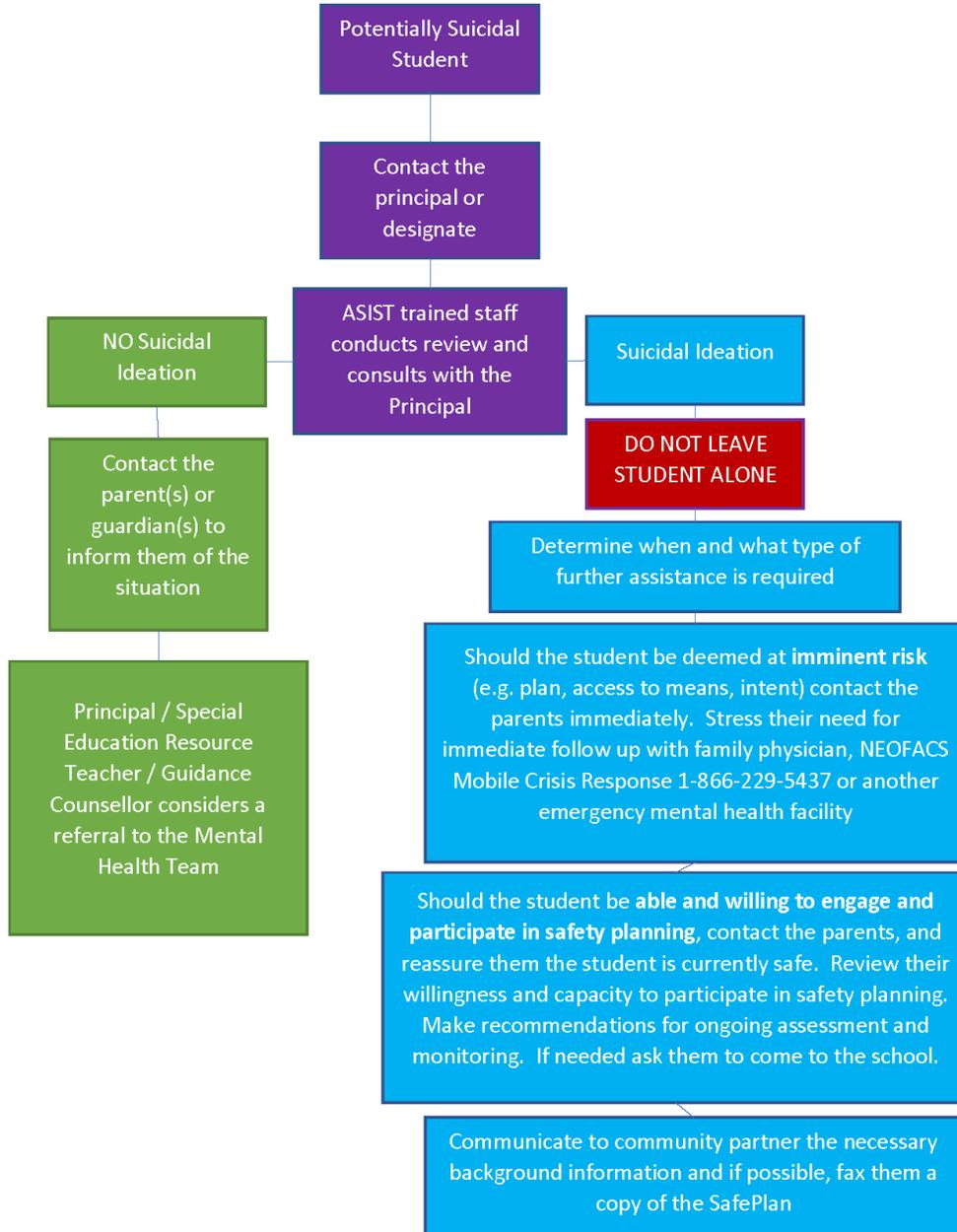
District School board Ontario North East (DSB1) values the work of community agencies and service providers for students and families. The guidelines below will support our ongoing collaboration with community agencies, while maintaining high safety standards in our schools.

- Workers wishing to work with a student in-person must contact the school to make an appointment.
- Workers must complete the [screening tool](#) **each** day before coming into the school and follow the direction provided in the tool.
- Workers must sign in upon entering the school.
- Workers must always wear a medical/procedural mask and eye protection while inside the school, except when eating or drinking.
- Workers must wash/sanitize their hands upon entering the building.
- Workers must clean the space that was allocated for the visit before leaving (e.g., spray and wipe down table and chairs)
- Workers must wash/sanitize their hands before exiting the school

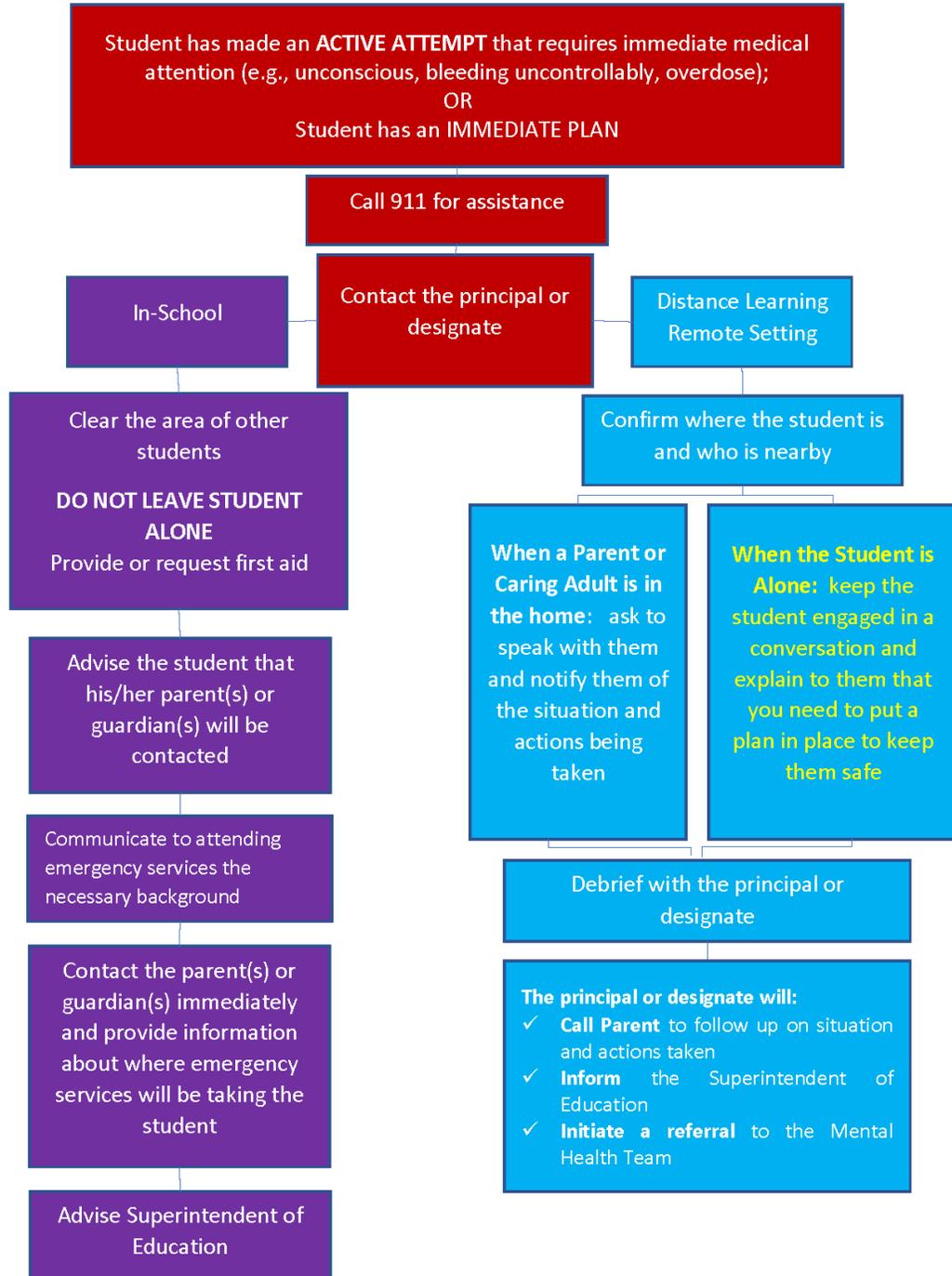
## DSB1 Youth Suicide Protocol

[Click here to consult the Youth Suicide Protocol.](#)

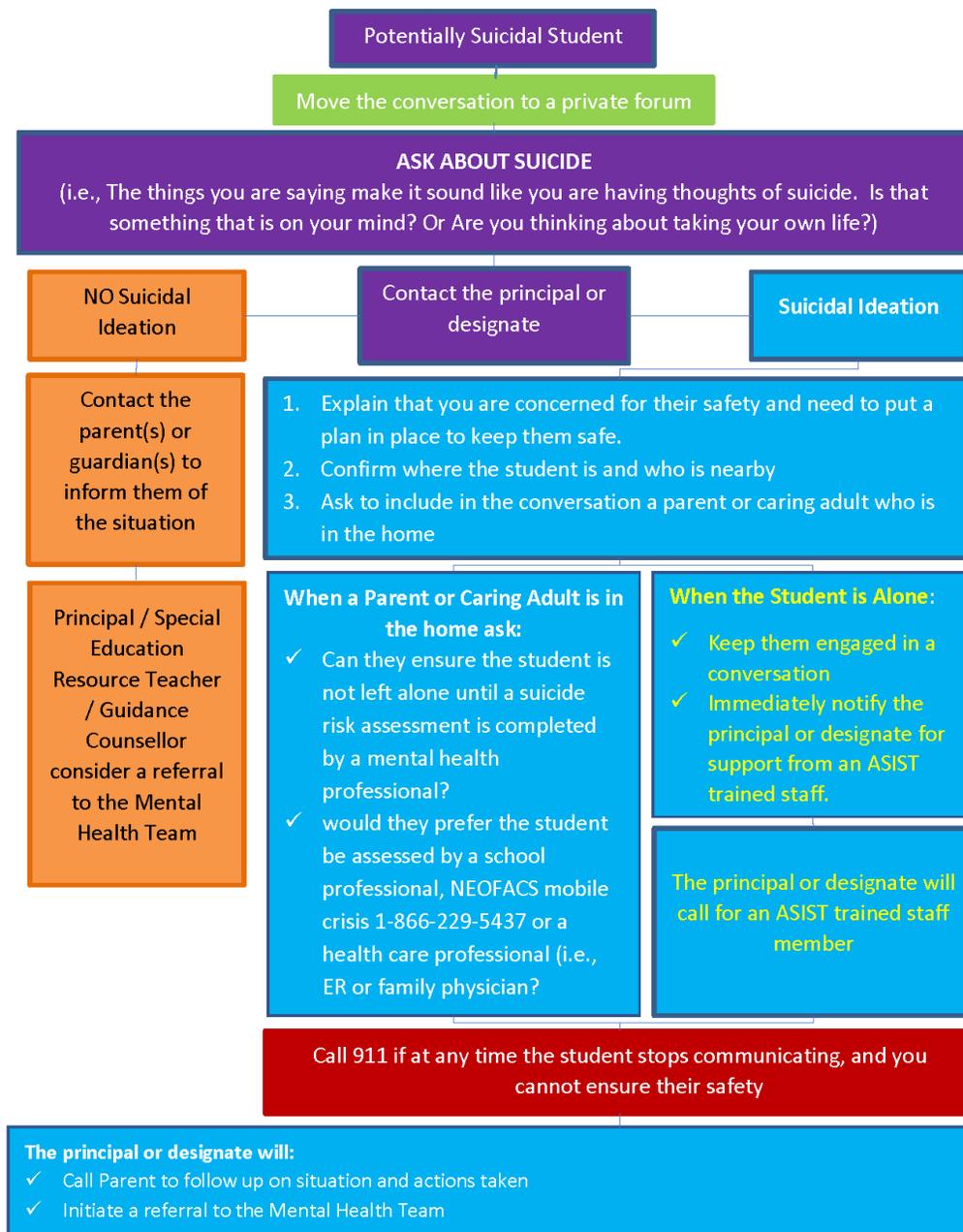
### IN- SCHOOL SUICIDE INTERVENTION FLOW CHART



## ACTIVE SUICIDE ATTEMPT Flowchart IN-School or Remote Setting



## Distance Learning – Remote Setting SUICIDE INTERVENTION FLOW CHART





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## DSB1 Field Trip Checklist

Please submit this completed checklist with the Field Trip Form.

- Prepare a sign-in sheet for all students, staff and volunteers participating.
- Ensure all students and staff participating complete the [daily screening tool](#) and provide confirmation prior to participating in the activity.
- Have a copy of the student binder for the duration of the field trip.
- Ensure hand sanitizer is available for students before and after participating in the field trip.
- Ensure additional masks are available if staff or students misplace theirs during the trip.
- Include an alternate transportation plan if a student or staff becomes ill during the field trip.

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### **Additional information for extracurricular activities, clubs, and sports**

- Vaccination attestations/testing procedures are in place for all participants.
- Communicate with families that no spectators are allowed.