

***NSS Council Presents “Ask Adam”:
Questions & Answers with Principal Adam Marshall
Sept 30, 2020***

What is being done with regards to celebrations for the 2020 Grads?

- Thanksgiving, once considered a good alternative date for getting the students back together safely at the school, is now off the table due to new government restrictions on large gatherings
- Northern would still like to do something, even if it ends up being a year from original commencement date
- Virtual ceremony a possibility, some challenges e.g. trophies would need to be mailed to recipients
- Yearbooks have arrived, programs and diplomas are on the way

What is the current number of students at Northern?

- This year there are 1810 students enrolled, with about 300 in virtual only
- 750 per day attend in person
- Some staff have been removed to move to virtual learning, a few classes had to be cancelled

How does the new entrance policy work?

- Teachers get scanned at 7:30 a.m.
- Students get scanned 8:30-8:45 a.m. through three main doors depending on what floor your class is on - unless you are outside for phys ed
- Doors close at 9 am. with only front door remaining open
- Seems to be working well
- Screening App may not be forever; it is a decision by Toronto Public Health

Why are parents getting calls about late arrivals for online afternoon classes?

- Last spring the TDSB implemented a strict late arrival policy that has teachers submitting absences 15 mins into class time
- There are some errors in the process
- Attendance does not affect a student's mark in a class

What's the mood in the school?

- Kids are engaged and focused, lots of benefit from their classes
- Each class has an outdoor break once per day
- Mr Gana is providing a series of indoor break ideas (yoga, mental wellness)
- With inclement weather on the way, new break ideas will have to be implemented

- With no garbage coming into the school from lunches, the caretakers are able to focus on disinfecting duties

How is the staff coping with the technology challenges?

- TDSB has asked teachers to be on Google or Brightspace
- About 25% are on Brightspace - there are some growing pains
- Teachers are given time each week to specifically work on their skills on whichever platform they choose
- There is upcoming PD focused on equity and anti-black racism

Who to contact if there is a question or issue?

- If you are upset with a mark or attendance, Start with teacher => Vice Principal => Principal => Superintendent => Trustee
- Vice-Principals are split into groups by student last name - [click here](#) for the list
- If there is a timetable, counselling, or mental health question, start with Guidance - [click here](#) for list of Guidance Counsellors by student last name

What is the process for switching between in-person and online only models?

- As of right now, the process is not quite in place, although the deadline to switch for Q2 will be October 15th at 4 pm, (start date of Nov 23).
- More details will be shared in the weekly bulletin as they are available

What is the current info on exams?

- Currently have two exam days in the schedule for Q1, Nov 18 and 19
- Still up in the air as to how this will work, as there are 4 cohorts (2/class) and only 2 exam days
- There is flexibility in grades 9-11 to not have exams and just grade on classwork and summative
- Grade 12 will need a more formal exam

Will there be Parent-Teacher interviews this fall?

- Nothing is in place right now. If they happen, it would be virtual
- Ask a teacher directly to hear about a student's progress

How does a student who misses classes make up for it?

- There's no recording of classes, unless the entire class is quarantined.

What about Special Ed needs?

- Special Ed needs are being addressed
- Teachers are required to know about IEPs
- Teachers have been directed to go to a database to check on needs
- It won't look the same as other years but we will do the best we can with technology

Will there be any extracurriculars?

- A chart of clubs and contacts is being worked on
- We lost some teachers who supported clubs to virtual school but we need a staff sponsor for each club
- Can't hold the club fair like other years, looking for Buddies and Student Council to help
- Everything will be virtual and again we'll have to get creative- open to suggestions

Is there anything planned for Grade 9 students?

- No extra activities are currently planned due to Covid restrictions.
- Buddies have been going into the Gr 9 afternoon classes for virtual visits the past few weeks.

What is planned for Grade 12 students looking at universities?

- The post-secondary fair and visits are not happening in person this fall.
- More information here: <https://www.ontariouniversitiesfair.ca/>
- Students can check online to sign up for info from the school they are interested in attending.
- We are anticipating community hours requirement will be waived.
- More info can be had from your guidance counsellor

What should we be focusing on this year?

- For students in grades 9, 10 and 11, prioritize headspace over marks
 - Manage your child's expectations... it's ok this year not to get straight As
 - Teachers are aware and will be providing second chances to improve marks/submit work
- For grade 12, marks are still important
 - Keep lines of communication open, teachers will be flexible
 - Important to reach out to Guidance for help and info early in the process

What are the mental health resources available for students?

- Students can make an appointment with their guidance counsellor anytime
- In addition, Dale Callendar (Lumenus Community Services at Northern Secondary School In School Support), is currently not allowed into Northern due to Lumenus' Covid policies. But, he is meeting students remotely. To schedule an appointment, email: dalecallender@lumenus.ca or Tel: Confidential Direct line -416-489-9586
- Referrals can be made through your VP to the TDSB social worker.

What do we need to know regarding Covid protocols, including positive tests etc.?

- The Ministry of Labour visited the school; there were no recommendations for improvements to the HVAC system. We are installing new filters on a more frequent schedule.
- Can't do air purifiers because it's boiler/radiator heat system
- For Covid positive students or teachers, Toronto Public Health (TPH) is the driver of the school's response.
- TPH will assess each specific case separately for risk.
- Parents will be informed by letter if there is a case at the school. Just because there is a case at Northern does not mean your student will have to stay home.
- You will receive a specific letter if the case is in your child's classroom, which will have specific directions for your student to follow for attendance.
- If there's a case in your child's class/cohort, they may be asked to stay home. Work will move online.

Roehampton Shelter

- Mid-summer to now, improvements for safety have been made around the shelter and the school
- The city workers assigned to the community patrol wear yellow vests and are visible in the area from 6 a.m - 10 pm.
- Good efforts are being made to keep everyone safe
- City meets every 2 weeks with school staff and parents. Please let principal know of any incidents; share concerns with School Council (they have a Roehampton Residence committee), express your opinion on any changes like a safe injection site (see nsscouncil.com for city/TPS contacts and a sample letter to the Minister of Health).