



August 8, 2020

Dear Hawthorn Parents,

Only a little over 4 weeks before we will be welcoming you back to school! The Task Force has been working diligently since June preparing for your return.

I want to first thank you for your continued support and trust with the education we provide at Hawthorn.

As I mentioned in my last email, it is time to share Hawthorn's plans for reopening this September. These plans have been developed taking into consideration your feedback, careful incorporation of Ontario Ministry of Education and City of Toronto guidelines, consultation with other schools, as well input from a Psychologist, Cristina Pineros B. PSYCH, SSW<sup>1</sup> who is helping us in the current context.

The plan is to reopen for in-person instruction five days a week from Daycare to Grade 12 as of September 8, 2020. Being a relatively small school gives us a definite advantage in safely taking this step. We can and will meet the social distancing and safety protocols. To this effect, besides the measures I will summarize below, we have adapted the school by: installing additional sinks for handwashing and hand sanitizing dispensers at all entry points; improving ventilation; hiring additional cleaners to sanitize the school during the day; installing separate changing areas for gym; and procuring a surplus supply of personal protective equipment for all staff. We are confident that our plan, including all its measures, not only meets, but exceeds the Ministry's expectations.

While it is clear that the ideal is in-person instruction for students to flourish, given the current context we have also developed a 'hybrid' plan for students to synchronously access classes online, as well as a plan in case a full return to online learning is required. These two new contingency plans incorporate best practices we have acquired in-house, and by interacting with other schools.

Our traditional in class learning plan includes 'dividing' the school into 4 safe 'bubbles': Daycare; Junior School; Lower School; and Upper School. Students and staff will enter and exit each of these 'bubbles' through specific separate entrances, and be essentially off limits to those outside this safe 'bubble'. As per the most recent government guidelines, mandatory requirement for face masks applies for Grades 4 through 12. Face masks will be optional for the JK to Grade 3 students in the classroom but they will be required whenever students are outside of the classroom or when physical distancing is not possible.

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<sup>1</sup> Bachelor in Psychology and Social Service Worker

As a safety measure, the Administration will send all families a link to a Parental Screening Google Form. This form is to be completed and submitted to Administration electronically every morning by 7:30 a.m. This task is mandatory for all staff and students to allow entry into the school. A staff member will be at every entrance to ensure prerequisites for entry have been met.

We are adopting different measures and policies to minimize risk of exposure to COVID, including:

- o Daily enhanced cleaning throughout the school
- o Ventilation of classrooms throughout the day
- o Infection prevention and control (IPAC)
- o Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- o Screening of children upon entry
- o Sanitary environment and interactions

**Daycare** will be accessed through their playground entry. Detailed plans and policies to reopen the Daycare have been submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval, as part of the process the IPAC policy was sent to the daycare parents yesterday. These plans are in sync with what will occur in the rest of the school.

### **Junior School (JK & SK)**

The Junior School will be its own safe 'bubble'. Parents are asked to drop-off their children at the front side door where they will be greeted by a staff member. At the end of the school day, they will await in their homeroom to be called and will exit through the same front side door.

Upon entry, students will sanitize their hands and proceed directly to their homeroom. They will follow their regular schedule and will only have access to the Upper School for physical education classes. The playground designated to the Junior School will be sanitized between playtimes.

If parents prefer their children follow classes online (or in the case of a mandated closure, or a family that has to quarantine) we have developed a fully synchronous (live streamed) online program. The goal is to build on foundational learning, promote cognitive attention development, ability to follow instructions, language, and motivation skills. That said, children at this age require constant supervision, and online learning is no exception. For this to be feasible at this age, full parental / adult support at home is essential.

The remote learning program will see teachers providing five synchronous (live streamed) sessions per day. Teachers will prioritize the main objectives to be learned and include activities to achieve these goals. Sessions will follow a similar schedule to the one in school with discretionary time in between. In addition, each child will have a one-on-one synchronous session a week to ensure that learning goals are being met, with an option for a second one-on-one session each week.

In a hybrid approach, where some parents opt for online learning and others are in school (or a child has to remain home for family quarantine but is otherwise healthy) traditional, face-to-face learning will continue at school. Children who are not physically present can follow the first portion of each class through Google Meet. Again, full parental / adult support at home is essential for this to work. Children who follow online will have an additional weekly one-on-one session of 10 minutes to ensure learning goals are being met.

## **Lower School**

The Lower School (LS) will be its own safe 'bubble'. Within this safe bubble, there will be cohorts by grade level, with grades 1 and 2 being one cohort.

All LS students and staff will enter through the front side door while maintaining social distancing. At the end of the school day, they will await pickup in their homeroom, and exit through the same front side door.

Upon entry, students will sanitize their hands and proceed directly to their homeroom. Classroom desks are spaced to respect physical distancing of students within a cohort, and between students and their teacher. Timetables have been revised to limit the need to move between classes maximizing their safety. Lower School students will only have access to the Upper School for physical education classes.

Students will eat lunch and access the playground by cohort. If weather permits, preference will be given to having lunch and other activities outside.

In a hybrid approach, where some parents opt for online learning and others are in school (or if a student has to remain home for family quarantine but is otherwise healthy) traditional, face-to-face learning will continue at school. Students not physically present can follow all classes synchronously while they are being taught at school. If there is a need to return to online learning, this will be done in a fully synchronous (live streamed) manner, using Google Classroom. Students will follow classes 'live' through Google Meet, through video conferencing with their teachers. Teachers will continue to deliver course material. Class start times will remain the same, but class length will be adjusted as needed.

## **Upper School**

As in the Lower School, the Upper School will be its own safe 'bubble'. Within this safe bubble, there will be smaller safe bubbles / cohorts: grades 8 and 9; grades 10 and 11; and grade 12.

All US students and staff will enter through the back side door. At the end of the school day, they will await pickup in the US lunchroom, seated by cohort.

Upon entry, students (and staff) will sanitize their hands and proceed directly to their homeroom. Lockers and classrooms have been assigned by cohort. Lockers have been spaced to respect social distancing of students' within a cohort. Similarly, classrooms have visual aids for social distancing among students, and between students and teachers.

Classrooms that are shared between cohorts (i.e. science lab, art room, learning center, gym, lunch room) will be disinfected after each use. Students will eat lunch in their homeroom by cohort. If weather permits, lunch and other activities will take place outside. The Lower School will be off limits to Upper School students.

In case some students need/prefer to access classes online, a 'hybrid' plan and IT investments ensure that all courses can be followed synchronously. In this case, or if there is a full return to online learning, teachers will continue to deliver course material using Google Classroom as the main online learning platform. Students will follow classes 'live' through Google Meet, using video conferencing. Class length will be adjusted as needed.

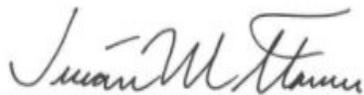
I do hope this overview gives you a good sense of our efforts to ensure your child's safety while maximizing their learning. There are many more details as you can imagine. The full plan will be made available online and you will be notified.

In the coming weeks we will contact you with more specifics in terms of course schedules, timing for dropping off supplies, calendar, etc. Please do not hesitate to continue sending us your input and to let us know if you have any question or concern. We are in this together!

Like you, I am grateful for the significant reduction in the impact of COVID, knowing that with continued patient perseverance we will get through this.

Know that you are very much in our prayers, as we count on yours.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Irian Flores de Medina". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "I" and "F".

Irian Flores de Medina  
School Head