



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Joint Statement on Safe Return to Before & After School Programs in City of Thunder Bay

2020, September 11 – Community partners in the city of Thunder Bay, including The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB), the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, the Lakehead Public School Board, the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board and various childcare operators are working in collaboration to plan the provision of safe before and after-school (B&A) programs. Our collective goal is to ensure smooth transitions between home, childcare, and school, while keeping everyone safe and minimizing the opportunities for transmission of COVID-19.

The school system has organized children into cohorts for the start of the school year in order to limit their exposure to other children, thereby reducing the potential for the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, the pre-existing model for B&A programs has involved children from many different schools attending the same B&A program. Continuing with this model would mix children from multiple school cohorts and create additional opportunities for COVID-19 to spread. Therefore, a process of re-organization is underway with the goal of keeping children from the same school together in the same B&A program whenever possible.

The first phase of this re-organization is to place as many children as possible into a B&A program within the school they attend. This does not guarantee a space at the school each child attends, as space is dependent upon the locations and the staff available to provide care. For B&A programs not housed in a school building, the goal is to reduce the number of schools sending children to each program to one or two at most, if staffing and space permit. Phase two will be to determine additional schools that could be licensed for B&A programs and which childcare operators might be able to offer the service.

This re-organization will be an iterative process and will take time to plan and implement. Therefore, before and after-school care may be disrupted or unavailable during this reorganization process. Once the locations and program assignments have been determined,

families will be contacted by a childcare operator. Fees charged will be determined by each B&A program. It is important to note that there are many factors that are considered when determining the B&A program location, and therefore the childcare operator may be different than where families had originally been provided a space.

We appreciate your patience during this difficult time as the system works toward the provision of safe before and after-school programs for your child(ren).

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