

August 13, 2021

Memorandum to: Directors of Education
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

From: Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

Subject: COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for
Schools 2021-22 Update

Following updated direction from the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH), we are writing today with updated guidance for the 2021-22 school year. The [COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools 2021-22](#) released on August, 3, 2021 has been updated to reflect the below updates.

In addition to the sections noted below, updates were also made to student masking guidance to reflect changes made in the health and physical education guidance for use of masks during sport activities; as well, updates were made in the staff personal protection equipment (PPE) section of the guidance, to provide clarification on the use of staff eye protection.

School Case, Contact and Outbreak Management:

Contact and outbreak management remains a crucial component of the government's plan to keep students, families and staff as safe as possible during the school year.

On August 11, 2021, the Ministry of Health released updated guidance on [school case, contact and outbreak management](#).

This guidance provides information to support the management of cases, outbreaks and suspected outbreaks associated with elementary or secondary (K-12) school settings. Key updates for the 2021-22 school year include:

- Those that are fully immunized and asymptomatic will not be required to isolate after contact with a confirmed or probable case and will also not be required to isolate if they are in the same household as a symptomatic individual.
- High-risk contacts of a case are to isolate for 10 days, unless they are fully immunized or if they were previously positive within the past 90 days and have since been cleared.
- For high-risk contacts who are not fully immunized or who were previously positive within the past 90 days and have since been cleared, testing is recommended on or after day 7 of their isolation period. If a test is collected before day 7, a repeat test on or after day 7 is recommended.

- For high-risk contacts who are fully immunized or who were previously positive within the past 90 days, testing is to be recommended immediately upon notification of exposure.

For full guidance, please see the Management of COVID-19 in Schools section of the [COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools 2021-22](#).

In regards to provincial screening tools, the Ministry of Education continues to work closely with the Ministry of Health, and we anticipate that provincial screening tools, including the school and child care screener, will be updated shortly.

Sports, Health and Physical Activity:

Being active has a positive impact on physical fitness and is an important element of achievement, mental health, well-being and overall student success.

As advised by the OCMOH, on August 4th, 2021, the Ministry provided updated guidance with respect to sport and physical activity in schools. As aligned with this direction, updates have also been made to the student mask, health and physical education and inter-school sport activity sections of the [COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools 2021-22](#) to reflect the below changes:

- High-contact indoor sports such as basketball and wrestling, will be allowed for the start of the school year;
- Masking is encouraged for indoor sports where they can be worn safely based on the activity for both high-contact and low-contact activities; and
- Windows should be opened when feasible to support increased ventilation during physical activity.

These changes are aligned with broader community sport requirements and allow students to play a full range of sports within the school and through inter-school sport activities.

As we look toward the 2021-22 school year, we will continue to focus on the health and well-being of students, families and staff. We will continue to work with the OCMOH and local public health units (PHUs) to adjust health and safety requirements and update guidance as required.

Thank you again, for your ongoing partnership and support in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor
Deputy Minister

c: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario
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