

Information Bulletin for Parents/Guardians March 10, 2022

On March 9, 2022, the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH) for the province of Ontario announced the lifting of measures in our response to COVID-19, as result, the province is returning schools to a more normal learning environment, while maintaining protective measures – like the availability of rapid tests, ventilation improvements, screening and continued access to free PPE for students and staff. Below is a summary of the changes which will impact our schools:

Effective Monday, March 14, 2022:

Vaccination Disclosure Policy and Community Use of Schools

The instructions issued by the OCMOH related to vaccination disclosure policies will be revoked across all sectors. As of this date, school boards are no longer required to have a COVID-19 vaccine disclosure policy in place and will no longer be gathering vaccination status from staff and visitors.

Effective Monday, March 21, 2022:

Masking & Staff Personal Protective Equipment

In alignment with community masking requirements, masks will no longer be required for students, staff and visitors in schools, school board offices and on student transportation.

We will continue to provide masks for students and staff who wish to wear them. These can be accessed through the office and or classroom teacher. Students wishing to wear masks are encouraged to do so. It will be very important to respect everyone's choice whether to wear a mask or not and all efforts will be made to continue to promote respectful, welcoming, and inclusive practices.

A reminder that under [current federal travel requirements](#), upon return from international travel, individuals must, wear a mask at all times when in public spaces (including schools and child care), maintain a list of all close contacts for your first 14 days in Canada, and monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Lifting of Cohorting and Distancing

Cohorting and distancing will no longer be required in schools. Assigned seats and cohorting will no longer be required in student transportation. Elementary students can play and learn together across cohorts, classes and grades, both indoors and outdoors and during lunch and recess. Shared spaces, such as libraries, tech labs, and music rooms can be fully utilized without distancing.

Limitations on in-person gatherings and assemblies will also be removed; therefore, schools are now permitted to plan and host in-person events (e.g., proms, graduation ceremonies, year-end celebrations, field trips and assemblies).

Schools will be returning to pre-Covid learning spaces such as reconfiguring our classrooms to allow students to sit in groupings and/or circles, and to facilitate peer conversation and collaboration, both during class and lunch periods.

On-site Confirmation of Screening

Daily on-site confirmation of screening for all students and staff will no longer be required. Staff and students are asked to continue to self-screen every day before attending school using either the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#). The screening tool has been updated to align with the updated [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#). It is very important that all students follow the instructions in the screen and if they are sick to stay home.

Remaining Health and Safety Measures in Schools for the 2021-22 School Year

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Appropriate hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette will continue to be promoted and integrated throughout the school day.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting

Schools and school vehicles will continue with enhanced cleaning protocols in place.

Ventilation Measures

Significant improvements have been made to ventilation and filtration through the implementation of various measures across all of our schools, including improvements to existing ventilation systems, and the deployment of standalone HEPA filter units. We are in the process of purchasing additional HEPA filters to ensure that every learning space has a HEPA filter.

COVID-19 Testing Strategy for Ontario Schools

Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT)

Our schools will continue to distribute RATs to staff and students who return from an unplanned absence. Please ask the office for a RAT should you require the test.

Updated Case and Contact Management Guidance

Further to the updates mentioned above, the Ministry of Health has revised the [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#), with updated guidance for close contacts in the community and in households:

- Asymptomatic individuals who are close contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual in the community are no longer required to isolate but must self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure. During the self-monitoring period, close contacts must wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings and avoid activities where they need to take off their mask (for example, playing a wind instrument in music class or playing high-contact sports).
- Asymptomatic household contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual are also not required to isolate if they are 17 or younger and [fully vaccinated](#); 18 and older and have already received their COVID-19 booster; or tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have completed their isolation period. Asymptomatic household contacts who are not required to isolate are also required to self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure, as outlined above. Children under 5 who are asymptomatic household contacts are required to isolate for 5 days.

We appreciate the efforts made by parents, students and staff to keep our schools safe and to support one another through this difficult period. We thank everyone for their support and understanding as we move to a more 'normal' school experience and remind everyone of the importance to self-monitor, stay home if they are sick and to always treat everyone with respect and understanding. We wish you all a wonderful March Break, with any luck the weather will permit the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful outdoors.

Sincerely,



Joanne B  nard
Director of Education



Michael Bellmore
Chair of the Board