

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health

Public Health
277 Victoria Street
5th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5B 1W2

Tel: 416-338-7600
Fax: 416-392-0658
PublicHealth@toronto.ca

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Dear Principals, School Administrators, and Education Providers who operate or administer programs and activities at a school, private school and/or a place where in-person teaching and instruction of any type is hosted or offered:

Re: Toronto Public Health School Health Response and Services during COVID-19

As Toronto schools prepare to reopen to in-person learning this September, I would like to provide you with some important updates about Toronto Public Health (TPH) school health supports and services.

Toronto Public Health Resources

Toronto Public Health has released [COVID-19 Guidance for Schools JK to Grade 12](#), which includes recommendations that are intended to help schools reduce the spread of COVID-19. All schools should open with the following public measures in place:

- **Getting vaccinated**
- **Health screening** for COVID-19 symptoms
- **Physical distancing** measures
- **Practice frequent hand hygiene** and respiratory etiquette (cough into elbow/tissue)
- **Proper use of masks**
- **Assign staff and students into cohorts**
- **Enhanced attendance reporting practices**
- **Enhanced cleaning and disinfection** of high-touch surfaces.

I would also like to provide you with some important information about COVID-19 prevention measures to help protect your school community:

Getting vaccinated

Getting vaccinated is one of our best tools for this fourth wave of COVID-19 and will help the most to prevent severe illness from COVID-19. To protect all children, all eligible youth and adults should be vaccinated. [Clinics](#) continue to be offered across the City.

Completing the screening tool each day before school

Each day before school, [students](#) and [staff](#) must complete COVID-19 screening. If they have any of these symptoms, even if they are vaccinated, they should stay home, [self-isolate](#) and [get tested](#) or contact a health care provider.

Pause extra-curricular activities, field trips and mixed-cohort high-contact sports for September

Toronto Public Health has updated the [COVID-19 Guidance for Schools JK to Grade 12](#). We are recommending that schools and school boards place a pause on extra-curricular activities, field trips and high contact sports with mixed cohorts, for the start of the school year. TPH will continue to assess COVID-19 case rates and will update the guidance as required.

Preventing COVID-19 in the Community:

With the start of the new school year, preventing COVID-19 in the community as much as possible will help to prevent COVID-19 in schools. Getting as many people vaccinated is essential, and Ontario's Science Table is recommending that people reduce their contact with others as an additional layer of protection. This includes avoiding indoor crowded places, keeping a physical distancing, limiting large gatherings and wearing a mask.

Updated Protocols for Vaccinated Students and Cohort Dismissal

Staff/students who do not have symptoms and are fully vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine may not be required to self-isolate as a close contact of someone who tests positive for COVID-19. In order for Principals to dismiss only those in a cohort who are not fully vaccinated, schools may voluntarily ask for a student's COVID-19 vaccination information. Toronto Public Health will continue to investigate all positive cases of COVID-19 related to a school and advising the Principal of next steps. For more information, please refer to the [TPH COVID-19 Decision Guide for Principals to Dismiss Cohorts to Self-isolate](#) and to the COVID-19 Guidance for Schools: [Collecting and Using COVID-19 Vaccination Status to Assist with Interim Cohort Dismissals](#).

TPH COVID-19 Child and Youth Response Team

TPH COVID-19 Child and Youth Response Team provides dedicated support to schools with questions/concerns related to COVID-19 prevention and case, contact and outbreak management:

- **COVID-19 School Case and Contact and Outbreak Team**
Toronto Public Health will continue to investigate all positive cases of COVID-19 related to a school, to notify their close contacts of self-isolation requirements, as well as advising the Principal of next steps. In the event that someone does contract COVID-19 at your school, TPH Communicable Disease Investigators will conduct an investigation and provide recommendations in accordance with public health guidance.

- **To report COVID-19 cases:**

Schools must immediately report laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff or students to TPH by filling out the [COVID-19 School Reporting Notification Tool](#)

In this tool you will be asked to include the following information:

- Name of School
- Name, role and contact information of person making the report

- First name, last name and contact information of ill staff/student including the date of birth
 - Onset date of symptoms
 - Last day that the ill staff/student was at school
- **TPH COVID-19 Testing Outreach Staff:**
To raise awareness of COVID-19 testing opportunities and help increase testing uptake, TPH has dedicated Testing Outreach staff who are available to provide testing outreach and education to dismissed cohorts.
 - When requested, Testing Outreach staff will contact impacted cohorts (students and staff) to provide information about where and how they can get tested and answer any questions they have about testing.
 - Principals can speak with their TPH Communicable Disease Investigator for further information.
 - **TPH School Liaison Public Health Nurses:**
A team of our TPH school liaison public health nurses are available to provide support with your questions/concerns related to COVID-19 prevention at your school. To access this service, please call the TPH Hotline at 416-338-7600.

Request for School Information

To help TPH respond to any COVID-19 cases or outbreaks in your school, we are asking to collect some information about your school community. Please complete this survey to ensure that TPH has important information about your school that can be used in the event that there is a COVID-19 case or potential outbreak in your school. Please click on the link [here](#) to access the survey which will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Toronto Public Health School Services

As Toronto Public Health continues to focus our efforts on the local COVID-19 response, below is information on the status of TPH's school services:

- **Vaccinations for Hepatitis B, HPV & Meningococcal Disease**
Toronto Public Health is offering vaccinations for hepatitis B, human papillomavirus and meningococcal ACYW-135 for Grade 7–12 students who have not received these vaccines. Students can book appointments at existing [City-run immunization clinics](#) through www.tphbookings.ca/tph/studentvaccines.

Routine Childhood Vaccinations

Toronto Public Health will not be reviewing student immunization records this year and therefore will not be sending letters to remind parents that their child/children are overdue for their childhood vaccinations. It is important for students to get their usual vaccinations to protect them from non-COVID-19 diseases. Because vaccinations are an essential health service, parents can make an appointment to

get them from your health care provider. Parents can continue to update and access your child's vaccination record online [here](#).

- **Dental Services**

Dental screening services in schools are temporarily suspended, but are still available at TPH dental clinics, by appointment. Please call 416-338-6565 for more information.

- **Tobacco Enforcement**

All Tobacco, Vapor & Cannabis Enforcement programs are suspended at this time. For information on ensuring your school is compliant with the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*, please refer to the [Smoke-Free Ontario Act Fact Sheets](#).

For general COVID-19 information:

- For general and school related COVID-19 inquiries please call the TPH Hotline at 416-338-7600.
- For information related to schools, visit [COVID-19 Guidance: Educational Institutions & Instructional Services](#).
- For general COVID-19 information, visit the [City of Toronto COVID-19 website](#) to learn more about the current health situation, affected City services, and economic supports.

Additional updated resources that you may find helpful include:

- [TPH COVID-19 Contact List & How to Report a Positive Case](#)
- [COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire for School Students](#)
- [COVID-19 Screening Questionnaire for Staff/Visitors to Schools](#)
- [COVID-19 Decision Tool for Students JK-12](#)
- [COVID-19 Decision Tool for School Staff and Visitors](#)
- [TPH COVID-19 Decision Guide for Principals to Dismiss Cohorts to Self-Isolate](#)
- [Collecting and Using COVID19 Vaccination Status to Assist with Interim Cohort Dismissals](#)

As the COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation, we understand that this is a challenging time for schools, staff, students and parents. There are many resources available on the TPH website that may be of interest, including information about [mental health resources](#) to address the social and emotional needs of all members of the school community. Resources are also available online for [parents and caregivers](#).

We look forward to continuing to work together to keep your school community safe during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Nicole Welch
Director
COVID-19 Child and Youth Response Team
Chief Nursing Officer