

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

Re-opening of York Region school for in-person learning

Wednesday, February 10, 2021

Dear staff and families,

On Wednesday, February 3, 2021 the Minister of Education announced schools in York Region will re-open for in-person learning on Tuesday, February 16, 2021.

York Region Public Health reassures you it is safe to return to school. We are working in close partnership with the school board and taking all appropriate steps for the health, safety and well-being of our school community. This includes updating our screening guidance and implementing more stringent protocols.

Updated screening guidance

Effective immediately, all students and staff are required to complete a [York Region Public Health school and child-care screening tool](#). Daily confirmation of screening will be required for staff and secondary students.

Effective immediately:

- If a student or staff member has **ONE** symptom of COVID-19 they are required to stay home from school and child-care and get tested for COVID-19 at an [Assessment Centre](#)
- If anyone in a household has travelled outside of Canada, everyone must stay home from school and child-care until the 14-day quarantine period has finished, except for essential reasons
- If anyone in your household is sick and has not tested negative for COVID-19, or does not have an alternative diagnosis from a health-care provider, all others in the household must stay home from school and child-care until the results are known or an alternative diagnosis is provided
- If someone in the household is identified as a high-risk/close contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case, the whole household is required to stay home from school for the 14-day quarantine period, except for essential reasons**

**Please note: Individuals in a dismissed cohort do not need to have the rest of their household stay home from school or child-care unless contacted by Public Health. Public Health will work with the impacted school or child-care setting to identify individuals within cohorts that may be at increased risk of exposure to provide further direction.

Updated information on masking

To keep students and staff safe, the provincial government is advising all students in Grades 1 to 12 must wear non-medical or [cloth masks or face coverings](#) indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes, on school transportation and outdoors during recess where students cannot maintain physical distancing.

As an added layer of protection, the [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) recommends Canadians wear 3-layer cloth masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19. [Existing 2-layer cloth masks](#) can still be used as before.

Stay safe. Stay Informed.

york.ca/COVID19

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Testing

York Region Public Health is working with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education to implement asymptomatic testing clinics and symptomatic rapid testing clinics across York Region. More information will be released shortly.

What happens if there is a case of COVID-19 in my child's class?

Any staff or children who have had close contact with a probable or confirmed COVID-19 case in a school will receive a letter from York Region Public Health advising them to stay at home for 14 days. Certain individuals may receive more instructions from Public Health if the investigation reveals the student/staff/essential visitor is at increased risk of exposure. These individuals will receive a phone call from Public Health to outline any additional requirements, including isolation of household contacts.

The identity of any person who contracts COVID-19 is protected under privacy legislation and cannot be shared. You would want this same privacy if your family was affected. We remain committed to respecting the privacy of all students and staff.

Schools in York Region have worked diligently to implement strict public health measures within the school environment such as physical distancing of students and staff, increased hand hygiene, cohorting of classrooms and the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) to reduce the risk of acquiring COVID-19. In addition to regular twice-daily cleaning of high touch surfaces, additional cleaning of affected areas will be undertaken to make sure the building remains safe.

Important reminders for all York Region residents

York Region Public Health reminds all residents about the importance of providing a history of all contacts and contact information if you test positive for COVID-19. This is crucial to the prevention and control of this infection.

Close contact continues to be the largest factor of spread of the COVID-19 virus in York Region. Providing Public Health with a history of all contacts and contact information if you test positive for COVID-19 helps us with contact tracing, our most effective tool to slow the spread of COVID-19 and interrupt further transmission.

It is important to be honest about your recent actions and interactions. Please work with us to support our contact tracing efforts; we are working hard to slow the spread of COVID-19 and keep you, your family and our communities safe.

It is important to follow the advice of York Region Public Health. Please visit york.ca/COVID19 and york.ca/SafeAtSchool for information on ways to protect yourself, your family and your school community.