

COVID-19 Update Report #5

January 17, 2022

curiosity

creativity

possibility

GOALS (WIGs)

1. Safety – 80% ↑ identify
2. Reading – 75% ↑ K-6 cohorts
3. Graduation – 80% ↑ 7-12 cohorts

* Close the gap for current and historically underserved *

* Anti-oppression, Anti-Colonial, Anti-Racism *

Equity and Inclusion

The HWDSB Plan for Operating Schools in the 2021-22 school year is focused on two principles:

1. Safety for all.
2. Remain and maintain in-person learning in schools.

1. Ontario Ministry Guide to Reopening Schools

- Health, safety, and operational guidance for schools 2021-22 (released August 3 – updated November 18, 2021)
- [Modified Step 2 of RoadMap to Reopen](#) (January 3, 2022)

2. Ontario Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance

- [Updated Testing and Isolation Guidelines](#) in Response to Omicron (updated December 30, 2022)

3. [Ministry of Education Immunization Disclosure and Testing Requirement Policy](#)
 - Vaccination Policies for school boards, licensed childcare settings and private schools (updated September 1, 2021)

4. [COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care: Omicron Surge](#)
(released January 13, 2022)

- Public Health
 - Testing
 - Flow Charts
 - Enhanced Public Health Measures
 - Masks
 - Vaccinations for Educational Workers and Students
- Remote Learning and Short Term Virtual Learning
- Device Deployment
- In Person Learning for Students with Pervasive Needs
- Mental Health and Well-Being
- Managing Staff Absences
- Ventilation
- Director's Update (from Ministry and CODE)

Rapid Antigen Testing

- The Ministry will be providing two rapid antigen tests per person for symptomatic use as outlined in the [revised symptom screener](#). The two rapid antigen tests provided are to be taken home, and used at home ONLY when individuals are symptomatic.
- The Ministry has prioritized delivery of the RAT kits to childcare children and staff, in person elementary students, board staff who come in contact with students (including bus drivers) and secondary students.
- Central staff are “rekitting” and packaging the tests that have been delivered and sending them to schools in the priority order this week.

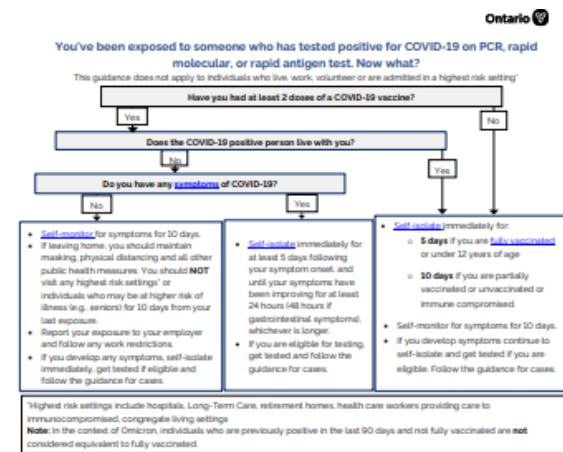
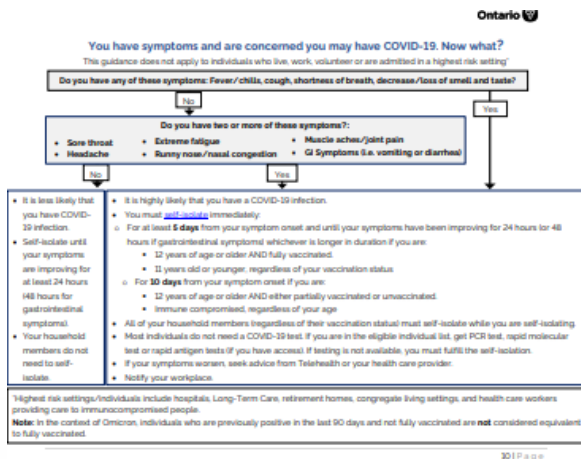
Testing – PCR

- A limited number of PCR self-collection kits are available in schools. They are to be provided to individual symptomatic students and education staff, attending in person, experiencing only symptoms most commonly associated with COVID-19.
- These kits are voluntary and those who qualify can complete the test at home and drop-off at a participating pharmacy. Results are not shared with the school.

Ministry of Health Flow Charts

You have symptoms and are concerned you may have COVID-19. Now what?

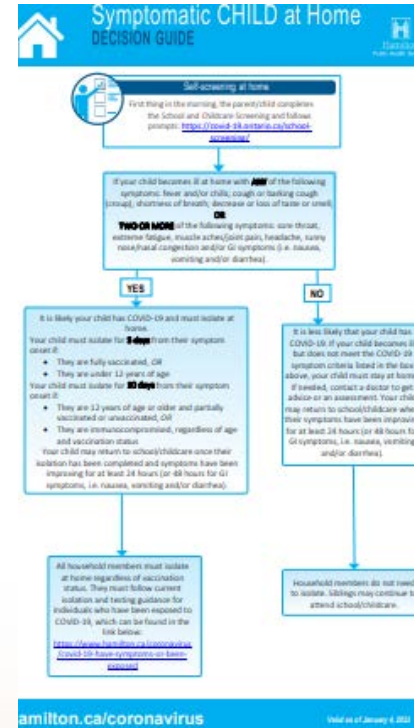
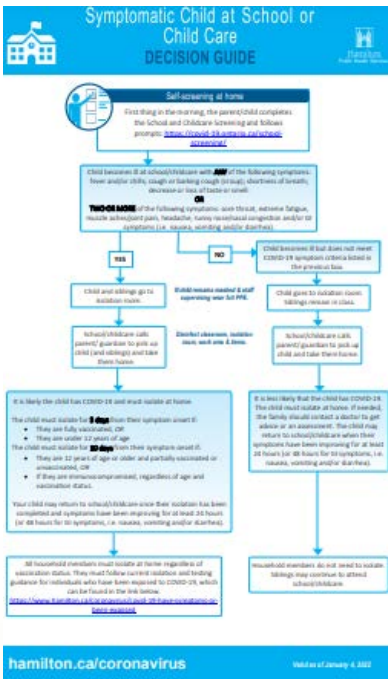
You've been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 on PCR, rapid molecular, or rapid antigen test. Now what?



Public Health Flow Charts and Decision Guides

Symptomatic Child at School or Day Care

Symptomatic Child at Home



Vaccination for Educational Workers

<https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination>

We continue to work in partnership with PH and will support school clinics as required. Currently there are appointments open at the current clinics, with some dedicated to education workers.

We have sent information to all educational workers and continue to encourage vaccinations for all staff.

Vaccination for Students:

<https://www.hamilton.ca/coronavirus/covid-19-vaccination>

We continue to work in partnership with PH and will support school clinics as required. Currently there are appointments and walk-in availability at the current clinics as indicated on the Public Health Website.

There are many targeted clinics, hosted at Recreation Centres and we will be sending specific communication to schools in the vicinity of those Centres. We await additional information on future school-based clinics.

Immunization Disclosure – Third Dose Requirement

- In accordance with Ministry direction, we are required to collect and report aggregated and depersonalized statistical information regarding booster (third dose) COVID-19 vaccination of staff.
- All HWDSB staff who have received the third booster dose against COVID-19 have been asked to report that information to the Board by sharing their vaccination receipt.
- We will report this data to the Ministry monthly.
- Definition of “fully vaccinated” has not been expanded to include booster doses.
- We continue to encourage all staff to get their vaccine including their third dose.

Enhanced Safety Measures:

- [Active verified screening](#) and self-monitoring
- Students or staff with symptoms are isolated and go home
- Wearing a mask as recommended
- Respiratory etiquette, physical distancing, hand hygiene

Masks:

Staff PPE

- The Ministry is now providing Boards with non-fitted N95 masks in addition to the medical grade masks currently provided
- Eye protection is required if closer than 2M or with an unmasked student
- A choice of mask will be available to staff who come in contact with students. Staff are being asked to test out a non-fitted N95 mask to determine if this would be their preference moving forward.
- Future orders will be based on staff choice of mask

Students

- The Ministry is providing Boards with a supply of 3 ply cloth mask. HWDSB will get 19,400 masks in various sizes and will be distributed equally to schools when available.
- Students may continue to wear their own masks as previously allowed.

Permanent Elementary Remote Learning

- Parent Portal Survey runs from January 13 to 20
- Only asking for students interested in transitioning to Remote Learning until June 30th, 2022
- Student interest will dictate staffing needs (approx. 500 open spaces) and transition timelines

Permanent Secondary Remote Learning (eLearning)

- Student transitions occur in Student Services (Guidance)
- Staff has been added and additional staff may be needed
- Students should have places for February 3rd start of semester



- The Ministry of Education has directed school board to provide a short-term virtual learning option for those parents who may be interested.
- This program is intended to be flexible so families can return to in-person learning as soon as possible.
- It allows for a temporary excusal from school with supported learning.

Elementary

- Short-term virtual learning will be **asynchronous**.
- We will provide learning packages posted on the Board website or in paper at the home school. Packages will not be assessed by teachers.
- We will supplement through a regular Teams event that will:
 - Have a live component at scheduled hours;
 - Enable questions regarding the learning packages t in the chat function;
 - Not provide 1:1 support;
- This option will continue to February 18 (Family Day weekend) depending on the evolving situation with COVID-19 in the province.

Secondary

- Short-term virtual learning for secondary students for Quad 2 will be provided via the continuity of learning model
- Educators will use the HUB to make learning and assignments available to students.
- Students can submit work for assessment.

During Remote Learning, device deployment was as follows:

- Secondary students made use of their 1:1 Board provisioned iPads
- In-person elementary students requested iPads through a Parent Portal survey
- 5647 regular iPads were deployed to Gr. 1 – 8 students and a further 342 LTE (data enabled) iPads were deployed
- We expect students to return all loaned iPads when they return on January 17

In-Person Learning for Students with Pervasive Needs

- Students in Regular Classes had the opportunity to attend school in-person at their home school
 - Staff: Educational Assistants, Learning Resource Teachers

- Students in Self-Contained Classes also had the opportunity to attend school in-person at the school where the class is located
 - Staff: Classroom Teachers and Educational Assistants

ATTENDANCE	
Elementary	246
Secondary	122
Total	368

- Continue with existing supports including Reimagining Wellness, Emotion Coaching, student and parent groups
- Expansion of parent groups with a focus on separation anxiety
- Launching a parent "guide" which includes:
 - Upcoming student mental health groups
 - Upcoming parent/caregiver mental health workshops
 - Key mental health recourses for students
 - Key mental health resources for parents/caregivers

Supporting Schools

- Carefully monitoring staffing levels within all schools and system programs.
- Where a need exists, we will redeploy system staff to support both elementary and secondary schools.

- Every school's ventilation system has been inspected in the fall 2020. See [Board website](#) for details.
- Air flushing continues daily
- CVRIS projects continue. 17 of 30 major projects are complete and the remainder are in process.
- Tier 3 schools (no mechanical ventilation) have a HEPA filter in every classroom and shared space.
- HEPA filters purify up to 1000 sq ft spaces and classrooms are approximately 750 sq ft
- Filters last 12 months; Facilities staff monitor regularly

Priority is to Re-open to in-person learning!

- Enhanced measures and resources and reminders for the first week!

Reporting and Monitoring of School Impacts

- Ministry Absence Reporting Tool (ART)
- 30% threshold above baselines -> inform PH
- Health Protection and Promotion Act
- Public Health Role – Communicable Disease
- HWDSB Role – daily operations

Mitigating School Closures

- Human Resource Services is engaging all staffing strategies (hiring, teacher candidates, retired, redeployment)
- Implement rotating remote days for schools, if required

Public Health Partnership

Attendance Surveillance Monitoring

- Base line in-person data as families decide on permanent or part-time remote
- Operational Committee to develop plan

School Based Vaccine Clinics during instructional day

- Mobile Clinics in School locations
- Reviewing data by community to assess need
- Operational Committee to develop plan based on resources