

Ministry of Health

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Ministère de la Santé

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February 17, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: Medical Officers of Health and Associate Medical Officers of Health

RE: Enhanced School and Child Care Screening

Dear Colleagues:

Further to my February 3, 2021 memo regarding supports for school and child care related testing, I am reaching out to provide additional details regarding an enhanced approach to school and child care screening.

In alignment with the *COVID-19 Variant of Concern: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance* (Version 2.0 – February 12, 2021), a more rigorous and cautious approach is being adopted to support a more comprehensive and enhanced school and child care screening program. In addition to work underway, both locally and provincially, to support increased access to testing, changes will be made to the provincial COVID-19 school and child care screening criteria as follows:

Single-symptom screening

Staff, students and children with any new or worsening symptom of COVID-19, **even those with only one symptom**, must stay home until:

- They receive a negative COVID-19 test result;
- They receive an alternative diagnosis by a health care professional; or
- It has been 10 days since their symptom onset and they are feeling better.

Isolation requirement for household contacts of symptomatic individuals

As outlined in the *COVID-19 Variant of Concern: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance* (Version 2.0 – February 12, 2021), all asymptomatic household contacts of symptomatic individuals are required to quarantine until the symptomatic individual receives a negative COVID-19 test result or an alternative diagnosis by a health care professional. If the symptomatic individual does not seek COVID-19 testing, all household contacts must quarantine for 14 days from their last contact with that symptomatic individual.

The provincial COVID-19 school and child care screening tool will be updated to reflect these changes in the coming days. We encourage you to continue to work with the school board(s) in your region to align any locally developed screening tools with the updated provincial tool, and any additional guidance provided by your local public health unit based on local risk factors.

We recognize that these changes in screening criteria are likely to increase testing needs and are continuing to work with our health system partners to make testing and related supports available to address any gaps in testing capacity in your regions. As you continue to monitor cases and access to testing in your regions, we will welcome opportunities to work with you to support your locally developed plans. For follow up and to discuss requests for additional support with testing, please contact: Helen Bedkowski, Manager, Strategic Implementation, Accountability and Liaison Branch, at Helen.Bedkowski2@ontario.ca.

For additional questions on school and child care screening, please contact: Ryan Dyck, A/Manager, Health Populations Policy and Programs Unit at Ryan.Dyck@ontario.ca or Dr. Daniel Warshafsky, Senior Medical Consultant at Daniel.Warshafsky@ontario.ca.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment and support for our school communities.

Sincerely,



David Williams, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Chief Medical Officer of Health

- c. Helen Angus, Deputy Minister
- Dr. Barbara Yaffe, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Dr. David McKeown, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Dr. Fiona Kouyoumdjianm, Associate Chief Medical Officer of Health
- Colleen Kiel, Director, Strategy and Planning Branch, Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health
- Elizabeth Walker, Director, Accountability and Liaison Branch, Office of Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health
- Nancy Naylor, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education