

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

September 8, 2021

Dear Parent or Guardian,

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

As you prepare for your child/children to return to in-person school this September, I would like to provide you with some important information about COVID-19 prevention measures and Toronto Public Health school services for this year.

Get vaccinated

If your child born in 2009 or earlier has not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine, it is not too late. 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.

Complete the screening tool each day before school

Each day before you send your child/children to school, you must complete a [COVID-19 screening questionnaire](#). If they have any of the symptoms, even if they are vaccinated, your child should stay home, [self-isolate](#) and [get tested](#) or contact a health care provider.

Teach your child how they can [protect themselves](#) from [COVID-19](#)

We strongly encourage parents to follow the public health guidelines including:

- **Cleaning hands:** Reinforce with your child the importance of washing their hands well with soap and water for at least 15 seconds or using hand sanitizer, especially if they touch their face or mask, and before and after eating.
- **Physical distance:** Remind your child to keep two metres/six feet from others as much as possible.
- **Masks:** Teach your child about the [proper use of masks](#) and [how to safely put on and take off a mask](#). Supply your child with a few fitted two or more layer [cloth masks](#) in a clean bag, and have a labelled bag to store dirty masks.

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 distance, limiting large gatherings and wearing a mask.

School Health 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. Vaccinations are an essential health service, and you can make an appointment for your child to receive their childhood vaccination from their health care provider. You 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 Toronto Public Health dental clinics, by appointment. Please call 416-338-6565 for more information.

COVID-19 School Case, Contact and Outbreak Team Investigations and Contact Information

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 in the school community (student or staff) contracts COVID-19, TPH Communicable Disease Investigators will conduct an investigation and provide recommendations in accordance with public health guidance. TPH works closely with your school administration, and in doing so it is important that your child's school has updated contact information for your family (including your child's health card number).

Updated Protocols for Vaccinated Students and Cohort Dismissal

Staff/students who do not have symptoms and are fully vaccinated with an approved 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 advise the Principal of next steps.

We will continue to provide updates to schools and school boards as new information is confirmed. Please continue to visit our website at: www.toronto.ca/COVID19 to stay up-to-date. Information specific to school communities is available at: [COVID-19 school information for parents & caregivers](#). If you have general questions about COVID-19, please call our Hotline at 416-338-7600, Monday-Sunday 8:30 AM – 8:00 PM. Interpretation services are available. If you need immediate health care assistance, please call Telehealth Ontario 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 1-866-797-0000.

Thank you for all that you are doing to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Welch', written in a cursive style.

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