

# Keeping Schools Safe During COVID-19

## FAQs for Parents and Caregivers

Dr. Rosana Salvaterra, Medical Officer of Health  
Monday, October 26, 2020  
7pm



Peterborough  
Public Health



*We Are All Treaty People*

# How to Ask Questions

Kindly mute your microphone



Written questions only

Please type your questions into the chat box.

***THANK YOU!***



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# Disclosure

- This webinar is being recorded and will be posted after the event.
- This presentation has been prepared based on information current as of October 26, 2020 at 4 pm.
- This presentation is intended to provide information only and is not legal guidance.
- The intended audience is families within the City and County of Peterborough, and Hiawatha and Curve Lake First Nations. All other regions must consult with the applicable Public Health Unit.
- Private Schools and Home schools are not regulated under the same guidance as publicly funded schools. However they are encouraged to follow the same guidelines.



# Current COVID-19 Situation

- Schools reopened in Sept 2020 after being closed by the Government of Ontario in March 2020.
- On July 30, 2020, the ministry released the **Guide to reopening Ontario's schools**
  - The guidance provided in this document is intended to support the safe reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year. Public health measures include:
    - Cohorts, hand hygiene, physical distancing, masking, screening, enhanced cleaning, school PHNs, etc.



# PPH School Health Team



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# Are schools “safe”?



# Current COVID-19 Situation in Peterborough Schools

As of October 26, 2020:

- 5 students tested positive since schools opened
- Only 1 school outbreak (declared over Oct 11<sup>th</sup>)
- **Currently have 0 cases in schools**



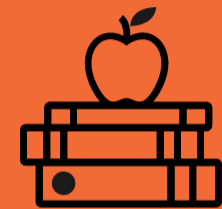


# Q1. My child only has a cold. Do they really need to have a test?

- The province has developed a [COVID-19 screening tool](#) to provide guidance to parents on whether or not it is advised to go to school along with next steps.
- Not every symptom or situation requires testing and isolation. Parents/students are strongly encouraged to complete this tool daily before going to school and follow the advice.

**Tip: bookmark this tool online and set a phone reminder to help make it part of your morning routine.**

Resource: [My Child Did Not Pass the COVID-19 Daily Screening. Now What?](#) On PPH website





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## Q2. How do I get a COVID-19 test for my child?

If you are advised to seek testing:

### PRHC COVID-19 ASSESSMENT CENTRE

- If you have COVID-19 symptoms and need to be assessed by a doctor, contact PRHC's COVID-19 Assessment Centre directly by phone at 705-876-5086 to determine whether an appointment is required. This phone line is staffed from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. seven days a week.
- Anyone with severe symptoms should go to the Emergency Department or call 911





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# Testing in Children is Getting Easier



# Q3. My child was sent home with symptoms and now they are fine. Is testing needed?

\*One symptom: Your child should **stay home for 24 hours** to see whether the symptom gets better or worse

- *If* within 24 hours your child starts to feel better and the **symptom is improving**, they can return to school and/or child care if well enough to do so. COVID-19 testing is not needed.

If more than one symptom (or one of the more severe symptoms: *fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell*)

- Your child should isolate and **contact the COVID-19 assessment centre for testing** and/or seek medical advice, if required.

COVID-19 school screening result

**Do not go to school/child care**



# Q4. My child has symptoms. Does the rest of the family need to be tested/self-isolate? Can siblings go back to school? Can parents go to work?

All household members of the symptomatic child are to **self-monitor** for 14 days. They can continue to go to child care, school or work as long as they have not developed symptoms themselves, and as long as the ill child has not been diagnosed with COVID-19.

COVID-19 school screening result

**Go to school/child care**



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# How does a family “self”-isolate???

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

## Self-isolation: Guide for caregivers, household members and close contacts

### Wash your hands often

- Wash your hands with soap and water after each contact with the infected person.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer as an alternative.



### Wear mask, gloves and eye protection

- Wear a mask, gloves and eye protection when you have contact with the person's saliva or other body fluids (e.g. blood, sweat, saliva, vomit, urine and feces).
- Examples of eye protection include safety glasses, goggles and face shields.



### Dispose of gloves and mask after use

- Take the gloves and mask off right after you provide care and dispose of them in the wastebasket lined with a plastic bag.
- Take off the gloves first and clean your hands with soap and water before taking off your mask.
- Most face shields and goggles can be reused and cleaned between use with dish detergent and water or disinfectant wipe.
- Clean your hands again with soap and water before touching your face or doing anything else.



### Limit the number of visitors in your home

- Only have visitors who you must see and keep the visits short.
- Keep seniors and people with chronic medical conditions (e.g. diabetes, lung problems, and immune deficiency) away from the infected person.



### Avoid sharing household items

- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, bedding or other items with the person under investigation.
- After use, these items should be washed with soap or detergent in warm water. No special soap is needed.
- Dishwashers and washing machines can be used.
- Do not share cigarettes.



### Clean

- Clean your home with regular household cleaners.
- Clean regularly touched items such as toilets, sink tap handles, doorknobs and bedside tables on a daily basis.



### Wash laundry thoroughly

- There is no need to separate the laundry, but you should wear gloves when handling.
- Clean your hands with soap and water immediately after removing your gloves.



### Be careful when touching waste

- All waste can go into regular garbage bins.
- When emptying wastebaskets, take care to not touch used tissues with your hands. Lining the wastebasket with a plastic bag makes waste disposal easier and safer.
- Clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer after emptying the wastebasket.



# Q5. My child received a negative test result, when can they go back to school?

If your child was **tested for COVID-19** they are required to self-isolate until test results are available.

If the test **results are negative**, your child may return to school or child care if all three of the following criteria are true:

1. They do not have a fever (without taking medication)

**AND**

2. It has been at least 24 hours since symptoms started improving

**AND**

3. They have not been in close physical contact with a person who currently has COVID-19.



## Q6. Why are students outside without masks on?



- Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in indoor spaces.
- Outdoor times like recess and physical education can be used as opportunities to provide students with breaks from wearing masks within their cohorts as long as a physical distancing can be maintained.



## Q7. What is considered an outbreak in a school?

- An outbreak in a school is defined as two or more COVID-19 cases in students, staff or other visitors in a school with an epidemiological link, within a 14-day period, where at least one case could have reasonably acquired their infection in the school (including transportation and before/after school care).
- When there is an outbreak, it DOES NOT necessarily mean that the school is closed.



## Q8. With a positive case, why did PPH only call students in their cohort when these students had close contacts with others not in their cohort?

PPH performs a risk assessment of contacts/cohorts of a positive case and will advise all contacts of need for self-isolation or self-monitoring.

Resource: [Close Contact...or Not](#) on PPH website

# Q9. I heard about the case at X school, what do I need to do? Does my child need to get tested/stay home?

- A Public Health Nurse will contact you if your child is considered a close contact and direct you on next steps. **This will occur in the first 24-48 hours of a new case. (7 days a week)**
- If you do NOT get a call, then your child can continue to go to school and does not need a test as long as they do not show any symptoms. Make sure to screen every day prior to arrival.



# Q10. There has been a positive case in my workplace, can I still send my kids to school?

- PPH performs a risk assessment of positive cases and will advise all close contacts on next steps including if they need to self-isolate or seek testing.
- If you have not been contacted, then household contacts can continue to go to school and work.
- Make sure to complete the [daily self screen](#) and monitor for symptoms!



**Q 11. “Will the PPHU please issue new guidelines for KPRDSB, above what is recommended by the Ministry and consistent with what has been implemented in Toronto, to keep Peterborough students, teachers, and other school workers safe?”**

**&**

**Q12. “Will you consider the other side of the coin in this issue [masking] and assess these potential harmful risks to our children before making them mandatory and repeal the mandatory requirement in favor of other measures like more distancing in classrooms while sitting at the desks?”**

- Provincial guidance is being provided by the PH Measures Table and CMOH
- Emerging evidence will be considered and integrated
- Weekly school outbreak meetings





# Here are a few things that you and your family can do to help protect against COVID-19

- Stay home from school when feeling unwell
- Complete the daily COVID-19 screening every morning prior to going to school
- Wash your hands often with soap and water OR alcohol based hand rub.
- Sneeze and cough into your sleeve. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Maintain physical distance
- Wear a mask
- Avoid sharing items with others (water bottles, food, vapes)
- Download the [COVID Alert App](#)



This household is in  
a 14 day

**ISOLATION!**

Please ring the doorbell +  
knock the door then leave any  
items on the doorstep and step back.  
Thank you x x x



# When is a MASK needed?

- Anyone with symptoms should wear a surgical mask, not a face covering
- Anyone isolating should wear a mask
- Anyone working within 2 metres of others needs PPE: a surgical mask and eye covering
- Anyone who is immunocompromised may wish to wear a surgical mask for personal protection





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## Children caretakers

**If your children have concerns, addressing those together may ease their anxiety.**

**Children will observe adults' behaviors and emotions for cues on how to manage their own emotions during difficult times.**

**#Coronavirus**

**#COVID19**



- Children's Mental Health Ontario - <https://cmho.org/>
- School Mental Health Ontario: <https://smho-smso.ca/covid-19/parents-and-families/>

# Other Resources

- For more information on COVID-19 visit [School Reopening](#) and [Information for Parents](#) webpages at [www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca](http://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca)
  - [Handwashing for Kids](#)
  - [Hand Sanitizing for Kids](#)
  - [COVID Protocol – Child Not Pass Screening PPH-DH-HKPR](#)
  - [My Child was Tested for COVID-19... Now What?](#)
  - [Close Contact... or NOT?](#)
  - [Facial Coverings...what you need to know!](#)
  - [Helping Children Cope with Stress During the Outbreak](#)
- More tips on how to prepare your child for attending school: [Preventing COVID-19: Tips for Children Attending School.](#)
- For specific questions about returning to school please be sure to refer to the [Guide to Reopening Ontario Schools](#) website and your child's school board FAQ website





**Please use the chat box to ask  
your questions.**

If you still have questions after this presentation contact PPH at:  
705-743-1000

Email: [covid19@peterboroughpublichealth.ca](mailto:covid19@peterboroughpublichealth.ca)



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