

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE: RETURN TO SCHOOL OR CHILD CARE FOR STUDENTS, CHILDREN, EMPLOYEES & VISITORS

This guidance reflects the [Ontario COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#). It can be used by school and child care administrators, with employees, visitors, children/students and/or their families to help determine screening recommendations and timelines for return to school and/or child care.

1. The child/student, employee or visitor is fully vaccinated* or aged 11 and/or younger:

1A. In the last 5 days, has the child/student, employee or visitor had <u>one or more</u> of the following symptoms?	1B. In the last 5 days, has the child/student, employee or visitor had <u>two or more</u> of the following symptoms?	1C. In the last 5 days, has the child/student, employee or visitor tested positive for COVID-19? (Rapid Antigen or PCR)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fever and/or chills (37.8°C or higher) Cough or barking cough (croup) Shortness of breath Decrease or loss of taste or smell 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sore throat or difficulty swallowing Runny or stuffy/congested nose Headache Extreme tiredness Muscle aches or joint pain Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea 	<p>IF YES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They must stay home and isolate for 5 days and until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea). Isolation starts from the date symptoms began OR the date they tested positive (whichever is first). Siblings and all household members must isolate for the same amount of time, regardless of vaccination status.
<p>IF YES to 1A or 1B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They must stay home and isolate for 5 days from when symptoms started and stay in isolation until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours after nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea), whichever is longest. Siblings and all household members must stay home for the same amount of time regardless of vaccination status. <p><i>NOTE: If they have only one symptom listed in question 1B or any other symptom not listed on the COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool, they can return to school/child care when symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms).</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If self-isolation is complete after 5 days, regardless of vaccination status or age, for a total of 10 days from symptom onset, individuals with symptoms must wear a well-fitted mask in public and not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (e.g. seniors), or any highest risk settings (hospitals, long-term care, retirement homes, congregate living settings). 		

If NO proceed to Question 3.

The child/student, employee or visitor is aged 12 or older and not fully vaccinated*, OR any age and immune compromised:

<p>2A. In the last 10 days, has the child/student, employee or visitor had <u>one or more</u> of the following symptoms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever and/or chills (37.8°C or higher) • Cough or barking cough (croup) • Shortness of breath • Decrease or loss of taste or smell 	<p>2B . In the last 10 days, has the child/student, employee or visitor had <u>two or more</u> of the following symptoms?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sore throat or difficulty swallowing • Runny or stuffy/congested nose • Headache • Extreme tiredness • Muscle aches or joint pain • Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea 	<p>2C. In the last 10 days, has the child/student, employee or visitor tested positive for COVID-19? (Rapid Antigen or PCR)</p> <p>IF YES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They must stay home and isolate for 10 days and until symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea). • Isolation starts from the date symptoms began OR the date they tested positive (whichever is first). • Siblings and all household members must isolate for the same amount of time, regardless of vaccination status.
<p>IF YES to 2A or 2B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days from when symptoms started and stay in isolation until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours after nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea symptoms), whichever is longest. • Siblings and all household members must self-isolate for the same amount of time regardless of vaccination status. <p><i>NOTE: If they have <u>only one symptom listed in question 1B or any other symptom not listed on the COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool</u>, they can return to school/child care when symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for gastrointestinal symptoms).</i></p>		

If NO proceed to Question 3.

Questions 3-5 apply to all children/students, employees or visitors, regardless of their age, vaccination or immune status.

3. Does the child/student, employee or visitor live with someone who is isolating because of COVID-19 symptoms, a positive COVID-19 test, or is waiting on COVID-19 test results?

IF YES:

- The child/student, employee or visitor can return to school or child care when their household member is cleared from their isolation.
- Siblings and all household members, regardless of vaccination status, must stay home until their household member is cleared from isolation.

4. Has the child/student, employee or visitor been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and been told to self-isolate?

IF YES:

- The child/student, employee or visitor can return to school or child care when they have completed their isolation.
- **If symptoms develop, refer to question 1 or 2.**
- Siblings and all household members can go to school, child care, or work, but must not leave the home for other non-essential reasons.

If the exposure happened in the community:

If Child/Student is:

- Fully vaccinated AND no symptoms they do not need to self-isolate
- Monitor for symptoms for 10 days and self-isolate immediately if symptoms develop
- If leaving home, they should maintain masking, physical distancing and all other public health measures
- They should NOT visit any highest risk settings or individuals who may be at higher risk of illness (e.g., seniors) for 10 days from their last exposure

If Child/Student is 12 years and older AND either partially vaccinated, unvaccinated OR immune compromised

- Stay home & Self-isolate. Must self-isolate for 10 days from their last exposure

If Child/Student is 11 years and under AND either partially vaccinated, unvaccinated

- Stay home & Self-isolate. Must self-isolate for 5 days from last exposure

If the exposure happened at school/child care with all public health measures in place:

- Monitor for symptoms for 10 days following last exposure and self-isolate immediately if symptoms develop
- If leaving home, they should maintain masking, physical distancing and all other public health measures.
- They should NOT visit any highest risk settings* or individuals who may be at higher risk of illness (e.g., seniors) for 10 days from their last exposure

NOTE: Exposures in schools/childcare are generally not considered close contacts due to the health and safety measures in place in these settings. However, specific individuals in those settings may be identified **by the case** as close contacts based on their prolonged, unprotected, close interactions with the case either in or outside the setting. If you have been identified as a close contact by the case, isolate as if the exposure happened in the community (above).

*Highest risk settings include hospitals, Long-Term Care, retirement homes, congregate living settings

<p>5A. In the last 14 days, has the child/student, employee or visitor travelled outside of Canada and been told to quarantine?</p>	<p>5B. In the last 14 days, has someone the child/student, employee or visitor lives with travelled outside of Canada and is isolating while waiting for COVID-19 test results?</p>	<p>5C. In the last 14 days, has the child/student who is not fully vaccinated travelled outside of Canada but is exempt from federal quarantine because they travelled with a vaccinated companion?</p>
<p>IF YES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If they were told to quarantine, they must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days after their return to Canada following federal guidelines. 	<p>IF YES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They must stay home until the household member gets a negative PCR test result. 	<p>IF YES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The child/student must not go to school or child care for 14 days after their return to Canada following federal guidelines.

IF NO TO ALL QUESTIONS, THEN THE CHILD/STUDENT, EMPLOYEE OR VISITOR IS CLEARED TO RETURN TO SCHOOL OR CHILD CARE.

Additional Information:

Return to school or child care guidance when testing is available:

- If a **single PCR test or a rapid antigen test is positive**, the child/student, employee or visitor should follow the guidance above in **question 1 or 2**.
- A **single negative PCR test** supports children/students, employees or visitors to return to school or child care when their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea).
- Two rapid antigen tests (RATs) collected 24-48 hours apart are both negative**, supports children/students, employees or visitors to return to school or child care when their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea).

***In Ontario, an individual is considered FULLY VACCINATED if they have received:**

- A full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines,
- One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada,
- or
- Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada;
- and they received their final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least 14 days ago.