

September 6, 2022

Dear Families,

On behalf of Peel Public Health, welcome back to a new school year. The last few years have been challenging for families and we thank you for following public health measures to keep our community safe.

As the new school year begins, Peel Public Health will continue to support schools in providing safe learning environments for students and staff. We will continue to work closely with our school board partners to restart programs focused on promoting student health and well-being.

The following is a back-to-school checklist to prepare students for the return to school:

Get up to date with all student immunizations:

- See your health care provider to receive your childhood immunizations (e.g., measles, polio) and report them [online](#) to Peel Public Health
- Book an immunization appointment at a Peel Public Health school or community clinic to receive:
 - Hepatitis B, meningococcal and human papillomavirus vaccines for students in grade 7-12 ([Book here](#))
 - COVID-19 vaccines for children 6 months to under 5 years and booster doses for student 5-18 years of age ([Book here](#))

Screen daily with the updated provincial [School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) and stay home if you are sick. Review the new provincial guidance below on returning to school after developing COVID-19 or symptoms of illness.

Wear a mask in school:

- when you are at higher risk of severe illness
- when isolation after COVID-19/symptoms has ended and for 10 days after symptoms started
- for 10 days after last exposure to a person with COVID-19 or symptoms
- when it is right for you

Updated Ministry of Health guidance on COVID-19

The following is a summary of the updated Ministry of Health guidance on managing COVID-19 and/or other symptoms of illness.

Stay home when sick:

Screen daily with the [School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) and stay home if you are sick. Come back to school when you do not have a fever AND your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours for nausea, vomiting,

and/or diarrhea). If you have severe symptoms like chest pain or difficulty breathing, go to the nearest emergency department.

Get tested:

If you are at [higher risk](#) of severe illness, get a PCR test ([if eligible](#)) OR take two rapid antigen tests 24 to 48 hours apart. At this time, a positive rapid antigen test result is enough to start COVID-19 treatment for those who are eligible.

Mask for 10 days after symptoms or close contact to a person with COVID-19/symptoms:

The following guidance applies to people who can stop isolating when they have no fever AND symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours for nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea) **OR** for 10 days after close contact with someone with COVID-19/symptoms:

- wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including school and child care)
- avoid non-essential activities where you need to take off your mask (for example, playing a wind instrument in music class or removing your mask for sports or dining out)
- avoid non-essential visits to anyone who is immunocompromised or may be at higher risk of illness (for example, seniors)
- avoid non-essential visits to highest risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes

Regardless of negative COVID-19 test results, these additional precautions can be an added layer of protection against the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses circulating in the community.

We will continue to support our schools and thank you again for your continued efforts in keeping our community safe.

Sincerely,

Peel Public Health