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Lifting of COVID Restrictions in Schools

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Provincial Announcement on Lifting of COVID Restrictions in Schools

Posted on 03/11/2022



Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) has [updated provincial measures](#) in response to COVID-19. The province is removing many of the emergency measures and mandatory requirements by the end of April.

Throughout the pandemic, the OCDSB has followed public health guidelines and continue to do so. We recognize the challenges of navigating change and want to share information about what these changes mean for schools.

Safety practices remain in place this week. The daily screening tool has been updated and it includes some adjustments to isolation requirements which are explained below.

After the March Break, the following measures remain in effect:

- Regular hand hygiene,
- [Daily self screening](#) for COVID-19 symptoms by staff, students and visitors will continue,
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures,
- Enhanced air filtration systems,
- Daily reporting of staff and student absences,
- Daily reporting of absence data to Ottawa Public Health when school absences reach or exceed 30%,
- Distribution of rapid antigen tests to symptomatic student and staff members,
- Daily maintenance by all classroom teachers of an up to date Learning Management System to allow students isolating or absent for other reasons to continue to access asynchronous learning opportunities.

The following provincial changes come into effect after March Break - Monday, March 21, 2022 -

- 1. Mask Requirements** - The wearing of masks is strongly encouraged, but masks will no longer be mandatory. We ask everyone to respect individual choices and the fact that everyone has different needs and comfort levels.
- 2. Cohorting** - Schools will no longer be required to maintain students in cohorts. This applies to classes, nutrition and lunch breaks, recess and before and after school activities, assemblies and other activities.
- 3. Updated daily screening tool and isolation requirements** - Daily self-screening by students, staff and school visitors is still required. The [self-screening tool](#) for schools has been updated. Schools will not be required to record the confirmation of self-screening.
- 4. Isolation requirements reduced for fully vaccinated household members or those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days** - Changes have been made to the isolation measures required for household contacts. Moving forward the following household members without symptoms will not need to self-isolate:
 - i. Household members that previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days,
 - ii. Household members that are 18+ and have received their booster dose,
 - iii. Household members that are 17 years old or younger and are fully vaccinated,
 - iv. Children under 5 who are asymptomatic household contacts are required to isolate for 5 days.

Also, household members that do not meet the criteria above must continue to [self-isolate](#). Staff and students should continue to follow the direction of the revised daily self-screening tool.

We continue to be committed to providing a safe and caring learning environment for all students and staff. We appreciate your continued patience and support as we navigate the transition back to more regular school operations. We have travelled a long and difficult road together these past two years and repeatedly we have seen that working together in a culture of respect and empathy is essential to a successful transition.

