

Halton Region Public Health Recommendations for School Reopening 2020-2021 Version 2

This resource is intended to support the safe reopening of schools and improve their overall preparedness and management of COVID-19. It includes considerations for the development of policies and procedures, adherence to infection prevention and control practices, and appropriate response planning to ensure the health and safety of school staff, students, parents/guardians and essential visitors.

This supplementary resource is to be used in conjunction with Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and Public Health directives, guidelines, and recommendations as well as other guidance documents, including [Guide to reopening Ontario's schools](#), [Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools](#), and [COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management](#). This document does not replace guidance from the Province, and it is subject to the staged and regional approach to reopening in the framework: [Reopening Ontario](#). Please note that this resource was designed to support the conventional full day and the modified/adaptive school day reopening models. All items in this resource should be considered and discussed, but may not always be appropriate or applicable for your setting or school.

Federal Guidance for International Students can be found [here](#).

For additional information please refer to [Halton Region](#) website.

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A. SCHOOL/SCHOOL BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

A 1.0 GENERAL MEASURES/POLICIES	
1.1	<p>COVID-19 related policies/procedures/protocols are developed and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screening/Exclusion • Daily attendance records • Drop-off and pick-up • Visitor restrictions • Cohorting and staffing • Physical distancing • Enhanced cleaning and disinfection • Use of PPE • Protocol is in place if a student, parent/guardian, visitor or staff experiences symptoms and/or is exposed to COVID- 19 (e.g., School Board 2020-2021 Reopening Plan) <p>Staff are trained in all policies and procedures and staff completion of training is documented.</p>
1.2	A copy of the COVID-19 related policies and procedures and School Board 2020-2021 Reopening Plan is accessible to all staff, parents/guardians and emergency contacts.
1.3	Given the stringent screening, students and staff may spend many more days away from school. Consider how to manage additional student and staff absenteeism.
1.4	Schools are required to follow all existing worker health and safety requirements, as outlined in the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> (OHSA) and its regulations.
A 2.0 COMMUNICATION	
2.1	<p>In advance of the school year, parents/guardians receive and are aware of the enhanced COVID-19 related measures, expectations and guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New school protocols • Instructions for screening/exclusion • Drop-off/pick-up procedures • Information on physical distancing and hand hygiene • Protocols for symptomatic student/staff
2.2	Encourage the use of video and telephone calls with parents/guardians in place of in-person meetings.

2.3	<p>Signs are posted at entrances to the school to remind students, staff, parents/guardians and essential visitors about COVID-19 protocols (e.g., screening information, Do Not Enter signage, hand hygiene, physical distancing).</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton - Screening poster • Halton - Protect yourself and others poster • Halton - STOP - Sanitize First! poster
2.4	<p>Parents/guardians have provided an emergency contact that is able to pick up student whenever needed. Emergency contact is aware of all COVID-19 measures for physical distancing, hand hygiene and self-monitoring.</p>
2.5	<p>Some staff and students may be at a higher risk of adverse outcomes from COVID-19. The people at risk for severe outcomes are those who are over 70, or who have chronic diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease or cancer. These individuals should work with their healthcare provider to make an informed decision about attending school.</p>
2.6	<p>Consider the following when communicating with your school community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a COVID-19 advisory section on your school website. • School boards and schools will be asked to post information if there is a confirmed COVID-19 case that involves a student or a staff member in a school setting. • In the interests of privacy, information provided to school communities will not identify the student or staff member that has received a positive COVID-19 test. • Notice of any closures of classes, cohorts or schools will be posted on school and school board COVID-19 advisory sections.
A 3.0 SCREENING	
3.1	<p>Educate staff, students, parents/guardians and essential visitors on the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.</p> <p>A self-assessment must be completed by all individuals prior to entering the school.</p> <p>Note: Schools must communicate to parents/ guardians that they are responsible for completing the daily screening for their child(ren) prior to leaving for school.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHO - COVID-19 Reference document for symptoms • Ontario - COVID-19 School Screening

3.2	<p>Parents/guardians must perform <u>daily</u> screening of their child(ren) for COVID-19 symptoms BEFORE leaving for school using a self- assessment checklist (refer to 3.1).</p> <p>Direct parents/guardians to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check their child's temperature (fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$) • Monitor for signs and symptoms (including atypical symptoms) of COVID-19 • If any signs or symptoms, student must stay home and school must be contacted. See section 13 - Management of Symptomatic Persons
3.3	<p>All staff must complete a <u>daily</u> self-assessment screen for COVID-19 symptoms BEFORE arriving at school (refer to 3.1).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff must check their own temperature (fever $\geq 37.8^{\circ}\text{C}$) • Monitor for signs and symptoms (including atypical symptoms) of COVID-19 • If any signs or symptoms, staff must stay home and school must be contacted. See section 13 - Management of Symptomatic Persons
3.4	<p>Anyone with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 or anyone who has come into close contact with a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, see section 13 - Management of Symptomatic Persons for more information.</p>
3.5	<p>Hand hygiene stations with alcohol based hand rub (ABHR minimum 60%) are available at all school entrances along with COVID-19 information/signage (e.g., screening information, hand hygiene, physical distancing).</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHO - How to clean hands with soap or ABHR • Halton - STOP - Sanitize First! poster
A 4.0 DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP	
4.1	<p>Identify locations and times for drop-off/pick-up and staffing requirements to support and monitor physical distancing during student's arrivals/departures via private transportation and active travel (e.g., walking, wheeling).</p>
4.2	<p>Create signage or landmarks to make drop-off and pick-up locations easy to identify.</p>
4.3	<p>Drop-off/pick-up procedures should support physical distancing and cohorting using strategies that may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only one designated parent/guardian drop-off/pick-up • Separate cohort entrances (if applicable and possible) • Outdoor drop-off/pick-up (unless there is a need for parent/guardian to enter the school) • Staggering entry or limiting the number of people in entry areas • Physical distancing ground markings

4.4	Limit student personal belongings brought to school to include essential items only (e.g., backpack, clothing, sun protection, water bottles, food).
A 5.0 COHORTING AND STAFFING	
5.1	Students should limit contact with only their classmates and a single teacher for as much of the school day as possible (cohort). Cohort group does not mix with other cohort groups.
5.2	All members of a cohort (students/staff) practice physical distancing (including between members of the same cohort) and infection prevention and control practices when possible e.g. hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
5.3	Cohorts should remain in the same classroom/space as much as possible. If a different teacher is required, staff should come to the classroom to prevent student movement to other rooms. Measures to protect this educator include: physical distancing, hand hygiene, medical mask (as per guidance from Ministry of Education), and eye protection e.g. shield/goggles (as per guidance from Ministry of Labour).
5.4	Ensure a plan is in place to prevent mixing of cohorts in washrooms/change rooms.
5.5	Records should be kept regarding which students/staff are assigned to each cohort. Daily attendance records should be kept within each cohort.
A 6.0 PHYSICAL DISTANCING	
6.1	Provide as much distance as possible between students, between students and staff, between staff members, and visitors to the school. Physical distancing measures are to be supplemented with other public health measures supported by health and safety strategies, such as screening, adapted school environment, cohorting, hand hygiene, enhanced cleaning and masking. There have been some differing direction in reference documents related to physical distancing. The Ministry of Education makes reference to the COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan for further guidance.
6.2	Physical distancing is maintained between and within cohorts in both indoor and outdoor learning and play spaces. The school should have a plan to monitor/enforce physical distancing.
6.3	Physical distancing strategies are incorporated in the school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase physical distance of chairs and tables/desks in all rooms (including cafeteria, library, staff areas) • Consider having classes outside if weather permits

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange student desks with as much distancing as possible and facing in the same direction • Consider using table top barriers e.g. Plexiglass between students when working at shared spaces • Incorporate more individual activities. Avoid planning activities involving shared objects/toys • Create designated routes for students/staff to get to and from classrooms • Use markings on floors and walls to promote physical distancing, including for lines/queues (e.g., tape on floors, signs on walls) • Use a temporary, floor to ceiling physical barrier when two cohorts are using the same indoor space (e.g., gym) • Move activities outside to allow for more space • Stagger periods of student movement around school and discourage student congregating in hallways • Stagger student/staff lunch/break times, recess times and use of communal spaces (e.g., library, gym, cafeteria, staff room) <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton - Physical Distancing Poster • Halton - Physical Distancing Video • PHAC - Physical Distancing Poster
6.4	Close communal spaces where strategies to support physical distancing cannot be implemented.
6.5	Assign staff to dedicated work areas where possible and discourage sharing desks, phones, tools, equipment, etc. If not possible, ensure a plan is developed for cleaning and disinfecting of these spaces between users.
6.6	Set capacity limits for staff rooms and consider establishing virtual staff rooms (e.g. for staff meetings, breaks, socializing) to avoid staff congregating. Post signage re: capacity limits outside the rooms.
6.7	Cancel all large gatherings/assemblies. Consider virtual alternatives where appropriate.
6.8	Limit the number of students/staff/essential visitors gathering in common areas and limit number in an elevator to allow for physical distancing. Consider signage for these areas.

6.9	<p>In shared outdoor spaces, as much distance as possible should be maintained between cohorts and any other individuals outside of the cohort.</p> <p>While close contact may be unavoidable between members of a cohort, general IPAC measures e.g., handwashing, respiratory etiquette, and physical distancing, should still be maintained where possible.</p> <p>Providing children with opportunities to play and socialize improves overall well-being, supporting social, emotional, physical and intellectual development.</p>
A 7.0 SHARED ITEMS AND PROGRAMMING	
7.1	<p>Limit personal belongings being brought into school. Personal items being brought to school (for example, backpack, clothing, sun protection, water bottles, food) should be labeled and stored separately in cubbies/designated areas or lockers.</p> <p>Cubbies/ lockers should be assigned for individual use. If students do share these spaces, they should be cleaned between users.</p> <p>If staff touch any student personal belongings, they should wash hands or use ABHR before and after touching.</p>
7.2	<p>Reviews of inventory should be carried out to determine items to be stored, moved, or removed altogether to reduce handling or the challenges associated with cleaning them (e.g., porous or soft items such as stuffed toys, playdough, area rugs, fabric upholstered seating).</p> <p>Ensure all supplies, toys and equipment used in the classroom are made of materials that can be cleaned and disinfected or are single use and are disposed of at the end of the day (e.g., craft supplies).</p>
7.3	<p>Limit sharing of supplies, equipment, and toys among students.</p> <p>If possible, each cohort should have designated supplies and equipment (e.g., balls, loose equipment).</p> <p>Items should be cleaned and disinfected prior to use by another cohort.</p> <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton – COVID-19 Guidance for Handling Materials
7.4	<p>Paper handling:</p> <p>Although fomite transmission through paper products in school may be possible, there is currently no direct evidence to suggest transmission through fomites occurs and therefore any recommendation for the length of “quarantine” of paper materials is based on the theoretical possibility of transmission via this route.</p> <p>Student paper assignments completed while at school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No specific quarantine period is necessary for the paper products being handled • Practice hand hygiene before and after handling paper products • When students are submitting paper materials or they are being handed back to

	<p>students, use a contactless method wherever possible to promote physical distancing (e.g. having a drop-off or pick-up box for paper assignments)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where possible or appropriate, have assignments submitted/returned electronically <p>Paper assignments brought in from home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarantine them for 24 hours (out of an abundance of caution) Practice hand hygiene before and after handling paper assignments
7.5	<p>Physical distancing is maintained in activities that are part of physical education (PE) classes.</p> <p>Physical education classes should take place outside if possible. Gymnasiums should only be used where physical distancing measures can be followed.</p>
7.6	<p>Clubs and organized sports can be offered if physical distancing is possible and equipment and spaces are cleaned and disinfected between each use.</p> <p>Consider whether certain extracurricular activities can be conducted virtually.</p> <p>High contact sports (e.g., rugby, football, wrestling) should be postponed.</p>
7.7	<p>Play structures/playground equipment can only be used by one cohort at a time. Ideally, high touch surfaces should be disinfected between cohorts using the equipment.</p>
7.8	<p>For all structured and unstructured play (including: recess, playground use, PE classes, extracurricular sports/activities):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students/staff must practice proper hand hygiene before and after play/use of equipment Clean and disinfect shared equipment between cohort/group use Activities should take place outdoors where possible Students must not share personal items (e.g., water bottles, towels)
7.9	<p>Most overall expectations for the Music strand can be met without the use of instruments in both the elementary and secondary Arts curriculum.</p> <p>A variety of delivery options may be considered to meet the music curriculum's overall expectations, which could include fully distanced learning, in-person teaching and instruction with lower-risk creative performance opportunities (e.g., in-school instruction in larger spaces, restricting the type of instruments in a group setting) or in-person teaching and instruction with no live performance.</p> <p>Boards may choose to refer to the Ontario Music Educators' Association resource for suggestions on teaching music in line with current public health recommendations.</p>

A 8.0 EATING AND DRINKING

8.1	<p>All staff and students perform proper hand hygiene before and after eating.</p> <p>Stagger student/staff lunch times to accommodate for hand washing or ABHR use at communal stations (e.g., washrooms) and in shared spaces (e.g., cafeterias). See section 9 - Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given regarding proper mask storage while eating and drinking. See PPE section (11.6)</p>
8.2	<p>Where possible, students eat in their classroom with their cohort. If weather permits, consideration could be given to having lunch breaks outside.</p>
8.3	<p>Increase physical distance of chairs and tables in cafeterias and staff lunchroom. Encourage staff to eat in classroom and limit numbers in staff room.</p> <p>Clean and disinfect shared eating areas (e.g., cafeterias) between cohort use.</p>
8.4	<p>Students/staff fill water bottle rather than drinking directly from water fountains.</p>
8.5	<p>Ensure students have their own individual meal or snack.</p> <p>Ensure “No sharing” policies and procedures are reinforced. This includes food, water bottles or personal items. Personal items should be clearly labelled with each student’s name.</p>
8.6	<p>Remove self-serving food items (e.g., in cafeterias). Microwave use will not be permitted.</p>
8.7	<p>Do not plan activities that involve students in preparing or serving food.</p>
8.8	<p>Third party food services/nutrition programs can continue to operate. All surfaces, bins and containers for food must be disinfected prior to and after use. “Grab and Go” format is preferred.</p>

A 9.0 HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

9.1	<p>Staff and students should be provided with targeted, age appropriate education in proper hand hygiene.</p> <p>Encourage proper and frequent hand hygiene practices by staff and students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soap and water for at least 20 seconds • Upon entering and before exiting the building • At regular time intervals throughout day • Before/after eating food • After using washroom
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before/after outdoor play • Before/after playtime with shared equipment/toys <p>Soap and water is preferred when hands are visibly soiled. ABHR can be used if handwashing is not possible.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton - How to Wash Your Hands poster • Halton - STOP - Sanitize First! poster • Halton - Wash Your Hands - Stop the Spread of Germs poster • Halton - Wash Your Hands poster • PHO - How to wash hands and use ABHR poster • PHO - How to Hand Wash video • PHO - How to Hand Rub video
9.2	<p>Hand hygiene products are available in all rooms and at school entrances (i.e., hand wash sink or ABHR).</p> <p>All staff, students and essential visitors conduct proper hand hygiene upon entering the school.</p>
9.3	<p>Staff provides supervision/assistance for student hand hygiene practices when necessary.</p>
9.4	<p>Staff and students should be provided with targeted, age appropriate education in proper respiratory etiquette.</p> <p>Staff and students should practice proper respiratory etiquette. Use education posters at the entrance and in areas where they are likely to be seen.</p> <p>Respiratory etiquette includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covering nose and mouth during coughing and sneezing with a tissue or sneezing or coughing into your sleeve or elbow • Disposing of used tissues into the garbage immediately after use • Practicing proper hand hygiene immediately after coughing or sneezing or touching one's face <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton - Cover your Cough or Sneeze poster • PHO - Respiratory etiquette poster - Cover Your Cough
9.5	<p>Use lined, no-touch waste baskets (i.e., foot pedal-operated, hand sensor, open basket).</p>
9.6	<p>Faucets that are hands-free or shut off automatically help to prevent recontamination of hands after handwashing. In situations where hands-free taps are not available, Public Health recommends the use of paper hand towels instead of hand dryers in order to prevent recontamination of hands when turning off taps.</p> <p>Paper hand towels are preferable to hand dryers.</p>

A 10.0 ENHANCED CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

10.1	<p>Cleaning and disinfecting process, schedule and log are developed and posted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing practices to identify required cleaning enhancements (e.g., locations, frequency, timing, PPE, staffing, signage) Identify inventory needs
10.2	<p>Only use cleaners and disinfectants that are approved by Health Canada, with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe use.</p>
10.3	<p>Train staff on enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures.</p> <p>Cleaning and disinfecting products are provided and accessible to staff.</p>
10.4	<p>Shared rooms/spaces must be cleaned and disinfected before and after using the space.</p>
10.5	<p>Clean and disinfect common areas and items including high touch surfaces (e.g., door knobs, handrails, light switches, sink and toilet handles, keyboards, touch screens, desks, sports equipment) at least twice daily and as often as necessary.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton - Cleaning practices to prevent the spread of COVID-19 Halton - COVID-19 Guidance for Handling Materials PHAC - Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces PHO - Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings
10.6	<p>Shared equipment, supplies and objects (e.g., physical education equipment, play structures, art supplies, toys, games) must be cleaned and disinfected between cohort use.</p>
10.7	<p>Wall posters and other wall hangings should be laminated for wiping and cleaning.</p>

A 11.0 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

11.1	<p>Risk assessment is conducted to determine PPE required for each task and role.</p>
11.2	<p>See Appendix A: PPE Recommendations for a chart outlining type of PPE that is recommended for various staff roles.</p>
11.3	<p>Staff complete/review the Public Health Ontario PPE training resources outlined in Appendix A: PPE Recommendations.</p>
11.4	<p>Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shield) will be provided by the Ministry of Education (MOE) for all teachers and other staff of school boards.</p> <p>The MOE has directed that all school-based staff will be required to wear masks, with reasonable exceptions for medical conditions.</p>

	<p>If physical distancing cannot be maintained, measures to protect an educator include: hand hygiene, medical mask (as per guidance from Ministry of Education), and eye protection e.g. shield/goggles (as per guidance from Ministry of Labour).</p>
11.5	<p>Any visitors to a school should be required to self-screen and to wear a medical mask while on school premises.</p>
11.6	<p>A mask is not a replacement for proven infection control methods such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing.</p> <p>Individuals are responsible for the safe use and cleanliness of their mask and its proper disposal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A medical mask or non-medical disposable mask must be discarded when it becomes visibly soiled, damp or damaged. • Non-medical cloth masks should be changed if visibly soiled, damp or damaged or difficult to breathe through • Masks should be stored in a clean bag or container between uses • The best storage option is a labeled paper bag or envelope as these materials do not retain moisture which could allow bacteria to grow on the mask. If a paper bag or envelope is used, discard at the end of each day. • Alternatively, use a labeled cleanable container with a lid or a sealable plastic bag. If a reusable container with a lid is used, clean and disinfect it at the end of each day. • Lanyards and pockets are not recommended for mask storage. <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton - Use of Non-Medical Masks or Face Coverings in Schools • Halton - Mask video • Ontario - Face covering poster • PHO - How to wear and wash a cloth mask properly
11.7	<p>Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 will be encouraged but not required to wear masks in common spaces.</p> <p>Students in Grade 4 to 12 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks while indoors at school.</p> <p>Reasonable exceptions to the requirement are to be put in place by schools and school boards.</p> <p>Parents are responsible for ensuring cleanliness of the face covering.</p>

11.8	<p>If an individual, including students, staff, contractors, visitors, parents, guardians, becomes ill while at school, including before and after school care affiliated with the school, it is recommended that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the staff person caring for the individual must wear PPE from the kit including a medical mask, eye protection, gloves and gown and maintain as much physical distance as possible. Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced while the ill individual is waiting to be picked up. if tolerated, the ill individual should also wear a medical mask.
A 12.0 VENTILATION	
12.1	<p>Implement practices to support adequate air circulation in classrooms and staff rooms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure clean filters Avoid recirculating air Use outdoor ventilation when possible (e.g., opening windows, increasing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system) <p>If practices are not feasible for whole facility, prioritize higher risk areas (e.g., where crowding may occur).</p> <p>Note: Crowding is to be avoided. Areas that could potentially be crowded should be closed or have occupancy limits posted.</p>
12.2	<p>Minimize use of other air current generating devices (e.g., bladed and bladeless fans, portable air conditioners):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit use during the day Place on lowest setting Adjust placement and positioning to direct airflow upwards away from surfaces and people <p>Practice regular device maintenance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surface cleaning (including fan blades) Follow manufacturer's guidelines Remove moisture/water collected by portable air conditioners
A 13.0 MANAGEMENT OF SYMPTOMATIC PERSONS	
13.1	<p>Staff are to monitor self and students for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, including before and after school care affiliated with the school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff are provided with information on signs and symptoms of COVID-19 in children Students should be made aware, in age-appropriate and non-stigmatizing language, how to identify symptoms of COVID-19 Staff should encourage students to speak to staff if they are feeling unwell <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario - COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms

13.2	<p>Individuals with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to the school day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at home • Seek medical advice, including the recommendation of testing for COVID-19 as appropriate or as advised by their medical provider • In some circumstances, special efforts may be needed to facilitate access to COVID-19 testing to meet the needs of some staff or students/families • Remain isolated and excluded from school until test results are received as per COVID-19 Class Order. • At this time, due to lower case counts in Halton Region, we are recommending that siblings (and other household contacts) of symptomatic children self-monitor while the symptomatic child is awaiting test results. This means that they can attend school or work as long as they do not have any symptoms. This recommendation may change if case counts start increasing in Halton Region. • If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, Halton Region Public Health will notify the individual, the close contacts and the school. See 13.9 below. <p>If a student/staff was recommended for testing by their Health Care Provider but testing was refused by the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the individual should self-isolate for 14 days from symptom onset based on guidance from Public Health or their health care provider <p>Note: Mild symptoms known to persist in young children (e.g., runny nose) may be ongoing at time of return to school if other symptoms have been resolved and there is a negative test.</p> <p>If a student/staff was assessed by their health care provider and cleared to return to school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can return to school 24 hours after symptoms have resolved • Medical notes are generally not required for return to school. However, follow school policy for return to school <p>Return to school for ill individuals who test negative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical notes or proof of negative tests should not be required for staff or students to return to school • If an individual tests negative for COVID-19, they may return to school after symptoms are resolved for at least 24 hours providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ There is no known high-risk exposure ◦ The individual is not advised by Halton Region Public Health or health care provider to self-isolate ◦ Halton Region Public Health does not notify individuals of negative test results
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Ill individuals who do not seek medical assessment and do not get tested for COVID-19:

- The ill individual must self-isolate for 14 days from symptom onset date
- Symptoms must have resolved for at least 24 hours before returning to school after the 14 days of isolation period

Resources:

- [Halton Region Public Health School Protocol for Student/Staff Member with COVID-19 Symptoms](#) flowchart
- [Halton - Return to School Protocol for Student/Staff with COVID-19 Symptoms](#) flowchart
- [Halton - What to do if your child has symptoms of COVID-19](#) FAQ
- [PHO - How to Self-isolate](#)
- [COVID-19 Assessment Centres in Halton](#)
- [Ontario - Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools](#)

13.3	<p>Individuals with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 while at school, including before and after school care affiliated with the school:</p> <p>Students should be immediately separated from others and supervised in a designated room/space. Their parent/guardian should be contacted to pick them up immediately. Ill students should not take school or public transportation.</p> <p>School Protocol should include procedures for picking up students with signs/symptoms of COVID-19.</p> <p>Any staff or essential visitors with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 must go home immediately. If they cannot return home immediately, they must be isolated in a designated room/space until their departure.</p> <p>Any staff or essential visitors with sign/symptoms of COVID-19 should avoid using public transportation.</p> <p>Advise the ill individual and/or their parent or guardian to have the ill individual seek medical advice, including the recommendation of testing for COVID-19 as appropriate or as advised by their medical provider.</p> <p>In general, schools should not report all instances of ill individuals in the school setting to Halton Region Public Health as these are frequent occurrences and typically students have non-specific symptoms.</p> <p>If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, Halton Region Public Health will notify the individual and the school. See 13.9 below.</p> <p>Return to school for ill individuals who test negative or who are not tested, see direction as outlined in 13.2</p> <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton Region Public Health School Protocol for Student/Staff Member with COVID-19 Symptoms flowchart • Halton - Return to School Protocol for Student/Staff with COVID-19 Symptoms flowchart • Halton - What to do if your child has symptoms of COVID-19 FAQ • Ontario - Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools
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13.4	<p>Schools should maintain a personal protective equipment (PPE) kit specifically for managing students or others who become ill during school hours. The kit should contain ABHR, gloves, medical masks, eye protection, and a gown. Instructions on proper use of PPE should be available on the outside of the kit.</p> <p>Tissues should be provided along with guidance on proper disposal of the tissues.</p> <p>A thermometer should be available and a temperature check is recommended if ill individual complains of fever. The thermometer must be covered with single-use protective covers (discarded after each use) or cleaned and disinfected after each use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thermometers are medical devices and licensed by Health Canada (searchable database is available here). Some thermometers are also included on the list of products authorized under interim order, for use related to COVID-19 • Thermometers must be used and calibrated according to manufacturer instructions • Personal protective equipment would be needed for staff taking temperatures if a physical distance cannot be maintained, or if they are not separated from the individual by a protective barrier (e.g., Plexiglass)
13.5	<p>Designated staff member providing care to a student, staff member or essential visitor with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 must wear PPE from the kit including a medical mask, eye protection, gloves and gown and maintain as much physical distance as possible. Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette should be practiced while the ill individual is waiting to be picked up.</p>
13.6	<p>A medical mask is worn by the person with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 (if tolerated).</p>
13.7	<p>Clean and disinfect the designated room/space, and any items touched by the symptomatic individual as soon as reasonably possible after ill individual leaves.</p> <p>Identify contaminated areas and items within the school used by any individual with signs/symptoms of COVID-19 and conduct cleaning and disinfection of these items (refer to 10.0).</p>
13.8	<p>Place any soiled personal items in a securely tied plastic bag and send home with the student's parent/guardian. Soiled items must not be rinsed and/or washed at school.</p>
13.9	<p>Contact Assessment & Management of Case(s) in the School</p> <p>As each situation is unique, the school will work closely with Halton Region Public Health on exclusion and isolation requirements for close contacts and other individuals from the same cohort.</p> <p>In the event of a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19, Halton Region Public Health will notify the school within 24 hours to provide further information on contact tracing and outbreak management. A letter will be provided to notify staff and parents/ guardians of the COVID-19 exposure.</p>

	<p>Schools must consider the following when a confirmed or probable case is identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure confidentiality of student/staff is maintained • Immediately contact the Health Department by calling 311 • Ensure COVID-19 school Outbreak and IPAC measures are in place • Ensure student and sibling(s) portfolio information remain up-to-date See 14.0 Records Management • Ensure/co-ordinate environmental cleaning and/or disinfecting of the space and items used by student/staff • Monitor school population for new/additional illnesses and signs and symptoms • Distribute communications provided by public health to school community (e.g. parent/staff letter) <p>An outbreak in a school is defined as two or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in students and/or staff 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 or after school care).</p> <p>For more information on outbreak management, please refer to Appendix B: School Outbreak Management: Halton Region Public Health Support for Schools with COVID-19 Case or Outbreak</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton - What is a Close Contact poster • Halton - Your Health Information Privacy • Ontario - COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management • Ontario - Environmental Cleaning in non-health care settings
13.10	<p>Any instances of occupationally acquired infection shall be reported to WSIB within 72 hours of receiving notification of illness.</p> <p>If the staff member's illness is determined to be work-related, in accordance with the <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> (OHSA) and its regulations, the employer must provide a written notice within four days of being advised that a staff member has an occupational illness, including an occupationally-acquired infection, or if a claim has been made to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) by or on behalf of the staff member with respect to an occupational illness, including an occupational infection to the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development; • Joint health and safety committee (or health and safety representative); and • Trade union, if any.

A 14.0 RECORDS MANAGEMENT

14.1	<p>Daily attendance and records of anyone entering the school setting must be maintained and kept on-site (includes staff, students, parents/guardians and essential visitors). Each record must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Contact information • Time of arrival and departure • Notation that a screening was completed
14.2	<p>In the event that schools are made aware of a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 for staff or students, it is essential that key information pertaining to staff and students be available upon request by Halton Region Public Health for the purposes of contact tracing.</p> <p>This information needs to be accessible by school administrators on short notice, both during and outside of school hours, when requested by public health. Schools and school boards are expected to establish a system with Halton Region Public Health to ensure that these records can be accessed at all times.</p> <p>The following information should be available for the last 30 days including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attendance records • class cohort lists and seating charts • before-and-after school child care lists • transportation lists and seating charts • up to date contact information for parents, staff and students • special assignments/programs/activities (for example, Education Community Partnership program (formerly Care Treatment Custody Corrections), Special Education) • records of essential visitors

B. BUSSING TRANSPORTATION RECOMMENDATIONS

B 1.0 GENERAL MEASURES	
1.1	<p>School bus drivers and parents/guardians of student riders are aware of adapted or new COVID-19 related protocols and enhanced measures.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 for Student Transportation Employers • Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations
1.2	<p>School board and transportation consortia develop COVID-19 related communication protocol. Must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus driver notifying employer and school if they screen positive using the daily COVID-19 self-assessment tool • Bus driver notifying school of any instances of a symptomatic child while riding bus • School notifying consortia if student develops symptoms while at school and will not be riding bus home
B 2.0 SCREENING	
2.1	<p>All bus drivers complete a <u>daily</u> self-assessment screen for COVID- 19 BEFORE arriving at work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff must check their own temperature • If any signs or symptoms, staff must stay home and employer and school must be contacted • Staff who screen positive should be tested for COVID-19 <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool • COVID-19 Assessment Centres in Halton
2.2	<p>Students who have symptoms associated with COVID-19, have been exposed to COVID-19, or in self-isolation due to travel, must stay home. They should not use student transportation services.</p>
2.3	<p>If a student develops symptoms while at school, they should not take the school bus home and should be picked up by a parent/guardian. In such instances, the school must notify the transportation provider.</p>

B 3.0 PHYSICAL DISTANCING	
3.1	Establish designated drop-off/pick-up times and locations for bus transportation that support physical distancing and limit congregation of students.
3.2	Students, parents/guardians and caregivers should maintain physical distancing between people when waiting at school bus stops.
3.3	<p>Bus capacity and seating arrangements support physical distancing between students and driver on the school bus.</p> <p>To support return to school 5 days a week school boards may be required to increase the utilization of buses beyond one student per seat and operate closer to capacity. To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of non-medical masks for students in Grades 4 to 12 will be required on school vehicles.</p> <p>Strategies can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One student per seat. Students of the same household are permitted to share seats. • Students of the same cohort sit in the same area • Consider leaving a gap between each row • Boarding/Exiting strategies (e.g., fill seats back-to-front for boarding and front- to-back for exiting to reduce student interaction). • Students should be assigned seats and a record of the seating plan should be kept to assist with contact tracing in the case of a student or driver contracting COVID-19
3.4	Use physical and visual cues on the bus (e.g., signs, seat markers).
3.5	Any physical barrier or modification (e.g., a plexiglass shield between driver and aisle/entrance) should be compliant with all federal and provincial legislation and not interfere with or affect the safe operation of the vehicle.
B 4.0 ENHANCED CLEANING AND DISINFECTION	
4.1	<p>Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) is available at the entrance of the school bus (ABHR minimum 60%).</p> <p>Bus driver should prompt students to use ABHR prior to boarding.</p>

4.2	<p>Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting process is established and must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of existing practices to identify required cleaning enhancements (e.g., frequency, timing, PPE, signage) • Identifying inventory needs and availability on each bus • Training staff on enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures • A cleaning schedule and log must be posted in each bus and used to track cleaning • Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces between each route/group of riders and at least twice daily (e.g., handrails, seats, seat belts, windows, steering wheel) <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PHAC - Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces • PHO - Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings
4.3	Only use cleaners and disinfectants that are approved by Health Canada, with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) and follow the manufacturer's instructions for safe use.
4.4	Implement practices to support adequate ventilation and air circulation (e.g., opening windows).
B 5.0 PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)	
5.1	<p>Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shields) will be provided by the Ministry of Education for school bus drivers, school bus monitors and student aides. Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles and is intended to protect drivers during close contact with students, such as during boarding and exiting.</p> <p>Reference:</p> <p>Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations During COVID-19</p>
5.2	<p>To the extent that physical distancing may not be possible, the use of non-medical masks for students in Grades 4-12.</p> <p>Parents may choose to send a face covering (e.g., non-medical mask) for their child(ren) to wear.</p> <p>Parents are responsible for the safe use/compliance during the school day and ensuring cleanliness of the face covering.</p> <p>Reference:</p> <p>Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations During COVID-19</p>

C. OTHER REOPENING MODEL CONSIDERATIONS

C 1.0 EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS	
1.1	<p>Consider how the chosen model will impact students and families in the community inequitably and establish mitigation strategies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the model further exacerbate social (gender, race, language), economic, ability and other challenges and barriers that children and families in your school or community already encounter? Does the model create new social (gender, race, language), economic, ability and other challenges and barriers for children and families in your school or community?
1.2	<p>Establish guidance and supports for children and families disproportionately impacted by chosen reopening model due to social, economic, ability and other challenges and barriers.</p> <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vulnerable Populations and COVID-19
1.3	<p>Tailor COVID-19 prevention and response measures appropriately for students with medical and/or behavioural complexities as appropriate.</p>
1.4	<p>Consider how the chosen model will impact special education students.</p> <p>In order to ensure that students with special education needs are supported, schools and school boards will need to consider additional planning and transition time for students with special education needs to support a smooth transition back to school.</p> <p>Schools and school boards should support attendance options including offering daily attendance to students with special education needs for whom adapted timetables or remote learning may be challenging based on the student's special education needs.</p> <p>Schools and school boards should work with partners to develop local protocols for school access by regulated health professionals, regulated social service professionals and paraprofessionals for the purpose of delivering school-based supports and services. Protocols should include support for remote delivery where in-school delivery is not possible.</p>
C 2.0 OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS	
2.1	<p>Consider the physical and mental health impacts of the chosen model on children, family and staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the model increase risk of negative mental health or mental illness? Does the model increase risk of chronic disease?

2.2	<p>Review Ministry of Education/Health and Public Health Guidance to proactively establish COVID-19 mitigation strategies and measure risk. These strategies should include public health measures outlined in this checklist (screening, hand hygiene, infection prevention and control and physical distancing, etc.) as well as whether community transmission is taking place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there any additional risk to a daily school model?
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D. APPENDICES:

Appendix A: PPE Recommendations.

The following chart outlines the PPE recommendations for use in a school environment.

Role/Situation	Type of PPE
Teachers, Office administration, Principal, Vice Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice physical distancing Medical mask If physical distancing cannot be maintained, eye protection e.g. shield/goggles is also required
EAs and specialized staff for students with special needs	<p>Staff who work in close proximity to students must wear:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask Eye protection (goggles or face shield) Where direct contact with a student is required, staff must also wear gown and gloves
Supervision staff (e.g. for various cohorts, before/after school supervision) and Occasional teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice physical distancing Medical mask If physical distancing cannot be maintained, eye protection e.g. shield/goggles is also required
School staff providing care for a sick child (suspect case of COVID-19)	<p>Droplet and Contact Precautions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask Eye protection (goggles or face shield) Gown Gloves
School staff cleaning up bodily fluids with the risk of splashing/soiling of clothing	<p>Droplet and Contact Precautions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask Eye protection (goggles or face shield) Gown Gloves
Symptomatic student (suspect case of COVID-19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask (if tolerated)
Custodial and caretaker staff (no direct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medical mask

care or close contact with students or other staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gloves, as required (as per manufacturer's instructions)
Cook, food handler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice physical distancing as much as possible Medical mask
Essential Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice physical distancing Medical mask
Maintenance staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice physical distancing as much as possible Medical mask
Counsellors/ Child and Youth Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice physical distancing Medical mask
Bus driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practice physical distancing Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shields) will be provided by the Ministry of Education for school bus drivers, school bus monitors and student aides. Eye protection for drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles and is intended to protect drivers during close contact with students, such as during boarding and exiting.

Note: Face Shields are not an appropriate substitution for masks, but may be used in addition to masks for eye protection. Face shields must be assigned to one user. Please refer to the [CDC](https://www.cdc.ca) for more information.

Before using PPE, staff should be familiar with how to safely put it on and take it off. Public Health Ontario training videos are available below and should be viewed by all staff:

Topic	Link
7 Steps of Hand Hygiene	https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/7-steps-handhygiene
Putting On Gloves	https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac- gloves-on
Putting On Mask and Eye Protection	https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac- maskeyes-on
Putting On Full Personal Protective Equipment	https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac- fullppe-on
Taking Off Mask and Eye Protection	https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac- maskeyes-off
Taking Off a Gown and Gloves	https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac- gowngloves-off
Taking Off Full Personal Protective Equipment	https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac- fullppe-off

Appendix B: School Outbreak Management Halton Region Public Health Support for Schools with COVID-19 Case or Outbreak

Management of a confirmed COVID-19 case in your school community

Public Health will:

- Provide timely notification to the school COVID-19 contact within 24 hours of a confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - During the school day Public Health will contact the school directly to speak with the school COVID-19 contact person.
 - After hours Public Health will notify designated school COVID-19 contact.
- Investigate and manage reports of cases and contacts connected to confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - Investigate clusters of cases associated with school locations:
 - School transportation.
 - In-person attendance.
 - Before/after school programs located at the school.
 - Additional facilities connected with the school.
 - Review the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) and outbreak control measures with the school.
 - Advise school to refer to reference documents:
 - [COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management](#)
 - [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#)
 - Provide school with letter to notify staff and parents/guardians of the COVID-19 exposure.
- Review and determine any testing recommendations for the school as needed.
 - [COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance](#)
- Complete daily follow up with the school to determine if any new students or staff have developed symptoms and facilitate testing as needed.
- Support school to address any other questions/concerns related to the confirmed COVID-19 case.

The School Will:

- Ensure confidentiality of student/staff is maintained
- Immediately contact the Health Department by calling 311 to report any confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 that has been reported to the school administrator by a student/staff person.

- Ensure COVID-19 school outbreak and IPAC measures are in place [COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management](#) .
- Ensure student and sibling(s) portfolio information (class lists, seating charts, transportation details) remain up-to-date.
- Ensure/co-ordinate environmental cleaning and/or disinfecting of the space and items used by student/staff
 - [Environmental Cleaning in non-health care settings](#) .
- Monitor school population for new/additional illnesses and [signs and symptoms](#) .
- Distribute communications provided by public health to school community:
 - Parent/staff letter.

Management of more than 1 confirmed COVID-19 case in your school community
Public Health will:

- Provide timely notification to the school COVID-19 contact within 24 hours of a confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - During the school day we will contact the school directly and speak to the school COVID-19 contact person.
 - After hours Public Health will notify designated school COVID-19 contact.
- Investigate and manage reports of cases and contacts connected to confirmed case of COVID-19.
 - Investigate clusters of cases associated with school locations:
 - School transportation.
 - In-person attendance.
 - Before/after school programs located at the school.
 - Additional facilities connected with the school.
 - Review the Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) and outbreak control measures with the school.
 - Advise school to refer to reference documents:
 - [COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management](#) .
 - [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#) .
- Public Health will conduct a risk assessment and consult with the Medical Officer of Health to determine if an outbreak needs to be declared.
 - Public Health will increase or decrease outbreak measures based on risk assessment and define if the outbreak exists within a cohort or the whole school.
- Public Health will declare an outbreak if required and:
 - Provide the school with an outbreak number.
 - Provide the school with outbreak declaration letter.
 - Provide school with letter to notify staff and parents/guardians of the COVID-19 exposure.

- Coordinate public communication, including media, regarding school outbreaks with the school/BOE partners and the MOH.
- Review and determine any testing recommendations for the school if needed.
 - [COVID-19 Provincial Testing Guidance](#).
- Complete daily follow up with school during outbreak:
 - Confirm that COVID-19 school OB and IPAC control measures remain in place.
 - Determine if any new students or staff have developed symptoms and facilitate testing.
 - Assess and determine status of outbreak (need to be expanded or prolonged).
 - Support school to address any other questions/concerns related to the outbreak.
- Declare an outbreak over:
 - Notification by phone that the school outbreak has been declared over.
 - Provide written communication to your school to notify staff/students, parents, and guardians that the school outbreak has been declared over