

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE: WHEN COVID-19 SYMPTOMS DEVELOP AT SCHOOL OR CHILD CARE

Note: The following process is intended as a general guide and may be adapted in the future.

All children, students, employees, and visitors complete daily screening *before* going to school/child care:

Complete the Ontario [COVID-19 school and child care screening](#). Follow directions given in the screening tool.



If symptoms develop at home:

- If a **child/student/employee or visitor** is unable to attend school/childcare due to COVID-19 symptoms they should follow directions given in the screening tool, including guidance for household members. Report absences, including those of household members', to the school(s)/child care.



If symptoms develop at school, child care, or on the bus / student transportation:

- If a **child/student** develops new or worsening symptom(s) of COVID-19 as per the [Ontario COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#):
 - They should be immediately separated from others, in a separate room if possible, until they can go home.
 - Provide the symptomatic child/student with a medical mask (unless they have a valid exemption/other contraindication).
 - Continue to supervise the child/student according to the school's policy.
 - Maintain physical distance, when possible.
 - If physical distancing cannot be maintained, staff caring for student should use personal protective equipment (PPE) including gloves, medical masks, face shields and gown, to be put on before entering the room with the student.
 - Contact parent/guardian for immediate pick-up. The child/student should not be permitted to take school or public transportation.
 - Follow school and/or child care protocols for use of PPE, cleaning, and disinfection.
- If an **employee/visitor** develops any new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19, they should go home immediately.

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When to distribute a take-home PCR self-collection kit:

- If available, take-home PCR self-collection kits are to be provided **only** to symptomatic elementary/secondary students and education staff who become symptomatic while at school.
- PCR self-collection kits are NOT to be provided to individuals experiencing single symptoms that only require isolation until the symptom is improving for 24-48 hours (e.g., runny nose), or to entire cohorts/school populations.
- PCR tests or RATs (contingent on provincial testing supply), may be used when a child/student or staff member is showing the following symptoms:
 - Fever and/or chills; OR
 - Cough; OR
 - Shortness of breath; OR
 - Decrease or loss of taste or smell; OR
 - Two or more of:
 - Runny nose/nasal congestion
 - Headache
 - Extreme fatigue
 - Sore throat
 - Muscle aches/joint pain
 - Gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. vomiting or diarrhea)

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

Children / students / staff who are household members are recommended but not required to leave school/child care at the same time as the ill child/staff/visitor. They can complete their day and then will need to isolate, as per the [Ontario COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#).

All household members (regardless of vaccination status) must also stay home and isolate for the same amount of time as the symptomatic child/student/staff.