

COVID-19 MANAGEMENT AT SCHOOLS

September 3, 2021

Attention: School Principals, Staff, Students and Families,

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit is working closely with local school boards to plan for a safe return to school. This includes consulting on the implementation of [COVID-19: health and safety measures at schools](#) and planning for [COVID-19 case, contact and outbreak management in schools](#).

To help prevent COVID-19 at school, all students, staff, and essential visitors must complete the [COVID-19 school and child care screening](#) each day before coming to school and follow the directions listed in the tool.

If a student, staff, or essential visitor has symptoms of COVID-19 (regardless of immunization status), they must stay home and seek testing at a local assessment centre, and/or seek medical attention if required. Follow the directions in the screening tool for when they can return to school.

School principals will notify the health unit any time someone in the school reports that they have COVID-19, following the school board's established processes.

When there is a report of COVID-19 at a school the health unit investigates each situation.

We will:

- receive a copy of the laboratory result to confirm the results,
- contact the person who tested positive to collect additional information,
- determine if the person was at school during their period of communicability (the time when the illness was most contagious),
- contact the school to collect additional information, if needed.

Through the health unit's investigation, we will determine who is considered a close contact and most at risk. The person who has COVID-19 will be required to isolate immediately. Other students, staff and essential visitors may remain at school unless advised to be excluded by the health unit, as long as they do not have symptoms and pass their daily screening.

The health unit operates Monday to Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm. Any results received after hours will be actioned on the next business day. Follow-up times may increase, as case counts rise.

If the health unit confirms that there is a person who tested positive who attended while infectious or there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in a school, we will:

- let the school board and school principal know.
- give the school a letter to send to any staff and families that have been identified as close contacts of the person with COVID-19, including any directions they need to follow.
- **NEW:** students who are not fully immunized and who were in close contact (in a cohort, class, bus, etc.) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, should generally expect to be excluded from school. Those who are fully immunized should generally expect to be able to continue to attend school.

Due to privacy laws, the health unit will not disclose any personal information about any staff or student who is ill unless it is necessary. If there is a case in a school the health unit will not be sending letters to the whole school, unless required. Non-identifying information about school cases will be posted on the health unit, school board and Ministry of Education websites.

We would like to thank you for the important role that you play in [preventing the spread of COVID-19](#) at school and in our community. Visit the health unit's website for more information: www.smdhu.org/covid19 or contact Health Connection at 705-721-7520 (toll free 1-877-721-7520).