

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE: SELF-ISOLATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN 18 YEARS AND YOUNGER

November 23, 2021

Attention: School Principals, Staff, Students and Families,

In recent weeks, we have seen an increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in Simcoe Muskoka. This includes an increasing number of COVID-19 cases in school-aged children, especially those who have not been vaccinated. We are seeing more children getting COVID-19 from within their household or other community settings, which can lead to more COVID-19 in schools.

To help slow the spread of COVID-19 in this age group, as of Wednesday, November 24, 2021, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) will implement changes to the health unit's order for self-isolation ([Class Orders under Section 22](#)).

New: When a person is identified as a close contact to someone with COVID-19 and is not fully vaccinated*:

- **Any other children (18 years and younger)** who live in the same house and are not fully vaccinated must follow the same isolation recommendations, and not leave their property unless it is to go for testing or to seek necessary medical attention. This includes not going to school, child-care, and other activities outside of the home.
- **Adults (19 years or older)** who live in the same house and who are not fully vaccinated should stay home except for essential reasons, if they themselves are not close contacts and there are no COVID-19 cases in the household. Essential reasons for leaving home include going to the grocery store or pharmacy, accessing health care services, and/or attending school and for essential in-person work.

This does not apply for those who are fully vaccinated* OR who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days.**

*Fully Vaccinated means that you have received:

- A full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or any combination of such vaccines
- One or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or
- Three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, and
- Your final dose of the COVID-19 vaccine was at least 14 days ago or prior to the exposure date.

**Some household members of close contacts may be able to return to school if they have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have been cleared by public health.

We understand that any cases of COVID-19 in schools can be concerning and that this concern grows when we see cases increasing. We continue to work closely with local school boards to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to keep schools open for learning. We also continue to investigate any reports of COVID-19 in schools and will notify anyone who is identified as a close contact. 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.

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. To help prevent further transmission of COVID-19 at school and in the community, it is important to continue to follow these public health measures:

- Get vaccinated.
- Complete the daily COVID-19 school and child care screening.
- Keep at least two metres apart from people you don't live with.
- Wear a mask when you are not able to keep physical distance.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Cover your cough and sneezes.
- Stay home and [self-isolate](#) when ill.
- Get tested at an assessment centre if you have symptoms of COVID-19 (please do not use "at home" rapid antigen testing).