

- This document is based on the following Ministry of Health (MOH) guidance documents: Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools¹ and COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management²
- This is not an exhaustive document - please refer to above guidance documents for listing of all scenarios
- To be used in conjunction with guidance from MOH: Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario³

Term	Definition
Confirmed case (provincial case definition ^{4*})	A person with laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 infection
Probable case (provincial case definition ^{4*})	<p>A. A person (who has not had a laboratory test) who has symptoms compatible with COVID-19 AND:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -travelled to an area impacted by COVID-19, (including within Canada) 14 days prior to symptom onset, or -has had close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19* or -lived in or worked in a facility known to be experiencing an outbreak of COVID-19 <p>OR</p> <p>B. A person with symptoms compatible with COVID-19 AND in whom laboratory results are inconclusive or indeterminate</p>
Outbreak in a school²	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)
Cohort²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the school community, including staff and students, that a case has regular contact with • A cohort could include staff and students; in the same class, on the same bus, that attend the same extra-curricular activities, and/or attend the same before and after school programs as the case <p>*Non-medical mask use by a case does not reduce exposure risk for a cohort of contacts*</p>
Screening⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mandatory that all students, teachers and staff check for symptoms of illness everyday before going to school by using the COVID-19 School screening tool found at https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health follow up within the school context will vary depending on the community and may be done by the local Public Health Unit (PHU), the nurse in the community with support from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)-Communicable Disease (CD) Unit or the local PHU or it may be a collaborative effort.
Close contact is defined as an individual with a high risk exposure to a confirmed or probable case ^{3}	
For a list of symptoms please refer to the current Ontario Ministry of Health: COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms⁶	

Note: For specific questions related to planning and implementation of public health measures within schools please consult the school board or equivalent that is affiliated with your jurisdiction

Situation: Student, staff or visitor becomes ill while at school (includes before and after care affiliated with the school)

General Considerations

- All students should be aware how to identify symptoms of COVID-19 and to inform a staff member immediately if they feel unwell
- Ill individuals should be separated from others until they are able to go home
- Staff should maintain physical distancing and wear a surgical/procedural mask and eye shield when attending to the ill individual
- Ill individuals should wear a surgical/procedural mask, if tolerated, and practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Ill individuals should be advised to seek medical advice, including testing for COVID-19 as appropriate or as advised by their health care provider
- Any space and items used by the ill individual should be cleaned and disinfected as per protocols
- Communication protocols should be initiated to update key stakeholders in the school community as necessary
- A list of contacts should be prepared and contacts should be kept in their cohorts; in most cases testing and isolation would only be recommended for contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case

RETURN TO SCHOOL

Ill individual, negative test result:

- **High risk exposure:** Return to school once 14 days self-isolation is completed
- **No known high-risk exposure, not advised to self-isolate:** Return to school when symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours
- **If symptoms compatible with COVID-19 persist/worsen:** Stay home, seek medical attention and consider the need for retesting

Ill individual with no laboratory test result:

- **High-risk exposure:** Manage as a probable case. Follow case and contact management guidelines for self-isolation and clearance
- **No known high-risk exposure (not a probable case):**
 - Alternative diagnosis: return to school when symptoms are resolved for 24 hours
 - No alternative diagnosis, symptoms are compatible with COVID-19, testing recommended: self-isolate as per testing and clearance guidelines
 - No alternative diagnosis, testing not recommended: return to school when symptoms have been resolved for at least 24 hours

Situation: Student, staff or visitor becomes ill while at school (includes before and after care affiliated with the school)
(Continued)

**Public Health
Management**

Public Health (follow up could be done by the local PHU, the nurse in the community and/or ISC-CD team)

Public health does not need to be notified of all illnesses within the school. Notify only if there is concern about a potential communicable disease or if there are multiple illnesses within a cohort

- Ensures school administrators and staff have the public health resources that will enable them to manage individuals within the school who develop symptoms of COVID-19
- Ill individuals with pending COVID-19 test results should be advised to self-isolate and seek medical attention as required
- If the ill individual has an exposure to COVID-19:
 - Ensure the school is collecting information on the cohorts and contacts of the ill individual
 - *At the discretion of the PHU/CD nurse, contact follow up may begin prior to test results depending on risk level of exposure
 - Self-isolation and testing of asymptomatic school contacts is generally not recommended while test results are pending
 - Household contacts should be advised to complete the [Ontario Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if there is a need for self-isolation and testing or if self-monitoring is recommended
- Helps facilitates relationships between school community and key stakeholders

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)-Environmental Public Health (EPH)

- Available to conduct school inspections (in-person or virtually) and can provide recommendations on how facilities could best meet provincial and federal COVID-19 operational guidelines
- Available to provide inspections, advice, and guidance in the areas of: drinking water, wastewater, housing, food safety, facilities, and general environmental public health concerns

Situation: Confirmed Diagnosis of COVID-19 in the School Community

General Considerations	Return to School for a confirmed case of COVID-19: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on MOH guidelines on clearance of cases and determined by PHU or PHN/CHN (with support from CD team)
Public Health Management	<p>Public Health (could be local PHU, nurse in the community and/or ISC-CD team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notifies school administrators of any confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the school community, works collaboratively with school to identify any contacts Performs case and contact management activities following MOH guidelines Determines where case likely acquired their infection, within or outside of the school community, reviews activities in the 14 days prior to symptom onset or test collection if case is asymptomatic Collaborates with provincial partners to facilitate a coordinated approach to testing Provides resources to communities Facilitates relationships with key stakeholders to support school communities <p><u>ACTIONS FOR SPECIFIC SCENARIOS</u></p> <p>Case acquired infection outside of school and attended school during period of communicability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort, and any other close contacts (including siblings), with high-risk exposure should be dismissed from school for 14 days of self-isolation from last exposure to the case <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exceptions to dismissal may be made on a case by case basis Close contacts should be tested as soon as possible To minimize risk of false negatives, testing is recommended 5-7 days after exposure School population should be monitored for other symptomatic individuals Additional contacts outside of the school community should be identified and followed up <p>Acquisition of infection unknown or acquisition likely at school; attended school during incubation period, may have been in school during period of communicability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cohort, and other contacts with high risk exposure (including siblings), should be dismissed from school for 14 days of self-isolation from last exposure to the case or cohort Close contacts should be tested as soon as possible. If test results are negative and symptoms develop retesting is recommended School population should be monitored for symptomatic individuals <p>Secondary cases identified from a known case:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cases should be managed as per above scenario Additional cohorts and high risk contacts may be identified and need to be dismissed from school for 14 days self-isolation Decision to declare an outbreak and initiate appropriate follow up will be determined by the PHU in conjunction with the school/community (CHN/PHN and CD team will be involved in the process as appropriate) Timeline for return to school for case and contacts will be determined by PHU (in collaboration with CHN/PHN and CD team as appropriate) <p>ISC-EPH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available to conduct school inspections (in-person or virtually) and can provide recommendations on how facilities could best meet provincial and federal COVID-19 operational guidelines

Situation: School bus driver becomes ill during work day

Suggested/General Considerations	<p>Bus Driver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies employer • Consults health care provider and follows recommendations • If tested for COVID -19 follows isolation instructions • Follows return to work guidelines <p>Employer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises ill employee to stay home from work and seek medical attention as required • Ensures buses undergo appropriate cleaning and disinfection and alternate driver is located
Public Health Management	<p>Public Health (follow up could be done by the local PHU, the nurse in the community and/or ISC-CD team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If communicable disease is suspected, follow up as per MOH guidelines • Provides support and guidance as required • Provides resources to communities • Facilitates relationships with key stakeholders to support school communities

Situation: School bus driver tests positive for COVID-19

Suggested/General Considerations	<p>Bus Driver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies employer • Consults health care provider as required and follows public health recommendations • Follows guidelines on return to work <p>Employer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifies impacted school(s) • Ensures bus is appropriately disinfected and alternative driver is identified • Communicates with impacted school and provides bus cohort list to schools as required • Notifies Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development and WSIB as required
Public Health Management	<p>Public Health (follow up could be done by local PHU, nurse in the community and/or ISC-CD team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case and contact management as per MOH guidelines • Supports school and community as required • Provides resources to communities • Facilitates relationships with key stakeholders to support school communities

Situation: Household member tests positive for COVID-19	
General Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents/caregivers are not required to notify school if a household member tests positive, but are encouraged to do so Students with household members who test positive for COVID-19 should participate in remote learning when possible Parent/caregivers members are encouraged to communicate regularly with school Parent/caregivers members should follow advice of healthcare provider and public health
Public Health Management	<p>Public Health (follow up could be done by local PHU, nurse in the community and/or ISC-CD team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case and contact management as per MOH guidelines Provides direction on any necessary public health actions within the school Makes testing recommendations for cases and contacts Facilitates relationships with key stakeholders to support school communities <p>ISC-EPH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available to conduct school inspections (in-person or virtually) and can provide recommendations on how facilities could best meet provincial and federal COVID-19 operational guidelines
Additional Considerations During an Outbreak (In addition to activities outlined in confirmed diagnoses of COVID-19 in the School Community)	
<p>Definition of Outbreak in a school²</p> <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>	
General Considerations	<p>Whole school dismissal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole school dismissal should be considered if there is evidence of potential widespread transmission within the school When the whole school is dismissed, can consider recommending testing for all school attendees Outbreak does not need to be over to consider gradually bringing back cohorts without evidence of transmission, depending on available information and test results <p>An outbreak can be declared over when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 14 days have passed with no evidence of ongoing transmission that could reasonably be related to exposure in the school <p>AND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further ill individuals associated with the initial exposed cohorts have tests pending²
Public Health	<p>Public Health (follow up could be done by the local PHU, the nurse in the community and/or ISC-CD team)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advises schools and boards of education on prevention and preparedness for managing COVID-19 in school community Determines when an outbreak exists and declares when it is over Decides when to dismiss from school cohorts and contacts for self-isolation, determines, in collaboration with the school/community, the need for school closure and timeline for reopening schools Performs case and contact management Establishes communication processes and facilitates communication with principal and school administrators Collaborates with provincial partners to make recommendations and coordinate approaches to testing Collaborates with schools, boards of education and other stakeholders for outbreak investigation and management Reports cases, outbreaks and school exposures through the provincial reporting system Monitors local epidemiology, transmission risk in the community and absenteeism in schools Works with other PHUs, Ministry of Health's Emergency Operations Center, schools and boards of education to coordinate response and facilitate communication

References

1. Government of Ontario. Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in Schools. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/operational-guidance-covid-19-management-schools>. Updated August 26, 2020.
2. Ontario Ministry of Health. COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management (V1). <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-covid-19-guidance-school-outbreak-management-en-2020-08-26-v2.pdf>. Updated August 26, 2020.
3. Ontario Ministry of Health. Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario.(V9). http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/contact_mngmt/management_cases_contacts.pdf
4. Ontario Ministry of Health. Case definition – Novel coronavirus (COVID-19). http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_case_definition.pdf
5. Ontario Ministry of Health. COVID-19: reopening schools. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-reopening-schools#section-1>. Updated September 16th, 2020.
6. Ontario Ministry of Health. COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms (V7). http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/contact_mngmt/management_cases_contacts.pdf. Updated September 21st, 2020.