

April 13, 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Re: Potential Increase in COVID-19 Transmission in the Community and at School

With the increase in the amount of Omicron circulating in our regions, it is likely that your child's school is seeing an increase in individuals who are testing positive for COVID-19. [Information about COVID-19 school closures and absenteeism](#) is available from the province.

In response to this rise in COVID-19, we are asking that families practice extra vigilance and consider public health measures that will protect themselves, their families, and their school and community.

The Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit and the Eastern Ontario Health Unit are advising the following:

Get vaccinated:

- Vaccines are safe, effective and the best way to protect your child and those around them from serious illnesses like COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccines available in Canada are effective against all current variants. To get vaccinated:
 - **In Leeds, Grenville & Lanark Region:** Book an appointment using the [Leeds, Grenville and Lanark online booking portal](#) or call the local Vaccine Call Centre at 1-844-369-1234 Monday to Friday 8:30am to 4:00pm.
 - **In Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry (SDG), Prescott-Russell (P-R), and the City of Cornwall:** Appointments are available through the provincial vaccine booking system at [Ontario.ca/bookvaccine](#) and through the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1 833 943-3900. Eligible individuals are also welcome to walk-in to [clinics listed](#) at [EOHU.ca/vaccines](#). Individuals who need assistance or special accommodations can call the EOHU at 1 800 267-7120.

Consider wearing a properly fitted and well-constructed 3-ply cloth mask or medical mask indoors in public places, including schools and on school vehicles:

- A well fitted high quality mask is an effective way to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other respiratory viruses by helping to keep the virus from the nose and throat of an infected person from reaching others. It also helps to keep virus from reaching the mouth and nose from an infected person who is close.
- Consider wearing a mask when with older adults or people who are immune compromised and who could become seriously ill as a result of a COVID-19 infection.
- The following are **situations where masks continue to be required:**
 - If you travelled out of the country in the last 14 days. See [current federal travel requirements](#).
 - If you had COVID-19 within the last 10 days (20 days for immune compromised individuals) and your isolation period is complete.
 - If you were in close contact with someone who has COVID-19.
 - If someone you live with has COVID-19 and you are exempt from self-isolation.

Check for symptoms of COVID-19 and stay home if sick:

- Students, teachers, school staff and visitors should continue to self-screen for symptoms of COVID-19 every day before going to school using the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening](#) tool.

- Anyone who has any symptoms of illness, even one, should stay home. All household members should also monitor for symptoms daily.

If your child or a member of your household develops symptoms:

- Complete the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening](#) tool and follow the guidance provided.
- Use a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT), if available.
- If your child (or any member of the household) tests negative on a RAT, they must stay home and repeat the test in 24 to 48 hours. If both RATs are negative, the individual is advised to self-isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms are present).
- If your child (or any member of the household) has COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive, [isolate](#) immediately. Isolate for at least 5 days after your symptom onset if [fully vaccinated](#) or under 12 years old; or 10 days after symptom onset if 12 plus and [not fully vaccinated](#) or immune compromised.
 - Symptoms must be improving with no fever for 24 to 48 hours (vomiting and diarrhea) before isolation can be ended. Once isolation ends, wear a well-fitted mask when out of the house, until day 10 (or 20 for immune compromised individuals) after symptom onset or positive result, and do not visit people who are immune compromised. For more information visit [Ontario.ca/exposed](#).
 - Household members must isolate while the person with COVID-19 is isolating unless they do not have symptoms **AND** meet the one of following criteria:
 - They have previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days
 - They are 18 + and boosted
 - They are 18 years old and are [fully vaccinated](#)
 - If symptoms worsen, seek advice from [Telehealth](#) (1 866-797-0000) or a health care provider.
 - If concerning symptoms develop, such as difficulty breathing or chest pain, call 911.

Continue to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette:

- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer. Cover your coughs and sneezes.

Have small gatherings of family and friends:

- Meet in a well-ventilated area, outside if possible, where people can spread out comfortably.
- Have everyone assess for symptoms before they come.
- If older adults or people who are immune compromised will be joining you, consider wearing a mask to help protect them.

These layers of protection combine to reduce the prevalence of COVID-19 and other respiratory infections, including influenza, that are circulating in our community.

For more information on COVID-19:

- In Leeds, Grenville & Lanark Region: Call the LGLDHU at 1-866-236-0123 or visit our website at: <https://healthunit.org/health-information/covid-19/schools/>.
- In SDG, P-R and the City of Cornwall: Call the Eastern Ontario Health Unit at 1-800 267-7120 or visit our website at: <https://eohu.ca/en/covid/schools>.

Sincerely,

Original signed by:
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Medical Officer of Health

Original signed by:
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Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer