

Good Afternoon St. Martha Families,

I wanted to thank all of our parents, students, and staff for their awesome work in the first week of school. The new rules place many challenges in front of us, but it was wonderful to see so many familiar and smiling faces on the yard.

I am particularly proud of our students, who have done a great job adjusting to the routines.

We continue to tweak things here to make sure that students and staff are as safe as possible. Rest assured that classes continue to practice hand washing, hand sanitizing, and social distancing. We have also staggered lunch and recess breaks to limit the number of students outside as well as assigned them zones to limit contact with other cohorts.

Thank you for your patience and thank you for your diligence. Together we can keep our community safe and healthy.

I do have a few points to clarify for families that I wanted to share at this time:

1. Tri-board has indicated that students will not be permitted temporary bus passes to ride with friends. Students can only take the bus that they are assigned to.
2. Parents are reminded that they must self-screen their child before sending them to school, and that they should not be sent to school with any symptoms. Siblings are permitted to attend school normally if they are asymptomatic.
3. The direction to schools from Public Health is that students/staff who present with any symptoms are to go home and either
  - Be tested and await results/direction from PHU
  - or - Remain home for 14 days

Information on symptoms of COVID-19 can be found on the Public Health website. There, you will also find the Ontario Ministry of Health self-assessment tool.

### **Symptoms of COVID-19**

The most common symptoms include:

- Fever (feeling hot to the touch, a temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher)
- Chills
- Cough that's new or worsening (continuous, more than usual)
- Barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing (croup)
- Shortness of breath (out of breath, unable to breathe deeply)
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Runny nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- Stuffy or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- Lost sense of taste or smell
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- Headache that's unusual or long lasting
- Digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
- Muscle aches
- Extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- Falling down often
- For young children and infants: sluggishness or lack of appetite

You can also use the [self-assessment tool](#) from the Ontario Ministry of Health.

If your child is sent home, they will get a note with information about next-steps, as well as reminders about what should happen before your child can return to school.

Please note that the school's responsibility is to note symptoms and contact parents for pick up and next steps. Staff cannot diagnose if a symptom is COVID related or not, and public health has been clear in their direction of the process that must follow.

It is critical that you self-screen your child each day before sending them off to school, in order to keep sick children at home and avoid the spread of illness in our schools.

Thank you for your help and support in keeping our kids and our community safe.

God Bless