**COVID-19 Guide for Families** 

2021-2022 School Year

#### Planning for return to in-person classes

There are many things that families can do to prepare students for in-person classes this September. Modelling healthy behaviours at home and talking to students about what changes to expect will help ease this transition back to school.

# Family roles in keeping schools safe

## Daily screening

- Check in with students each morning for signs of illness.
  If symptoms are present, keep student home and notify the school. ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread
- Make sure your contact information is current at school, including emergency contacts and individuals authorized to pick up student(s).

#### Keep a safe distance

Keep 2 metres between you and others when possible:

- During drop-off and pick-up.
- During interactions with a teacher, school staff, or other parents, caregivers, and students.

# Plan for transportation

- Make sure student(s) riding the bus come prepared wearing a mask. Talk to your student(s) about the importance of following bus rules, including assigned seating and physical distancing, if possible.
- If carpooling, plan on student(s) in the carpool and the driver wearing face coverings for the entire trip. If your school uses the cohort model, consider finding families within student(s) group or cohort at school to be part of the carpool.

# Plan for possible periods of quarantine.

- If transmission is increasing in our community or if multiple students or staff test positive for COVID-19, the school building might close.
- If a close contact of a student (within or outside of school) tests positive for COVID-19, student(s) may need to stay home and quarantine for 10 days.

# Talk to your student(s) about health measures that will be in place in schools:

- Sanitize hands before entering school and classrooms.
- Wash or sanitize hands several times throughout the day.
- ♦ Wear a mask.
- Cover coughs and sneezes in the bend of your arm.
- Keep a distance between others and follow marks in hallways.
- Do not share food or personal items like pencils or erasers.
- Tell staff if they are feeling sick at school.
- Lunch and recess routines may change to allow for physical distancing.
- Students who take the bus will have to sit in the same seat every day.









# COVID-19 vaccines

Getting fully immunized is the best way to protect yourself, family, loved ones, and the community from COVID-19. Vaccines are an important tool to help to stop the spread and allow students and families to safely get back to the things they love.

#### What does fully immunized mean?

COVID-19 vaccines require 2 doses, with at least 28 days between the first and second dose. A person is considered fully immunized 14 days after receiving their second dose.

## What vaccine can youth receive?

Health Canada has approved the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for youth born in 2009 or earlier.

# What are the benefits of getting fully immunized against COVID-19?

- ◆ Vaccine helps your immune system to fight the COVID-19 virus and reduces the chance of serious illness and hospitalization.
- Vaccine creates a strong antibody response in youth aged 12 to 17 and is up to 95% effective after two doses.
- Symptom free contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19 are not required to isolate if they are fully immunized.
- Symptom free household members of symptomatic individuals are not required to isolate if they are fully immunized.

Public Health may recommend COVID-19 testing for fully immunized students if they were a high-risk contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

# What if you are **not fully immunized?**

If you are not fully immunized a 10-day isolation period is required for high risk contacts of a confirmed COVID-19 case.

#### What if a COVID-19 case is confirmed at school?

Public Health will work with your school to determine the risk level of any potential contacts and will provide further instructions to any affected cohorts.