



Services de santé du

TIMISKAMING

Health Unit

Enhancing your health in so many ways.

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September 27, 2021

Dear Parents and Families:

Heading back to school in a pandemic is challenging. I want to acknowledge the varied emotions that families may be feeling such as excitement, worry, fear, relief, uncertainty, and more. Whether you have chosen in-school or remote learning, Timiskaming Health Unit is committed to supporting you and your schools.

Everyone plays an active role in keeping our kids safe during the 2021/22 school year. The attached *Top 10 COVID-19 Basic Rules for Safe Schools* gives important guidance for a safe return to school. For additional information about COVID-19 and resources, please visit timiskaminghu.com

Vaccination is also important to keep children healthy. COVID-19 vaccines are safe and help to protect people of all ages against serious illness, hospitalization and death. Getting the vaccine protects the individual and others who are vulnerable to COVID-19, including children who are too young to get the shot yet. Thank you to everyone who has already received their vaccine. For those who have not, it is strongly recommended to get fully vaccinated as soon as you can. **People born in 2009 (turning 12 in 2021) or older across Ontario are eligible to receive the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine. Timiskaming Health Unit will be hosting clinics in all schools with age-eligible students to offer the Pfizer vaccine to students and staff between September 29 and October 8.** If you or your child have questions about the vaccine, please speak to your health care provider or contact a nurse at Timiskaming Health Unit at 866-747-4305, ext 7 or covidvaccine@timiskaminghu.com.

Screening your child(ren) daily for illness and potential COVID-19 symptoms is a must. More details about screening are in the attached document. Children who fail the screening tool must stay home and contact an assessment center to arrange for a COVID test. When it is time for your child(ren) to return to school, follow your school's procedure. If required, a written statement that a student has tested negative or consulted with their health care provider is enough; you do not need to provide a medical note or proof of a negative test.

Please accept my sincere gratitude and admiration for all parents, guardians, school staff, bus drivers, and students themselves for the patience and resilience you have demonstrated throughout the multiple waves of COVID-19. You have sacrificed much and made school 2021/22 reopening a possibility. Let's continue to work together to help keep our schools safe.

Congratulations students, parents, and guardians – you have my very best wishes for the coming school year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenn Corneil, B.Sc., M.D., C.C.F.P., F.C.F.P.
Acting Medical Officer of Health/CEO

Top 10 COVID-19 Basic Rules for Safe Schools

- 1. The best way to protect schools and support a successful school reopening is to keep COVID-19 out of our communities.** Now, more than ever, we need to recommit to COVID-19 prevention. Follow the guidance set out by your local health unit.
- 2. Make COVID-19 symptom screening part of your daily routine.** Just like brushing your teeth every morning, checking for COVID-19 symptoms and using a COVID-19 self-assessment too. (e.g. <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>), are essential parts of your daily habits.
- 3. Got symptoms? Stay home!** Now is not the time to "tough it out" when you are under the weather. No one will thank you for showing up to school sick. When in doubt, wait it out-and let your school know!
- 4. Have a "plan B".** Things can change quickly with COVID-19. You know your "plan A". Have a back-up plan so you can deal with unexpected changes caused by COVID-19 in your school, like needing to stay home and being prepared to shift from in school learning to distance learning, or a combination of both.
- 5. Talk to each other.** Discuss different age-appropriate scenarios and role play them to support kids in how to handle them safely. Examples include situations in the school or classroom related to masks, distancing, touchless greetings, or handwashing, and getting to and from school.
- 6. Stay informed.** School boards and public health units post valuable information on their websites and on social media. It's also available by phone. School boards are required to post COVID-19 case information and share any real-time impacts on their schools, such as class dismissals or school closures.
- 7. Be prepared.** This year back-to-school supplies continue to include non-medical masks. Follow your school's policies on what to bring and what they will supply.
- 8. Get involved. Get Vaccinated!** As we enter a new school year, we will face unknowns and unexpected situations. Be solution oriented and encourage friends and family to get vaccinated. Share your observations and your suggestions with your school.
- 9. Take care of yourself. It's ok to not be ok.** You may feel alone as a student or someone who cares for a student. Unsettling feelings at school re-entry are very normal. You are never as alone as you feel. Know that help is available - reach out for support when you need it.
- 10. Be COVID kind. Practise kindness, patience, and gratitude-we are all in this together.**

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MY CHILD HAS 1 OR MORE SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19. WHAT SHOULD I DO?

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- Notify your child's school/child care that they have one or more symptoms.
- Your child should stay home, self-isolate and get tested.
- Anyone in the household who is not fully vaccinated (14 days after receiving the 2nd dose) must also stay home and self-isolate until the child's test is negative.

What was the result of your child's COVID-19 test?

POSITIVE

- Let your child's school/child care know that they tested positive for COVID-19.
- Your child must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days from the day their symptoms started.
- Unvaccinated/partially vaccinated household members and close contacts must also self-isolate for at least 10 days.
- The Timiskaming Health Unit will contact you to do an investigation and will provide further instructions.

NEGATIVE

- Your child may return to school/child care provided that they do not have a fever and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or at least 48 hours after their last bout of vomiting/ diarrhea has resolved).
- Siblings can return to school/child care right away as long as they do not have symptoms.
- Household members can return to school and work right away as long as they do not have symptoms.

NOT TESTED

- Your child must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days from the day their symptoms started.
- After 10 days, they can go back to school/child care if their symptoms are improving.
- Unvaccinated/partially vaccinated household members will stay home for 10 days from their last contact with the symptomatic child.

Alternative Diagnosis

If testing is not recommended, and/or an alternative diagnosis is provided by a health care provider, household members can end their isolation and your child may return to school/child care if they are meeting the following criteria:

- They do not have a fever (without using medication); AND
- Their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or at least 48 hours after their last bout of vomiting/diarrhea has resolved); AND
- They were not directed to self-isolate by their local Public Health unit after having close contact with someone who currently has COVID-19.

To find out more information on how to safely self-isolate with a child, please refer to Public Health Ontario's [fact sheet](#).

The Timiskaming Health Unit highly recommends COVID-19 testing for any student who has one or more new or worsening symptoms of COVID-19 that are not related to seasonal allergies or underlying health conditions. The new Student [Online Self-Assessment Tool](#) can help to decide if testing is needed. COVID-19 testing takes place at an Assessment Centre. Please call your closest Assessment Centre to book an appointment. Walk-ins may be turned away.

Assessment Centre	Phone Number	Location
Temiskaming Shores and area	705-648-1844	Temiskaming Hospital
Englehart and area	705-568-2127	Englehart Site of Blanche River Health
Kirkland Lake and area	705-568-2127	Blanche River Health Kirkland Lake
Temagami and area	705-569-3244	Temagami Family Health Team

After testing, a student with symptoms is required to self-isolate until test results come back. Note that individuals living in the same household as the student with symptoms who are not vaccinated, or partially vaccinated will need to self-isolate until the symptomatic child receives a negative COVID test. Individuals who are fully vaccinated (14 days following the 2nd dose of the vaccine) do not need to self-isolate.

After a student receives a negative test result, they may return to school provided that they do not have a fever and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or at least 48 hours after their last bout of vomiting/ diarrhea has resolved). Siblings and other household members can return to school and work right away as long as they do not have symptoms.

If you have any questions contact the COVID-19 Line at the Timiskaming Health Unit. We can be reached at 705-647-4305, 1-866-747-4305.