

CHECKLIST

(ARCHIVED) COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Elementary and Secondary (K-12) Schools

2nd Revision Published: September 1, 2021

2nd Revision Archived: April 14, 2022

ARCHIVED DOCUMENT

This archived content is being made available for historical research and reference purposes only. PHO is no longer updating this content and it may not reflect current guidance.

Who Should Use This Checklist?

This checklist can be used by elementary and secondary (K-12) school administrators or designated staff at in-person schools (e.g., for self-assessment purposes) and/or public health unit staff (e.g., when conducting assessments or inspections in collaboration with schools).

When to Use This Checklist?

This checklist can be used to help plan for, prevent, and detect COVID-19 in schools; it has been updated for the 2021-2021 school year, based on evidence and information available at the time of writing.

It outlines key public health measures and infection prevention and control (IPAC) strategies in the school setting that can reduce the risk of the introduction and spread of COVID-19 in elementary and secondary (K-12) schools.

The checklist is intended to provide a user-friendly resource to help systematically consider and apply relevant provincial and local guidance for schools, recognizing that there may be different epidemiological, equity, and implementation considerations across jurisdictions and boards of education, including mitigating against unintended harms and consequences).

The checklist is a companion to, and does not replace, other guidance and directives from provincial government (e.g., Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development), local public health units (PHUs) or boards of education. Where there is a conflict between this checklist and guidance and directives from local boards of education and PHUs, the guidance and directives prevail.

Note: In addition to the measures outlined in this checklist, enhanced measures may also apply based on local context (e.g., at the direction of the local PHU/school board).

Contents

Who Should Use This Checklist?	1
When to Use This Checklist?	1
Contents	2
1. Preparedness to Support Prevention and Local Public Health Unit Management of COVID-19	3
2. Symptom Screening and Management of Symptomatic Individuals	5
3. Student Transportation	6
4. School Structure/Physical Layout.....	8
Entrances/Exits	8
Classrooms and Other Shared Indoor Spaces (Including Staff Areas)	9
Self-isolation/Wellness Rooms	10
5. Cohort-Based Learning and Extracurricular Activities	11
6. Lunch/Nutrition Breaks and Food Services	12
7. Teachers, School-Based Staff, and Visitors	13
8. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette.....	14
9. Masking and Eye Protection.....	15
10. Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection.....	17
11. Indoor Air Quality.....	18
Additional Notes:	19
Summary of Revisions.....	20
Publication History.....	20
Sources.....	21
Citation.....	24
Disclaimer.....	24
Public Health Ontario.....	24

1. Preparedness to Support Prevention and Local Public Health Unit Management of COVID-19

1	Preparedness, Prevention, and Local Public Health Unit Management	Yes	No
1.1	<p>Appropriate provincial and local guidance on COVID-19 in schools has been reviewed by school administrator(s), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022)¹ • COVID-19 Guidance: School case, contact, and outbreak management² <p>Local school board's reopening plan (if available) and local PHU resources.</p>		
1.2	<p>Access to and uptake of COVID-19 vaccination by all eligible students, staff, and visitors, as well as family/household members of all students (including students ineligible for vaccination) is supported through collaboration with local public health units (PHUs)³ and other health systems partners.</p>		
1.3	<p>School administrator(s), teachers, and school-based staff have received education and training on health and safety protocols related to COVID-19 prevention, including IPAC measures, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and outbreak prevention and guidance.</p> <p>Resources: Preventing COVID-19: Refresher Presentations for Schools and Childcare Settings⁴</p>		
1.4	<p>School administrator(s) have designated a staff member(s) to function as a lead and/or provide support to school administrator for COVID-19 related matters in the school.</p>		
1.5	<p>Teachers, school-based staff, and visitors are informed of who their designated staff lead(s) are and how to reach them during school and after hours (if appropriate).</p>		
1.6	<p>School administrator(s) and designated staff lead(s) have readily accessible contact information for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health nurse (PHN) support from their local PHU (e.g., if one is assigned to school). • Other relevant contacts at the local PHU, including for reporting and after hours support if needed. • Students' parents/guardians or caregivers. 		

1	Preparedness, Prevention, and Local Public Health Unit Management	Yes	No
1.7	<p>School administrator(s) maintains an up-to-date list (including contact information) for each student/staff ‘cohort’ and can quickly identify all cohorts/groups to which an individual student/staff belongs. This list should be made available within 24 hours to assist with timely public health follow-up as needed in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.</p> <p>For reference, these ‘cohorts’ may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students in the same classroom/subject(s). • Students from different classrooms/subjects but who share common spaces at the same time (e.g., recess, lunch, library, gym). • Students on the same bus route, the assigned driver, bus monitors and student aides (if applicable). • Students attending before and after school programs, including extra-curricular activities (e.g., clubs, sports teams, band/choir). • Regular/homeroom teacher(s), classroom staff, and occasional teacher(s)/staff, when utilized. • Other rotational teachers (e.g., French or other specialty subjects). • Other school-based staff and/or visitors that provide additional in-school supports. 		
1.8	<p>School administrator(s) have developed a communication plan in collaboration with the local school board and PHU, including templates to facilitate rapid communication to students, parents/guardians, teachers, other school-based staff, and visitors in the event of a confirmed active COVID-19 case or outbreak (as determined by the local PHU), and designated media spokesperson(s) as appropriate. Communication tools could include school or school board websites.</p>		

Notes:

2. Symptom Screening and Management of Symptomatic Individuals

Note: Return to school guidance for symptomatic individuals, as well as COVID-19 case, contact, and outbreak management are out of scope for this checklist. For details, see [COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools \(2021-2022\)](#)² and [COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management](#)¹.

2	Symptom Screening and Management of Symptomatic Individuals	Yes	No
2.1	All students, teachers, school-based staff, and visitors have been instructed to self-screen daily for COVID-19 symptoms and relevant exposures (e.g., to a known or probable case) before departing for school (including prior to boarding student transportation, if applicable).		
2.2	<p>Students, parents/guardians or caregivers, teachers, school-based staff, and visitors have been provided with a COVID-19 symptoms/exposure checklist and/or tool to facilitate self-screening. This tool aligns with the Ministry of Health’s screening guidance and/or a more restrictive local PHU screening tool.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening⁵ • COVID-19 Worker and Employee Screening⁶ • COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms⁷ 		
2.3	School administrator(s), in consultation with their local school board, have a plan in place to accommodate on-site confirmation of daily self-screening, if directed to do so (e.g., by provincial guidance or by the local PHU).		
2.4	Students, teachers, school-based staff, and visitors who self-screen positive for COVID-19 symptoms or relevant exposures are aware that they must not attend school and are advised to follow the advice provided by the screening tool (e.g., seek appropriate medical attention, including testing if indicated).		
2.5	<p>Parents/guardians and caregivers, students, teachers, and staff are aware of relevant Ministry of Health and local PHU guidance for individuals who are in the same household (e.g., siblings) as a symptomatic individual, and to guide return to school for an individual who had symptoms (i.e., not a probable or confirmed case).</p> <p>Resource:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID-19 Fully Immunized and Previously Positive Individuals: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance⁸ • COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management¹ 		

2	Symptom Screening and Management of Symptomatic Individuals	Yes	No
2.6	<p>If a student, teacher, school-based staff, or visitor develops symptoms on or after arrival or during the school day, they are immediately isolated from others and sent home. A supportive and non-stigmatizing approach is used. If it is not possible to leave the school immediately, the symptomatic individual is isolated in a designated area until arrangements can be made to send them home safely.</p> <p>The symptomatic individual (or their parent/guardian or caregiver) should complete the appropriate tool (e.g., if under 18 years of age, the Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool⁵; if 18 years or older, the Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 Self-assessment Online Tool⁹) and follow the advice provided (e.g., seek appropriate medical attention, including testing if indicated).</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Self-Isolate¹⁰ • How to Care for a Child who Needs to Self-Isolate¹¹ 		

Notes:

3. Student Transportation

Note that responsibility for the items below (e.g., school administration vs. board of education vs. transportation operators) may vary. See [Section 2](#) on Symptom Screening and Management of Symptomatic Individuals for details on symptom screening.

3	Student Transportation	Yes	No
3.1	Active forms of travel (e.g., walking, biking) are encouraged.		
3.2	Students are assigned a seat. Where feasible, assigned seating optimizes physical distancing.		
3.3	A copy of the seating plan is available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.		

3	Student Transportation	Yes	No
3.4	Where feasible, siblings and/or members of the same cohort are seated together.		
3.5	Alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) with a concentration of 60%-90% should be available on student transportation with signage demonstrating appropriate use (e.g., see How to Wash Your Hands/How to Use Hand Sanitizer) ¹²		
3.6	Students in grades 1 to 12 wear a mask (medical or non-medical) when boarding, while on, and when exiting student transportation unless exempt. Exemption documentation not required.		
3.7	Students in kindergarten are strongly encouraged to wear a mask (medical or non-medical) when boarding, while on, and when exiting student transportation unless exempt. Exemption documentation not required. Note: Some schools, school boards, and/or local PHUs may require masking for kindergarten students.		
3.8	School bus drivers, monitors, and aides are provided with and required to wear medical masks (i.e., surgical/procedural) at all times on student transportation.		
3.9	School bus drivers, monitors, and aides are provided with appropriate eye protection (e.g., goggles, face shields), for use when close contact with students cannot be avoided (e.g., during student boarding and exiting when physical distancing and/or barriers are not possible). Use of eye protection does not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles.		
3.10	School bus drivers, monitors, and aides have received education and training on health and safety protocols related to COVID-19 prevention including IPAC measures and the use of PPE.		
3.11	Where feasible, the seat directly behind the school bus driver remains vacant to promote physical distancing.		
3.12	Where feasible (i.e., when safe and weather permitting), windows remain open to increase ventilation.		
3.13	Frequently touched surfaces (e.g., doors, seat backs, hand rails) are cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.		

Notes:

4. School Structure/Physical Layout

Entrances/Exits

4	Entrances/Exits	Yes	No
4.1	<p>Signage (in languages representative of the school’s population and appropriate to the grade level(s) and needs of students) is posted to remind students, teachers, school-based staff, and visitors to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and relevant exposure before entering school and to return home if ill. • Perform hand hygiene regularly and practice respiratory etiquette. • Wear a mask inside the school, when indicated, as per provincial and/or local school board requirements, unless exempt. • Report to the main office (or designated area) to sign-in (visitors only). 		
4.2	<p>For student arrivals and departures/pick-ups, strategies are in place to promote physical distancing (e.g., between cohorts) as feasible, as well as student safety (e.g., with respect to road traffic). This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using all available entrances and exits. • Having separate entrances/exits dedicated for use of individual cohorts. • See 4.8 regarding staggering movement in the school. 		
4.3	<p>ABHR with a concentration of 60%-90% is available with signage demonstrating appropriate use (e.g., see How to Wash Your Hands/How to Use Hand Sanitizer¹²) at entrances/ exits.</p>		
4.4	<p>A daily log is maintained of all visitors that enter the school each day. At a minimum this log should include the visitor’s name, contact information, date and time of visit, and who/where in the school they are visiting. Each day’s visitor’s log is kept for 30 days to facilitate contact tracing as needed.</p>		

Notes:

Classrooms and Other Shared Indoor Spaces (Including Staff Areas)

4	Classrooms and Other Shared Indoor Spaces (Including Staff Areas)	Yes	No
4.5	Where feasible, unnecessary furniture and equipment have been removed from classroom to increase available space for physical distancing.		
4.6	Furniture, including desks and chairs are spaced as far apart as possible and face the same direction, if possible. If individual desks are not used/appropriate (e.g., tables for younger students), maximize space between groups and use alternate seats, if possible.		
4.7	Visual cues (e.g., arrows taped on floor/walls, signs indicating which tables/chairs to use) are used to encourage a one-way flow of traffic and facilitate physical distancing.		
4.8	Periods of student movement throughout the school (e.g., lunch, recess, washroom breaks) are staggered to facilitate physical distancing.		
4.9	Use of elevators (if applicable) should be limited as much as possible. If used, physical distancing of at least 2 metres is maintained between riders and masks are worn.		
4.10	Signage is posted in shared spaces (e.g., washrooms, change rooms, gym, cafeteria, library, staff break rooms) informing students, teachers, school-based staff, and visitors of the maximum occupancy to facilitate physical distancing.		
4.11	Signage is posted in shared spaces reminding students, teachers, school-based staff, and visitors of the need to perform regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, as well as masking requirements.		
4.12	ABHR with a concentration of 60%-90% is available with signage demonstrating appropriate use (e.g., see How to Wash Your Hands/How to Use Hand Sanitizer) ¹² in all classrooms and shared indoor spaces.		
4.13	In classrooms and/or other commonly shared spaces with sinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liquid soap and paper towels in dispensers are available for performing hand hygiene. No-touch garbage cans are available. 		
4.14	In classrooms and/or other commonly shared spaces without sinks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wet wipes (or similar) are available for removing visible soiling from hands prior to performing hand hygiene with ABHR. No-touch garbage cans are available. 		

4	Classrooms and Other Shared Indoor Spaces (Including Staff Areas)	Yes	No
4.15	When possible and practical (e.g., privacy, safety), doors remain open to reduce touch points.		

Notes:

Self-isolation/Wellness Rooms

4	Self-isolation/Wellness Rooms	Yes	No
4.16	<p>At least one room/area has been identified to serve as the designated space to isolate students or staff/visitors who become ill (or have symptoms of COVID-19) during the school day, with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate signage and monitoring to limit entry to enable physical distancing at all times (at least 2 metres apart). • Space and furniture configured to enable at least 2 metres distance between ill individuals at all times. • The space enables windows to remain open (if available) (see Section 11 on Indoor Air Quality). • Medical masks for ill individuals and PPE (medical/surgical/procedural masks, eye protection, gloves and gowns) for staff when providing care within 2 metres. • ABHR, tissues, and no-touch garbage cans. • A designated space for staff supervising ill individuals in this space (if needed), at least 2 metres away from ill individuals. • A plan for cleaning and disinfection (e.g., if possible, between use by ill individuals). • Consider potential additional spaces that could be used to support self-isolation if multiple ill individuals present at the same time, as needed to enable at least 2 metres distance between individuals at all times. 		

Notes:

5. Cohort-Based Learning and Extracurricular Activities

There may be additional considerations for students who may participate regularly in learning outside of their cohort (e.g., students with an individualized learning plan). Before and after school programs may have additional provincial requirements. See [Section 11](#) on Indoor Air Quality for considerations for indoor spaces (e.g., classrooms). Detailed guidance for specific subjects is not provided here.

5	Cohort-based Learning and Extracurricular Activities	Yes	No
5.1	All available strategies (including use of all available spaces in the school and outdoor learning spaces) are being used to enable physical distancing wherever feasible and limit the number of potentially exposed individuals in a cohort as much as possible. Consistent and multiple (i.e., layered) strategies are in place to minimize risk of spread during learning (e.g., classroom) and extracurricular activities.		
5.2	For subjects taught by a teacher other than the regular/homeroom teacher, the student cohort remains in the same classroom and the teacher(s) move from classroom to classroom, where feasible/practical (e.g., may not be possible if special facilities required).		
5.3	Where feasible, music classes (singing, use of wind instruments) are held outdoors, with as much distance as possible encouraged between students from different cohorts.		
5.4	If held indoors, music classes (singing, use of wind instruments) take place in a well-ventilated space and with adequate physical distancing (i.e., at least 2 metres between each student).		
5.5	If wind instruments are shared between students, they are properly cleaned and disinfected between uses.		
5.6	Where feasible, health and physical education classes are held outdoors.		
5.7	If physical education classes are held indoors, masking is encouraged if they can be worn safely depending on the activity.		
5.7	Field trips, including overnight excursions, are planned in accordance with relevant provincial and local requirements. Routine public health measures, such as daily self-screening, hand hygiene, physical distancing, mask use, and cohorting are maintained.		
5.8	Clubs/activities, bands, and organized sports, including inter-school activities, are held outdoors (where feasible) with as much physical distance as possible encouraged between cohorts.		

5	Cohort-based Learning and Extracurricular Activities	Yes	No
5.9	Assemblies and other large student/school gatherings, if held, are planned in accordance with relevant provincial and local requirements.		
5.10	If applicable, in-person placements for students in cooperative education courses are organized in accordance with relevant provincial requirements, in coordination with the local school board and PHU.		

Notes:

6. Lunch/Nutrition Breaks and Food Services

6	Lunch/Nutrition Breaks and Food Services	Yes	No
6.1	Lunch and nutrition breaks are staggered to allow students and staff to perform hand hygiene and reduce crowding in hallways, washrooms, and designated eating areas.		
6.2	Weather permitting and when otherwise feasible, lunch and nutrition breaks are taken outside.		
6.3	When taken indoors, all available spaces within the school (e.g., cafeteria, gym, classrooms, library) are utilized to facilitate physical distancing of at least 2 metres between different cohorts and as much distance as possible within the same cohort. Larger schools have plans in place to limit the number of students and cohorts eating in proximity to each other as much as possible.		
6.4	Students and staff bring food for lunch and nutrition breaks that is labelled and not shared.		
6.5	Each student has their own drink bottle that is labelled and not shared.		
6.6	Single use, disposable cups and utensils are available for students and staff who do not have (or forgot) a drink bottle and/or utensils.		

6	Lunch/Nutrition Breaks and Food Services	Yes	No
6.7	Food handlers involved in school nutrition/third-party food programs, and/or non-instructional food events (e.g., pizza day) follow adequate food safety and handling practices, as well as applicable visitor requirements (e.g., screening, masking).		

Notes:

7. Teachers, School-Based Staff, and Visitors

7	Teachers, School-Based Staff, and Visitors	Yes	No
7.1	Where feasible, staff are encouraged to use modes of active transportation or private vehicles. If ride sharing is needed to get to and from work, encourage mask wearing, limiting number of riders to allow distancing within vehicle, and opening windows.		
7.2	Staff are reminded to adhere to school policy re: masking in shared indoor spaces unless eating or drinking (but while maintaining physical distancing).		
7.3	Breaks and lunch times are staggered to limit the number of staff permitted entry at one time to promote physical distancing.		
7.4	In-person staff meetings or other large gatherings are not planned and instead are scheduled virtually, or outdoors (if physical distancing of at least 2 metres can be maintained at all times).		
7.5	A policy is in place to define which visitors will be permitted to enter the school, where within the school they are permitted to be (e.g., staff break rooms) and for what purpose(s).		

Notes:

8. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

8	Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette	Yes	No
8.1	<p>Students, teachers, staff, and visitors have received education and training on when and how to perform hand hygiene (i.e., cleaning hands) properly.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to Wash Your Hands/How to Use Hand Sanitizer¹² • How to Hand Wash¹³ • How to Hand Rub¹⁴ • Preventing COVID-19: Refresher Presentations for Schools and Childcare Settings⁴ 		
8.2	<p>Students, teachers, staff, and visitors have received education and training on respiratory etiquette (i.e., cover your cough, sneeze with a tissue).</p> <p>Resource: Cover your Cough: Stop the Spread of Germs that Can Make You and Others Sick!¹⁵</p>		
8.3	<p>ABHR is the preferred method for hand hygiene when hands are not visibly soiled.¹⁶</p> <p>ABHR with a concentration of 60%-90% is available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At all school entrances/exits • In each classroom and other shared indoor spaces (e.g., gym, library, cafeteria, staff break rooms) • Near high-touch surfaces (e.g., water fountains/dispensers, outside of washrooms) • In the space designated for isolating symptomatic individuals (i.e., self-isolation/wellness rooms) <p>Resource: Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers (COVID-19): List of hand sanitizers authorized by Health Canada¹⁷</p>		
8.4	<p>A process is in place to monitor available supplies for hand hygiene (i.e., ABHR, liquid soap, paper towels) and are re-ordered and replaced when necessary.</p>		

Notes:

9. Masking and Eye Protection

9	Masking and Eye Protection	Yes	No
9.1	<p>Students in grades 1 to 12 are required to wear a properly-fitted mask (medical or non-medical) indoors* (including in hallways and during classes) and on student transportation, unless exempt. Exemption documentation not required.</p> <p>*For exceptions, see item 9.5</p>		
9.2	<p>Students in kindergarten are strongly encouraged to wear a properly-fitted mask (medical or non-medical) indoors* (including in hallways and during classes) and on student transportation, unless exempt. Exemption documentation not required.</p> <p>Note: Some schools, school boards, and/or local PHUs may require masking for kindergarten students. If the school/school board has implemented additional masking measures beyond provincial requirements (e.g., masking for kindergarten students), at the advice of the local PHU, these are followed.</p> <p>*For exceptions, see item 9.5.</p>		
9.3	<p>Teachers, school-based staff, and visitors have been provided with and are required to wear a medical mask (i.e., surgical/procedural) at all times when indoors* (including in hallways and during classes), unless exempt. Exemption documentation not required.</p> <p>*For exceptions, see item 9.5</p>		
9.4	<p>Teachers and other school-based staff have been provided with and are strongly recommended to wear eye protection (e.g., face shield, goggles), in addition to a medical mask, if close contact (i.e., less than 2 metres) with an unmasked student/staff member cannot be prevented.</p>		
9.5	<p>At minimum, provincial guidance on when masks can be temporarily removed is followed. I.e., When indoors, masks may be temporarily removed for the following activities, provided that physical distancing of at least 2 metres between different cohorts, and as much distancing as possible between members of the same cohort, is maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If singing (in areas with adequate ventilation; masks still encouraged) • If eating/drinking • If engaged in low- or high-contact activities (masks still encouraged if safe) <p>Any additional local (e.g., PHU) requirements are followed.</p>		
9.6	<p>Students, teachers, school-based staff, and visitors are not required to wear a mask (medical or non-medical) when outdoors, but distancing between cohorts is encouraged.</p>		

9	Masking and Eye Protection	Yes	No
9.7	A policy is in place on safe mask breaks (e.g., when eating/drinking, outdoors).		
9.8	<p>Students, teachers, and school-based staff have received education and training on how to properly wear masks, how to safely put them on and take them off (including hand hygiene), and how to clean in between uses (if applicable).</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preventing COVID-19: Tips for Children Attending School¹⁸ • Putting on Mask and Eye Protection¹⁹ • Preventing COVID-19: Refresher Presentations for Schools and Childcare Settings⁴ 		
9.9	Teachers and other school-based staff who have been designated to act as a lead for COVID-19 related activities in the school, which may include caring for an ill student or staff member, have received education and training on the selection and use of appropriate PPE ²⁰ .		
9.10	A supply of appropriately sized 3-ply non-medical masks are available for students who forget or lose their mask, who do not have masks, or if their mask becomes soiled or wet during the school day. Equity of access for all students who are required and encouraged to wear masks at school should be ensured.		
9.11	<p>A plan is in place, and students, teachers, and school-based staff are instructed on how and where (i.e., folded inward, stored in a clean/dry bag or cleanable container) to safely store their mask when it is not being worn.</p> <p>Resource: Preventing COVID-19: Tips for Children Attending School¹⁸</p>		
9.12	Non-stigmatizing policies are in place for how to manage students, teachers, and other school-based staff who are required to, but decline to wear a mask (ensuring access to masks is not a barrier) and are not medically or otherwise exempt.		

Notes:

10. Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

10	Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection	Yes	No
10.1	A regular schedule (i.e., timing, frequency) has been established for the cleaning and disinfection of washrooms and frequently touched surfaces/objects. Resource: Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings ²¹		
10.2	Establish a protocol for identification and communication of suspected/confirmed cases to administration/relevant staff to determine contaminated areas in order to facilitate cleaning and disinfection including timing, return to use, methods, PPE to be used, waste disposal.		
10.3	Products used for disinfection have a Drug Identification Number (DIN; an 8-digit number issued by Health Canada confirming the product is approved for use in Canada). Resource: Hard-surface Disinfectants and Hand Sanitizers (COVID-19): List of Disinfectants with Evidence for Use Against COVID-19 ¹⁷		
10.4	Individuals responsible for performing environmental cleaning and disinfection have received education and training on the proper use of available products as directed by the manufacturers' instructions (e.g., products to be used on different surfaces, correct dilutions, and contact time [the appropriate length of time product must remain wet on the surface]). Resource: Preventing COVID-19: Refresher Presentations for Schools and Childcare Settings ⁴		
10.5	Students perform hand hygiene before and after using shared items (e.g., toys, books, art supplies, sports equipment, computers) and/or items that are difficult (or impossible) to easily clean and disinfect. Note: Items that are difficult (or impossible) to easily clean and disinfect (e.g., books, paper) do not need to be quarantined before/after their use.		
10.6	A process is in place to monitor available supplies for cleaning and disinfection and are re-ordered when necessary.		

Notes:

11. Indoor Air Quality

11	Indoor Air Quality	Yes	No
11.1	<p>Indoor air quality, through ventilation and filtration (e.g., the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system, if applicable), is optimized in consultation with a HVAC professional.</p> <p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems in Buildings and COVID-19²² • COVID-19: Guidance on Indoor Ventilation During the Pandemic²³ 		
11.2	The HVAC system is regularly maintained by a HVAC professional, based on system requirements.		
11.3	Weather permitting, windows and doors are kept open if this can be done safely (ventilation with outdoor air is preferred).		
11.4	Where possible, air flow from portable fans or air conditioners is directed upwards and not blowing at typical breathing height (i.e., at head level).		
11.5	Portable fans and air conditioners are regularly cleaned and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions.		
11.6	<p>If portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration units are used, ensure they are appropriately selected for the room and optimal placement (e.g., follow manufacturer's instructions, ensure intake and outflow are not obstructed, avoid strong air flows at head level).</p> <p>Resource: Use of Portable Air Cleaners and Transmission of COVID-19²⁴</p>		
11.7	If portable HEPA filters are used, maintenance is carried out as required by the manufacturer.		

Notes:

Additional Notes:

ARCHIVED

Summary of Revisions

New material in this revision is highlighted in the table below.

Section	Revision	Implementation Date
1	Addition of item encouraging vaccination for those eligible.	August 30, 2021
2	Removal of item requiring confirmation of daily self-screening.	August 30, 2021
4	Consolidation of multiple sub-sections.	August 30, 2021
4	Removal of item regarding on-site symptom screening.	August 30, 2021
5	Language aligned with updated Ministry guidance on permitted classroom and extracurricular activities.	August 30, 2021
9	Language aligned with updated Ministry guidance on indoor and outdoor masking requirements.	August 30, 2021

Publication History

Published: September 10, 2020

1st Revision: March 5, 2021

2nd Revision: September 1, 2021

Sources

1. Ontario. Ministry of Education. COVID-19: health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021 [modified 2021 Aug 13; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>
2. Ontario. Ministry of Health. COVID-19 guidance: school case, contact and outbreak management [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021 [updated 2021 Aug 11; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-guidance-school-case-contact-and-outbreak-management>
3. Ontario. Ministry of Health. Public health unit locator [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.phdapps.health.gov.on.ca/phulocator/>
4. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Preventing COVID-19: refresher presentations for schools and childcare settings [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus/school-resources/school-presentations>
5. Government of Ontario. COVID-19 school and child care screening [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [updated 2021 Aug 10; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>
6. Government of Ontario. COVID-19 worker and employee screening [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [updated 2021 Aug 10; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screening/worker/>
7. Ontario. Ministry of Health. COVID-19: reference document for symptoms (Version 7.0) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [updated 2020 Sep 21; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf
8. Ontario. Ministry of Health. COVID-19 fully immunized and previously positive individuals: case, contact and outbreak management interim guidance (Version 2.0) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [updated 2021 Aug 11; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/contact_mngmt/COVID-19_fully_vaccinated_interim_guidance.pdf
9. Government of Ontario. COVID-19 self-assessment (Version 5.1) [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [updated 2021 Jul 28; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/
10. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): how to self-isolate [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-how-to-self-isolate.pdf?la=en>

11. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): how to care for a child who needs to self-isolate [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/2021/04/child-isolation/fact-sheet-self-isolation-child.pdf?la=en>
12. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). How to wash your hands/how to use hand sanitizer [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet/factsheet-covid-19-hand-hygiene.pdf?la=en>
13. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). How to hand wash: step-by-step demonstration of how to properly hand wash [video recording on the Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2018 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. 2 min. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handwash>
14. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). How to hand rub: step-by-step demonstration of how to properly hand rub [video recording on the Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. 1 min. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-handrub>
15. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Cover your cough: stop the spread of germs that can make you and others sick! [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/C/2013/clinical-office-cough-signage.pdf>
16. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee. Best practices for hand hygiene in all health care settings, 4th ed. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2014 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/B/2014/bp-hand-hygiene.pdf>
17. Government of Canada. Hard surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers (COVID-19) [Internet]. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada; 2020 [updated 2021 Jan 04; cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19.html
18. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): preventing COVID-19: tips for children attending school [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/sch/2020/09/covid-19-ipac-school-children.pdf?la=en>
19. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Putting on mask and eye protection: step-by-step demonstration of how to properly put on mask and eye protection [video recording on the Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [updated 2021 Jan 11; cited 2021 Aug 13]. 1 min. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-maskeyes-on>
20. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Risk algorithm to guide PPE use [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2013 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/c/2013/clinical-office-risk-algorithm-ppe.pdf?la=en>

21. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): cleaning and disinfection for public settings [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf>
22. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Focus on: heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems in buildings and COVID-19 [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/2020/09/covid-19-hvac-systems-in-buildings.pdf?la=en>
23. Government of Canada. COVID-19: guidance on indoor ventilation during the pandemic [Internet]. Ottawa, ON: Government of Canada; 2021 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/guidance-documents/guide-indoor-ventilation-covid-19-pandemic.html#a13>
24. Ontario Agency for Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Frequently asked questions: use of portable air cleaners and transmission of COVID-19 [Internet]. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2020 [cited 2021 Aug 13]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/ipac/2021/01/faq-covid-19-portable-air-cleaners.pdf?la=en>

ARCHIVED

Citation

Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Checklist: COVID-19 preparedness and prevention in elementary and secondary (K-12) schools. 2nd revision. Toronto, ON: Queen's Printer for Ontario; 2021.

Disclaimer

This document was developed by Public Health Ontario (PHO). PHO provides scientific and technical advice to Ontario's government, public health organizations and health care providers. PHO's work is guided by the current best available evidence at the time of publication. The application and use of this document is the responsibility of the user. PHO assumes no liability resulting from any such application or use. This document may be reproduced without permission for non-commercial purposes only and provided that appropriate credit is given to PHO. No changes and/or modifications may be made to this document without express written permission from PHO.

Public Health Ontario

Public Health Ontario is an agency of the Government of Ontario dedicated to protecting and promoting the health of all Ontarians and reducing inequities in health. Public Health Ontario links public health practitioners, front-line health workers and researchers to the best scientific intelligence and knowledge from around the world.

For more information about PHO, visit publichealthontario.ca.