COVID-19 Guidance for Schools on the Retrieval of Personal Property

This document provides guidance for schools for the safe retrieval of personal belongings by parents, students and staff. Strategies can be adapted to meet the needs of different school environments. Ontario schools have been closed to students and families since March 15, 2020. The provincial order that has closed schools until June 30, 2020 does allow for temporary access to schools for these purposes.

Current information about COVID-19 can be found in Toronto Public Health’s COVID-19 Fact Sheet.

Maintain a Healthy Environment

Set-up a screening area

- Designate an area outside, near the main entrance, as a screening station.
- Post signs at all entrances instructing employees and others not to enter the school if they are sick.
- Post signage in visible areas which clearly explains the screening process, and the rules and conditions for entry.
- The screening station must allow a minimum of two metres/six feet distance between staff conducting screening and the individual being screened.
- Alternatively, a protective barrier (e.g. plexiglass) can be installed around the screening station.
- Make hand sanitizer available at the screening area.

Screen staff, students, and parents for COVID-19 symptoms before entering the school

- It is strongly recommended that all school staff, students and parents complete a COVID-19 symptoms screening questionnaire before entering the school. The questions can be completed on a paper-based questionnaire (asked directly to employees and answers recorded), or can be completed electronically.
- Ensure individuals maintain two metres/six feet from others while waiting in line to be screened.

Scheduling

- People should be scheduled for access in designated timeslots to minimize the number of people in the building or waiting to access the schools; fifteen minute time slots are recommended.
- Anyone waiting for their designated time slot should be directed to a waiting or line up area with appropriate physical distancing makers (e.g. floor markings, pylons) spaced two meters/six feet apart.
- Consider designating the first appointments to vulnerable populations (e.g. seniors, people with an underlying medical conditions that you are made aware of).
- Keep a list of contact information of individuals entering the school, including the date and time. This list will help Toronto Public Health with contact tracing if there is an individual who attends the school that is diagnosed with COVID-19 shortly after attending the school.

Entrances and exits

- Schools should designate and clearly mark specific, separate entrances and exits for each visitor as appropriate, and only permit entry and exit through these doors.
- Individuals should be required to sign in upon entry and sign out upon exit from the school.
- Anyone entering the building should clean their hands prior to entry and upon exit. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) should be provided.
Where possible, doors and windows should be kept open to minimize the touching of door handles and increase ventilation, while maintaining the appropriate security.

**Measures to ensure physical distancing**
- Provide visible queues for parents/students who might be waiting in line outside the school by placing markers such as tape, safety cones/pylons or painted lines every two metres/six feet.
- Consider designing a flow for the school (with prominent signage and/or floor markings).
- Traffic flow and physical distancing markers should be visible throughout the school.
- Limit the number of people permitted in the school at any one time:
  - position a school employee at the entrance to control visitor entry
  - monitor the number of people entering and leaving the school
  - stagger entry into the school
  - once the maximum number of parents/students is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- People should be directed to stay only within the area(s) of the school they need to access and to refrain from lingering.
- Where possible, encourage the use of stairs. Where required, elevator use should be limited to one person or members of the same household.
- Use of washrooms and drinking fountains should not be permitted.
- It is strongly recommended that a face mask or non-medical face covering is used when individuals are unable to maintain a two metre/six feet distance from others.
- People should not be permitted to gather in groups on the school premises.

**Packing and receiving personal property items**
- Encourage individuals to bring their own reusable bags or boxes to pick up items.
- Provide clean carry-out bags if schools are packing up belongings for others.
- Returned items should be cleaned and disinfected if they need to be moved or used within three days. Otherwise, returned items should be left in the designated area for a minimum of three days before they are used or moved. After three days, the virus does not survive on paper and plastic surfaces.
- When receiving items that are outside of the school setting, wash hands regularly prior to and after handling items and avoid touching face, nose and mouth with hands.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer when hand washing is not possible. Washing with soap and water is preferred, and if hands are visibly dirty.
- Glove use is not a substitute for proper hand hygiene. If staff use gloves, it is important that:
  - Hands are washed and/or sanitized between changes.
  - Gloves are removed when changing tasks.
  - When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time.

**If individuals become ill at the school**
- School staff who become ill should be sent home immediately, and directed to this webpage to learn what to do next.
Enhance environmental cleaning and disinfection
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and common areas such as door handles, counters, cabinet doors, elevator buttons, light switches, faucets, toilet handles, hand rails, touch screen surfaces and keypads, and returned school items. Common areas should have soap, hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes available. If wipes are not available, general disinfectants can be used.
- Review Public Health Ontario’s Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings fact sheet.

Workplace health and safety
- Ontario has general information on COVID-19 and workplace health and safety. Learn about employer responsibilities and how to protect workers at work. Workers can also get information about health and safety protections at the workplace.

More information
For more information, visit our website at www.toronto.ca/COVID19 or call us at 416-338-7600.

Reference