COVID-19 Guidance for Post-Secondary Institutions

The following are recommended guidelines, with examples, for post-secondary institutions to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Each institution should update their policies and procedures, and review government orders, directives, and by-laws, to assess their ability to deliver planned, in-person education and related services while ensuring that the appropriate infection prevention and control measures are implemented and maintained.

The aim and purpose of this document is to assist individuals and businesses with information related to the Ontario Government’s reopening framework as well as Toronto Public Health requirements to reduce the spread of COVID-19. It is important to know that breaches of some of these directions will constitute offences under provincial regulations or other public health legal requirements. While we aim to provide relevant and timely information, no guarantee can be given as to the accuracy or completeness of any information provided. This guidance is not intended to nor does it provide legal advice and should not be relied upon or treated as legal advice. Users seeking legal advice should consult with a qualified legal professional.

COVID-19 is circulating in the community in Toronto. Keep current and comply with provincial orders (e.g. limits on size of gatherings), City of Toronto orders, directives, and bylaws (e.g. maintaining and enforcing physical distancing), and provincial stages of re-opening, including sector-specific guidance at Reopening Ontario.

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

Maintain a Healthy Environment

Support and encourage hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Educate staff and students on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and encourage them to:
  - Wash their hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70–90% alcohol concentration), provided hands are not visibly soiled. Remind staff, students, and others to avoid touching their face, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Cover their cough or sneeze into a tissue.
- Monitor supplies to ensure adequate amounts of liquid soap, paper towel, (air dryer if paper towels are not available), hand sanitizer, tissues and waste receptacles with lined plastic bags.
- Post hand hygiene signs in clearly visible areas.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) in dispensers near entrances, inside classrooms, at service counters, and near other high touch locations for staff, student and visitor use.

**Practice physical distancing**
- **Physical distancing** means keeping a distance of two meters/six feet from others.
- Ensure that staff, students, and other visitors can maintain physical distancing:
  - Ensure that the total number of students permitted in each instructional space, at any one time, does not exceed limit for the current provincial stage of re-opening, and that it is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres/six feet from every other person in the space.
  - Limit the number of participants in each group attending classes/activities and minimize or limit the mixing of participants between groups.
  - Stagger classes/activity times to promote proper physical distancing.
  - Designate and clearly mark specific, separate entrances and exits, and only permit entry and exit through these doors.
  - Ensure that there are systems in place to manage capacity in indoor spaces (e.g. position an employee at key entrances to control visitor entry and exit. Once the maximum number of people is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.)
  - Post signs directing people to stay only within specified area(s) and to refrain from lingering.
  - Encourage the use of stairs, when possible. Where required, elevator use should be limited to maintain a safe distance, and encourage the use of masks if using an elevator.
  - Discourage unnecessary group gatherings on the premises.
  - Avoid activities involving singing, shouting or speaking loudly indoors.
  - Provide visible markings and visual cues by placing markers such as tape, safety cones/pylons or painted lines every two metres/six feet.
  - Implement structural barriers and cordon off areas to restrict access to closed areas.
  - Develop and post clear traffic flow signs to minimize unnecessary interactions.

**Face masks and coverings**
- As of October 3, 2020, the use of **face masks and coverings** in Ontario is mandatory in all public indoor settings across the province. Settings include businesses, facilities and workplaces, with limited exemptions, including corrections and developmental services.
- **Masks** do not replace the need for physical distancing, hand washing, and staying home when sick.
• Post signs in visible areas on the proper use of masks and how to safely put on and take off a mask.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
• Consult Occupational Health and Safety staff and develop policies and protocols for the use of PPE for students and staff (e.g. use of goggles/face shield/gloves when cleaning or during student placements off-campus), both on campus and during off-campus placements.
• Train students and staff on the proper use of PPE. Refer to Public Health Ontario resources or Public Services Health and Safety Association.
• A medical grade mask may be recommended if teaching in a classroom where students are not masked and physical distancing cannot be maintained to allow for two-way protection for the staff.
• A face shield does not provide equivalent protection to a mask. A mask should be worn, and then if needed, a face shield or goggle on top of that. See Ministry of Labour guidelines.
  o Staff must wear a surgical mask and eye protection (e.g. goggles, face shield) when:
    ▪ Cleaning and disinfecting blood or bodily fluid spills if there is a risk of splashing or droplets.
    ▪ Caring for a sick individual or someone showing symptoms of illness.
• Gloves are not required for COVID-19 prevention as proper hand washing is sufficient. However, gloves must be worn when it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces.

Provide education
• Provide education to students, staff, and visitors about COVID-19, including to stay home if sick.
• Staff, students and visitors should be provided with the screening questionnaire and encouraged to perform a daily health self-screening before arriving on campus.
• Download, print and post signs in visible locations to raise awareness about COVID-19 and to encourage healthy behaviours:
  o How the Virus can Spread
  o Physical Distancing
  o Protect Yourself
  o Wash your Hands
  o Cover your Cough
  o Do you have COVID-19 Symptoms?
• COVID-19 Fact Sheet
• COVID-19 Spread the Word
• Face Masks and Coverings

• Post this information in high traffic areas such as elevators, lobbies, shared laundry areas, and other relevant common areas as appropriate.

**Develop/update infection prevention and control (IPAC) policies and procedures**

• Develop and/or update administrative and IPAC policies and procedures to include mitigation measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.

• COVID-19-related policies and procedures must address the following topics:
  o Screening
  o Attendance management and reporting, including follow-up with staff to determine reasons for unplanned absence
  o Cohorting staff and students, including the use of supply teachers
  o Guests/volunteers in institution setting
  o Transportation of ill students
  o Physical distancing
  o Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
  o Mask requirements for students and staff
  o Isolation/exclusion of ill staff and students
  o Return to work/learn for symptomatic staff and students
  o Enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection
  o Cleaning and disinfection of toys, equipment and other shared materials
  o Food safety practices
  o Use of PPE
  o Communication plans, including platforms, to communicate with stakeholders
  o Management of cases and outbreaks of COVID-19, with the guidance of Toronto Public Health (TPH) and the provincial Ministry of Health, including:
    ▪ Management of symptomatic staff and students; including testing and those who choose not to be tested.
    ▪ Management of cohorts exposed to a symptomatic/confirmed case of COVID-19.

• Develop an attendance policy for staff to ensure staff do not come to work sick. For more information, refer to TPHs COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces and Businesses.
• Consider promoting Health Canada’s COVID Alert app with students, staff and visitors so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

**Train staff**

• All institution staff must be aware of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
• Train staff to ensure they are aware of and can implement COVID-19 related policies and procedures.
• Train staff on proper use of PPE. Refer to Public Health Ontario resources or the Public Services Health and Safety Association.
• Encourage staff to download the COVID Alert app so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

**Screen staff and students for COVID-19 symptoms**

• It is strongly recommended that all staff, students, & visitors complete a COVID-19 symptom screening questionnaire before coming on campus every day, and to stay home if they answer YES to any of the questions. Under the provincial Reopening Ontario Act, staff are required to complete a screening every day before work.
• Develop an attendance policy, including criteria for return to work, for staff and students, to ensure they do not come to work sick.
• Refer to Toronto Public Health’s COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces and Businesses and Health and Safety Guidance during COVID-19 for Employers of Office Settings, as applicable.
• Institute a screening process for individuals at each of your buildings (e.g. use a designated area outside the main entrances as screening stations or use online self-assessments that can be completed before travelling to campus). Active screening is preferred, if possible.
• Post signs 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 the screening and the individual being screened.
• Alternatively, a protective barrier (e.g. plexiglass) can be equipped around the screening station.
• If physical distancing or a barrier is not possible, staff conducting the screening should wear a mask and other PPE, if required.
• Make alcohol-based (70-90% alcohol concentration) hand sanitizer available at the screening stations for participants who have answered NO to all questions for use prior to entry into the facility.
Post signs at all entrances instructing students, parents, staff and others not to enter the institution if they are sick.

No individuals who answer YES to any of the symptom screening questionnaire questions should be permitted to enter.
  - Direct all individuals who answer YES to any of the screening questions to this webpage to learn what to do next.

Daily temperature screening is not required or recommended. Active screening through the questionnaire is more beneficial since not all people contagious with COVID-19 have a fever.

**Enhance attendance reporting practices for staff, student and visitors**

- Ensure contact information is collected for all staff, students and visitors who use buildings (e.g. through sign in upon entry and sign out upon exit from designated areas of campus, as feasible, or through electronic means for collecting contact and use records).
- Maintain daily attendance records of all staff, students, and visitors (including maintenance workers) entering the campus, including comprehensive attendance reporting of sick and well staff and students.
  - Records should include: name, contact information, date, time of arrival/departure, reason for visit, rooms/areas visited, completion of screening, etc.
  - Ensure attendance records are available on-site at all times, and may be required by public health for contact tracing purposes should there be a case of COVID-19 linked to the campus.
  - Consider how you will ensure privacy and confidentiality of personal information, including safely storing and disposing of any records, as well as what and to whom you may need to communicate.
  - Update attendance records when any staff are absent, including reasons for any unplanned absences, and noting symptoms (e.g. fever, sore throat, cough) to determine if absence is due to illness.
  - Retain records for at least one month.
- Monitor attendance records for patterns or trends (e.g. students and staff in the same group or cohort absent at the same time or over the course of a few days).
- Non-essential visitors must not be permitted to enter the campus.

**Ill and confirmed COVID-19 positive students and staff**

- Send staff, students, and others (e.g. delivery or maintenance personnel) who become ill while on campus home / to dormitory immediately.
  - If they are very ill and require urgent care, call 911.
If they do not require urgent care, send them home immediately and direct them to this webpage to learn what to do next, including getting tested. As appropriate, this information should be noted in attendance records.

If ill and/or symptomatic students cannot go home, immediately separate them from others in a designated room and supervise them until they can go home / to their dormitories.

- Ensure physical distancing can be maintained in rooms/area.
- Ask individuals in these rooms to wear masks (if tolerated)
- Ideally, the designated room should have a handwashing sink. If this is not possible, ensure that alcohol-based (70-90% alcohol concentration) hand sanitizer is widely available in these areas.
- Provide tissues to the ill student to help support respiratory etiquette.
- Ensure these individuals have access to designated washrooms separate from other staff/students.
- If possible, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- Frequently clean and disinfect (see below for more information) the area after the individual with symptoms has been sent home.
- Staff attending to / supervising the ill student should maintain physical distancing as best as possible and wear PPE, including surgical mask.
- Clean and disinfect the area immediately after the student with symptoms has gone home.

Self-isolation time periods

- **Incubation period**: If an individual was a close contact of someone with COVID-19 they must self-isolate for 14 days as that is how long it can take to develop symptoms.
- **Infectious period**: If an individual has tested positive for COVID-19 they must self-isolate for 10 days as this is how long someone remains infectious. If they were hospitalized or have a weak immune system, they may need to self-isolate for longer.
- Students/staff/visitors who are COVID-19 positive cannot return to the institution until they are cleared by public health (typically 10 days after symptoms started, longer if the person was hospitalized or has a severe immune compromising condition). They must not have a fever (without taking medication) and their symptoms must have been improving for at least 24 hours.
- For students/staff/visitors with one or more symptoms of COVID-19, they must self-isolate and get tested. If they do not get tested they should self-isolate for 10 days from the date their symptoms first appeared. If tested, and the test is negative, and if symptoms are improving, the student/staff can return to work/school after 24 hours.
- For students/staff/visitors without symptoms who test positive, they must self-isolate for 10 days from the date of their COVID-19 test.
- Students/staff/visitors who have been in close contact with a person with COVID-19 must self-isolate for 14 days from the last day they were in contact with the individual.

Report cases and outbreaks to Toronto Public Health
- Post-secondary institutions must immediately report laboratory-confirmed (not suspect or probable) cases of COVID-19 to Toronto Public Health.
- To report laboratory confirmed students/staff COVID-19 cases who reside in university/college dormitories, email the following details to: TPHShelters@toronto.ca 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. (Monday to Friday) and 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (Saturday, Sunday & Statutory Holidays).
  Please remember to include:
  - Name and address of the institution
  - Name of institutional contact (including phone number and email)
  - Name of Occupational Health & Safety contact, if different (including phone number and email)
  - Residence involved, including number of students/staff residing there and layout
  - Information on ill staff/student (including date of birth)
  - Date symptoms started
  - Last day at institution
  - Name of ill staff/students
  - Contact information for staff/students (including a working phone number and address)
  - Onset date of symptoms
  - Last day at institution
  - Whether the infection is lab confirmed
  - Who reported the case to the school
  - Any other ill staff or student reports

- To report laboratory confirmed student / staff COVID-19 cases outside of university/college dormitories: Call the TPH Hotline at: 416-338-7600 (8:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m., seven days a week). After hours, call 311.
  Please remember to include:
  - Name and address of the institution
  - Name of institutional contact
  - Information on ill staff/student (including a working phone number, current address, and date of birth)
Date symptoms started
Last day at institution

- If TPH has not contacted you yet, and you are aware of a confirmed COVID-19 positive case(s), you can notify TPH to determine next steps by emailing TPH intake at: TPHShelters@toronto.ca (for cases in dorms) or by calling the Hotline at 416-338-7600 (for cases outside of dorms). For more information, see above.

- To report all non-COVID-19 communicable diseases: Call the Communicable Disease Notification Unit at 416-392-7411 (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday) or complete the Reportable Disease Notification Form and fax it to 416-392-0047. After hours, call 311.

- Confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 are reported by health care providers and laboratories to TPH, at which time TPH will perform a risk assessment for all exposures, including those that may occurred at the institution. Public health will also advise if there are any additional special measures that should be taken.

- If TPH has not contacted you yet, and you are aware of confirmed COVID-19 positive case(s), you can notify TPH and determine next steps you can take by emailing TPH intake at: TPHShelters@toronto.ca (for cases in dorms) or by calling the Hotline at 416-338-7600 (for cases outside of dorms). For more information, see above.

- At this time, TPH will only contact individuals that test positive for COVID19, and will ask those individuals to notify their household and non-household contacts.
  - Institutions can support these efforts, in particular for individuals who have been on campus during their period of infectiousness.
  - The period of infectiousness starts 48 hours prior to date their symptoms started (or the date they were tested, if they don't have symptoms) up until their last day on campus.
  - If the individual was not on campus during the period of infectiousness no contact follow up is required.
  - If the individual was on campus during the period of infectiousness, try to determine if they and others in their class were protected and/or consistently physically distancing.
  - If the others were consistently physically distancing and wearing their masks on that day (i.e. following public health measures) they are considered to have a low-risk exposure. The recommendation for low-risk exposure is for individuals to self-monitor for 14 days.
  - If there were any participants in the class that did not consistently follow the precautions, they would be deemed to have had a high risk exposure and should be recommended to self-isolate for 14 days from the last date of exposure with the positive individual.
● Unless informed otherwise by TPH, maintain confidentiality of staff’s/student’s personal health information if you are aware that a resident has COVID-19 or is a close contact of a person with COVID-19.
● If a student’s or staff’s symptoms are worsening and they are concerned, they can contact Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 or call their health care provider.
● Students or staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 and test negative can return to activities if it has been 24 hours since their symptoms started improving, as long as they are not required to self-isolate for other reasons (e.g. recent travel or being a close contact of a someone who had COVID-19).
● There are no tests or clearance letter required for return to campus/activities.
● For further guidance, refer to the staff screening questionnaire (also applicable to post-secondary institutions).

On-site COVID-19 testing
● To request access to on-site, community mobile COVID-19 testing (e.g. outbreaks in residences), email your request to Ontario Health Agency Toronto Region at: TRTestingIntake@tc.lhins.on.ca. They may require health information and related details that pertain directly to the organization or agency making the request. The following information should be included in your request:
  o Location for mobile testing
  o Total number of units or areas
  o Number of residents to be tested
  o Number of staff to be tested (if applicable).

Please note that Ontario Health Agency Toronto Region will be prioritizing requests based on an assessment of risk factors such as large cohort or if in a congregate setting.

Maintain heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems
● Ensure the HVAC system(s) are adequately maintained.
● Where provided, use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.
● Increase air-exchanges if possible.
● Rooms provided with ceiling fans should have an upward airflow rotation.
● Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
● Seating should be arranged away from areas with high airflow (i.e. not in front of air vents).
● If fans are used, they must be positioned to provide an upward movement of air.
● Make plans for days when the institution may be hot without air conditioning. Consider holding classes outdoors where ventilation is improved.
For more information please see our COVID-19 Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation fact sheet.

**Implement enhanced environmental cleaning and disinfection practices**

- Assign dedicated facility staff to complete environmental cleaning and disinfection duties.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and shared objects (e.g. doorknobs, water fountain knobs, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, electronic devices, tabletops) at least twice a day and when visibly dirty. If the same student is using the chair and desk all day it can be cleaned once daily at the end of the day.
  - Review Public Health Ontario’s Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings fact sheet.
  - Refer to Health Canada’s list of hard surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers for use against coronavirus (COVID-19) for approved products.
- Clean and disinfect individual items handled by more than one individual such as electronic devices, toys, sporting equipment, balls and mats after each use. If items are difficult to disinfect consider not using them, or placing in quarantine for a minimum of three days until they can be used again.
- Clean and disinfect the area used by an individual suspect of having COVID-19. This includes all surfaces within two metres/six feet of the ill person. Remove all items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books, etc.) and store them in a sealed container for a minimum of three days.
- Educate facility staff on how to use cleaning agents and disinfectants, and ensure:
  - Required disinfectant contact times are followed (i.e. amount of time that the product will need to remain wet on a surface to achieve disinfection).
  - Use of safety precautions and required PPE.
  - Directions for where and how to securely store cleaning and disinfectant supplies.
- Clean and disinfect staff/student washrooms and other areas as necessary throughout the day to maintain sanitation.
- Provide waste receptacles lined with a plastic bag, and empty as often as necessary.
- Monitor and clean the parking lot and institution outdoor grounds daily and as necessary (e.g. for discarded gloves, masks, litter).

---

**Providing Services to Students and Staff**

416.338.7600  toronto.ca/COVID19  |  Toronto Public Health
Classrooms/labs

- Implement physical distancing and other IPAC measures outlined above.
- If possible, open outside doors and windows to increase air circulation in the area.
- If feasible, assign equipment/supplies to each student and mark with their names to reduce the sharing of equipment/supplies, and ensure shared equipment and supplies are cleaned and disinfected between each use.
- Remind students not to share personal items.

On campus dining/restaurants

- Keep current and comply with provincial orders and City of Toronto directives and by-laws related to dining/food establishments related to COVID-19.
- Suspend unnecessary communal dining. If allowing, the communal dining area in cafeterias / dining rooms must be configured so that patrons seated at different tables are separated by:
  - a distance of at least two metres / six feet, or
  - plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- Consider staggering mealtimes, and clean and disinfect surfaces between uses or serve residents individual meals in their rooms. (Note: Customer logs would not be required for cafeterias.)
- Remove shared food containers/utensils from dining areas (e.g. pitchers of water, salt and pepper shakers).
- Use pre-packaged items and dispense snacks directly to students.
- In-house food services that are preparing food for room service should use single-use containers and cutlery.
- For more information, refer to:
  - COVID-19 Guidance: Food Premises, Toronto Public Health
  - Restaurant and food services health and safety during COVID-19, Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
  - COVID-19 Tips: Restaurants and Food Services, Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

Student placements and co-operative education

- Limit unnecessary student placements, and movement between facilities/locations.
- Consider alternative ways to facilitate learning (e.g. virtual) other than in-person attendance,
- Keep records of visits to off-campus facilities (e.g. date and time of visit, facility visited, areas accessed) by students.
Health and physical education / organized sports

- Keep current and comply with provincial orders, City of Toronto directives and by-laws, as well as Reopening Ontario sector-specific guidance related to indoor and outdoor organized sports.
- Follow public health advice, including those above, as well as individual sport associations’ recommendations, as appropriate.
- Offer classes in outdoors.
- Gymnasiums should only be used when physical distancing measures can be followed.
- The capacity in change rooms should be limited.
- Activities should be planned that support physical distancing and limit the use of shared equipment.
- Shared equipment should be disinfected between cohort use. If equipment (e.g. balls) are difficult to disinfect, they should be quarantined for three days before being used by another cohort.
- Students should practice hand hygiene before and after participating in physical activity and equipment uses.

Music education

- Cancel in-person choir and band practices and performances due to the higher level of risk of these activities.
- If deemed necessary:
  - Ensure that each person singing or playing brass and wind instruments is separated from every other person by plexiglass or another impermeable barrier.
  - Ensure instruments are not being shared between individuals.
  - Consider in-person teaching and instruction with lower risk creative performance opportunities (e.g. instruction in larger spaces, restricting the type of instrument in a group setting).
  - Avoid sharing of instruments between students.
- Refer to the Ontario Music Educators Association resource.
- Additional guidance on music education will likely be available as more scientific evidence on safer ways to learn music is available.

Access to other campus amenities (e.g. gyms, lounges, seating areas)

- Keep current and comply with provincial and City of Toronto COVID-19 emergency orders, directives and by-laws related to specific amenities.
- Comply with requirements for amenities (e.g. green space, sports fields, recreation centres).
If access is provided, ensure that the IPAC measures outlined above (e.g. physical distancing, environmental cleaning and disinfection) are followed, and appropriate signs, barriers, and markings are used.

Suspend all non-essential visitors to the facility.

Cancel non-essential group activities and outings that require close contact between individuals.

Stagger the use of the kitchen (e.g. one person at a time), and clean and disinfect after each use.

Create a schedule for residents to use common spaces in shifts, and to maintain physical distancing.

Reconfigure common spaces so seating ensures physical distancing.

**Dormitories/residences**

- Impose restrictions on living arrangements based on physical distancing, as well as for washrooms and common living spaces such as kitchenettes.
- Limit student moves into and/or between rooms and residences. If moving is absolutely necessary, put in place precautionary measures and IPAC measures outlined above.
- Ensure signs (see above) are posted in visible areas throughout dormitories/residences.
- Only residents and essential staff and visitors should be permitted entry into the dormitories.
- Set aside designated dormitories/private rooms and securing hotel rooms to isolate and quarantine COVID-19 positive students or students with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Support students who are quarantined or self-isolating:
  - Ensure policies, procedures, and programming are in place to allow for continued delivery of services and supports (e.g. mental health supports), and/or learning and provide support and re-assurance.
  - Ensure self-isolating students can receive deliveries of essential goods, like medications and groceries/meals, at their unit door so they can avoid non-essential trips outside.
  - Ensure students are treated with respect, fairness and compassion with a focus on dignity and privacy protection.
- For more information on isolating students in residence who become ill with symptoms of COVID-19, and other strategies to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission refer to:
  - Toronto Public Health Pandemic Plan - A Planning Guide for Colleges and Universities
  - Ministry of Health, COVID-19 Guidance: Congregate Living for Vulnerable Populations
  - Public Health Ontario, Managing COVID-19 Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings
  - Public Health Ontario, Cohorting in Outbreaks in Congregate Living Settings

**Suspend large student/staff gatherings**
• Keep current and comply with [provincial](#) and [City of Toronto](#) emergency orders, directives and bylaws related to specific amenities.
• Limit/discourage large gatherings/assemblies. Consider virtual options instead.
• Install structural barriers and cordon off areas to restrict access to closed areas.
• Limit group transport (e.g. on buses) and encourage active forms of travel or private transportation when possible. Should transport by bus is necessary, consider establishing safe transportation protocols. For more information, review Transport Canada’s [Federal Guidance for Institution Bus Operations](#).
• Assign staff to dedicated work areas as much as possible and discourage staff from sharing phones, desks and other tools and equipment. Consider using a virtual staff room.

**Libraries, study spaces, and other communal spaces**
• Limit on-site non-essential library services, such as computer access and contactless book pickup and drop-off.
• Cordon off / limit access to study spaces and reconfigure to discourage students from remaining on campus unnecessarily.
• Do not allow patrons to handle books or materials on shelves.
• If it is necessary to handle or re-circulate materials or books (e.g. returned books), ensure they are cleaned and disinfected if they need to be moved or used within three days. Otherwise, returned items should be left in the designated areas 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.
• Ensure adherence to public health measures, including those listed above on physical distancing, capacity, and hygiene procedures (e.g. disinfecting returns and high-touch areas like computers, study spaces).

**Water fountains and bottle filling stations**
• Water fountains and bottle filling stations can be used provided they are cleaned and disinfected twice per day, or more often, if needed.
• Fill water bottles rather than drinking directly from the mouthpiece of water fountains.
• Post [signs](#) near water fountains emphasizing public health measures.

**International students and staff**
• Consult relevant provincial and/or federal authorities to discuss and plan for safely bringing international students and staff on campus.
• Keep current and comply with any additional requirements from the Public Health Agency of Canada for students (e.g. testing).

• Notify (ahead of time) all travellers returning from outside Canada about the mandatory 14 self-isolation order, and encourage students to review the COVID-19 Travelled Recently web page.

• If possible, ensure private transportation for all international students and staff from the airport, and house them in designated hotel rooms and/or dormitories, with a separate bathroom for each student, for the 14 day quarantine period. During this period, arrange for daily check-ins as well as the provision of all meals and other necessities. In addition, ensure that health care is available / provided (e.g. with coverage through the institution’s health insurance plan for foreign students).
  o If it is not feasible to privately transport, house and quarantine all international students, then:
    ▪ For students staying off-campus, instruct them to arrange for their own private transportation (i.e. not public transportation), and to not come to the campus until they have completed their 14 day period of self-isolation.
    ▪ For students staying in dormitories, if they are unable to make alternative arrangements to self-isolate off-campus, instruct them to arrange for their own private transportation (i.e. not public transportation), and to ensure they are self-isolating in designated dorms/rooms upon arrival.

• Ensure students have the appropriate information and supports (e.g. mental health supports, virtual student engagement opportunities, daily physical).

• Ensure policies and protocols to address possible discrimination and stigma associated with COVID19.

• To request access to on-site community mobile COVID-19 testing, see section above.

Campus clubs and non-profits
• Limit non-essential on-site clubs, organizations, and services as much as possible. Consider alternative ways to facilitate services other than in-person attendance.

Communities with special needs
• Consider and plan for students and staff with special needs (e.g. accessible COVID-19 information and resources for members of the deaf and hard of hearing community, or the low vision, visually impaired and blind community).

Mental health and well-being
• Implement a tiered approach for mental health supports that will capture all students and staff and target intensive help to those who have been most affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.
• Promote resources to support the needs of students and families.
**Workplace health and safety**

- Employers must have written measures and procedures for staff safety, including for IPAC.
- Review Ontario's [COVID-19 and workplace health and safety](https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-workplace-health-safety) for information on where employers can learn about their responsibilities and how to protect workers at work.
- Refer workers to [health and safety protections](https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-workplace-health-safety) for information on workplace health and safety.
- For additional information, refer to the [Ministry of Labour, Training, Health and Safety](https://www.worksafe.on.ca/).

**More Information**

- For more information, visit our website at [www.toronto.ca/COVID19](http://www.toronto.ca/COVID19) or call us at 416-338-7600.
- To get the latest updates on the status of COVID-19 in our city from a trusted source, we encourage post-secondary schools that have a Facebook, Instagram or Twitter to follow Toronto Public Health (TPH) and to like, share, or retweet TPH messages on your school pages.

**Other Resources**

- [COVID-19 Staff Screening Questionnaire](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19 Resources for Post-Secondary Schools](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19 Prevention Checklist for Post-secondary Institutions](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [Guidance for Employers on Managing COVID-19 in the Workplace](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [What to Do if Someone in Your Workplace Has COVID-19](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Child Care Centres](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Food Premises](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces and Businesses](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Retail Settings](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/) (for on-site retail vendors)
- [Being Active and Getting Outdoors](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19: Mental Health – General Coping & Specific Stressors](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Places of Worship](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/) (e.g. for on-campus chapels/services)
- [Guidance for post-secondary institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic](https://www.toronto.ca/covid19/qrcode/) (Government of Canada)
- Post-secondary Education Health Measures Framework for Reopening (Ministry of Colleges and Universities)
- Considerations for Ontario’s Universities as they Navigate through the COVID-19 Pandemic (Council of Ontario Universities)