

COVID-19 Decision Tool for School Students

For elementary and secondary students (JK-Grade 12)

Version 4.1. Updated October 5, 2021

Please note: that the terms **Fully Vaccinated**, **Previous recent COVID-19 infection**, **Full list of symptoms of COVID-19**, **Symptoms** and **Essential reasons** are referred to in this document. Their definitions for the purpose of this document are listed below and should only be interpreted exactly as defined.

Definitions:

- **Fully vaccinated:** [Fully vaccinated](#) means 14 days or more after getting a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine series or as defined by the [Ontario Ministry of Health](#). They may not need to self-isolate as long as they don't have symptoms.
- **Previous recent COVID-19 infection:** Person has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and has been cleared by public health. They may not need to self-isolate as long as they don't have symptoms.
- **Full list of symptoms of COVID-19:** Watch closely for any symptom of COVID-19, especially if a close contact of someone who tested positive. The full list of symptoms include: fever or chills; cough; trouble breathing; decrease or loss of taste or smell; nausea, vomiting or diarrhea; tired, sore muscles or joints; sore throat; runny or stuffy nose, abdominal pain, headache, pink eye; or a decrease or lack of appetite.
- **Symptoms:** The daily screening tool lists five symptoms to screen for each day. For JK-12 students they include: fever and/or chills, cough, trouble breathing, decrease or loss of taste or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. For staff/visitors/adult learners they include: fever and/or chills, cough, trouble breathing, decrease or loss of taste or smell, tiredness, sore muscles or joints.
- **Essential reasons:** Essential reasons include attending school/child care/day camp/work and essential errands such as obtaining groceries, attending medical appointments or picking up prescriptions.

Updated COVID-19 screening for symptoms:

All students must complete a self-screening questionnaire before going to school. Students with a chronic health issue that is medically diagnosed and unrelated to COVID-19, should look for **new, different or worsening symptoms**.

Does the student have any of the following symptoms on the daily screening tool?



Fever >37.8°C
and/or chills



Cough



Difficulty breathing



Decrease or loss of taste
or smell



Nausea, vomiting,
diarrhea

The student should be excluded from school under the following conditions:

- (A) If the student has **one or more symptoms** even if it is mild or has resolved, the student should stay home, self-isolate, and get tested or contact their health care provider.
- (B) If anyone in the student's **household** has one or more COVID-19 symptoms the student should also stay home, self-isolate and follow instructions from public health.*
- (C) If the student has been in **close contact with a person who has COVID-19** they will need to stay home and self-isolate for 10 days, even if they don't have symptoms, and even if they test negative.*
- (D) If the student has **travelled outside of Canada** they must self-isolate for 14 days if they do not qualify for a federal quarantine travel exemption.**

(E) Anyone who is **sick or has any symptoms of illness** should stay home and seek assessment from their health care provider if needed.

*Those who are *fully vaccinated* and/or who have had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* may not need to self-isolate if they do not have symptoms.

**If *fully vaccinated* they may be exempt from federal quarantine. If not fully vaccinated, they are not to attend school/child care for 14 days, even if they traveled with a vaccinated companion. See federal requirements: [Group Exemptions, Quarantine Requirements under the Quarantine Act](#).

Student has symptoms and is not a close contact of someone with COVID-19

- If the student has any new or worsening symptoms, they must stay home, self-isolate, and get tested or contact their health care provider, even if the symptom has resolved.
- Anyone in the household must stay at home until the student/child showing symptoms tests negative, or is cleared by the public health unit, or is diagnosed with another illness. Household members who are *fully vaccinated* or have had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* are not required to stay home.

Student has symptoms and tests positive for COVID-19 on a PCR test

- The student must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days, starting from the day the symptoms started.
- The student may return to school on day 11 if they do not have a fever (without use of medication), and their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting, diarrhea).
- Even if the student does not have symptoms they must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days from the day of the test.
- Household members and close contacts who are not *fully vaccinated* or who have not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must stay home and self-isolate for at least 10 days from their last contact with the student during their infectious period and follow public health advice.
- Household members and close contacts without symptoms who are *fully vaccinated* or have had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* are not required to self-isolate.

Student has symptoms and tests negative for COVID-19 on a PCR test

- The student may return to school if their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting or diarrhea), and if they are not a close contact of someone with COVID-19
- If they have travelled outside Canada and are exempt from federal quarantine, they can return to school if symptoms are improving.
- Household members can return to school right away as long as they do not have symptoms.

Student has symptoms, is not a close contact of a positive case, and is not tested for COVID-19

- If the student has symptoms of COVID-19 that are not related to an existing medical condition and they are not tested, they must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days from the date their symptom(s) started. The student can return to school after 10 days if they do not have a fever (without taking medication), and their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting, diarrhea).
- Household members who are not *fully vaccinated* or have not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must self-isolate until the student with symptoms gets a negative COVID-19 test or 10 days have passed from their last contact with the student during their infectious period.

Student has symptoms and has an alternative medical diagnosis. Not tested for COVID-19

- Students who have symptoms, but have been given an alternative diagnosis by a health care provider (**not** related to COVID-19), may return to school if their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours for nausea, vomiting, diarrhea).
- A student who is ill or has multiple symptoms of illness that could be COVID-19 should be tested for COVID-19 with a PCR test or seek assessment from their health care provider.
- Household members can return to school right away as long as they do not have symptoms.

Student has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and has no symptoms

- A student who has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and is not *fully vaccinated* or has not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must self-isolate for 10 days. The student should go for testing. Even if the test is negative, they will have to self-isolate for the full 10 days. PCR testing is recommended immediately and on or after day 7 of the student's isolation period.
- If the household member does not have symptoms, they can leave for *essential reasons*. They will need to stay home for other non-essential reasons until the student who is a close contact completes their period of self-isolation. Household members without symptoms who are *fully vaccinated* or had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* are not required to stay home.

Student has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and has one or more symptoms

- If the student develops a symptom from the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms*, they should get tested with a PCR test right away. Household members who are not *fully vaccinated* or have not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must self-isolate until the student with symptoms gets a negative COVID-19 test.
- Household members without symptoms who are *fully vaccinated* with a COVID-19 vaccine or had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* are not required to stay home.

Student has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and develops symptoms, but is not tested

- The student must self-isolate for 10 days from when their symptoms started.
- Household members who are not *fully vaccinated* or have not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must self-isolate for 10 days or more as this is how long it can take for their symptoms to appear.
- Household members who are *fully vaccinated* or had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* do not need to self-isolate. For 10 days after their last exposure to the student, the household member should:
 - wear a mask and maintain physical distancing when outside of the home to reduce the risk of spreading to others in the event they test positive; and
 - monitor for the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms* daily and self-isolate immediately if a symptom develops

Student who is *fully vaccinated* or had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* and has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19

- If a student is *fully vaccinated* or had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* and the student does not have a symptom from the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms*, they do not need to self-isolate. For 10 days after their last exposure, the student should:
 - wear a mask and maintain physical distancing when outside of the home to reduce the risk of spreading to others in the event they test positive; and
 - monitor for the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms* daily and self-isolate immediately if a symptom develops
- The student should still go for testing if recommended. The student who is *fully vaccinated* is recommended to get tested with a PCR test immediately and on or after day 7 of their isolation period. A student who has had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* is recommended to get tested with a PCR test if they develop symptoms.

Household member has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19

- If a household member is *fully vaccinated* or had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* and they do not have a symptom from the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms*, they do not need to self-isolate;
- Household members who are not *fully vaccinated* or have not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must self-isolate for 10 days, and arrange to get tested with a PCR test, immediately and on or after 7 days. Even if the test is negative, they must self-isolate for the full 10 days.

- Students who live with them and other individuals in the household who are not close contacts can attend school/child care/work, but will need to stay home for other non-essential reasons until the household member who is a close contact completes their period of self-isolation.
- If the household member who has been in close contact develops a symptom from the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms* all children and adults in the household that are not *fully vaccinated* or have not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must stay home and self-isolate until COVID-19 is ruled out

Household member has symptoms of COVID-19

- If a household member has symptoms of COVID-19, any children and adults in the household who are not *fully vaccinated* or have not had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection* must stay home and self-isolate until COVID-19 is ruled out or if not tested with a PCR test, for at least 10 days.

Student has travelled outside of Canada

- The student must follow federal guidelines for quarantine and testing after returning from international travel.
- If the student is *fully vaccinated* they **may** be exempt from federal quarantine. If the child/student is not *fully vaccinated*, they are not to attend school/child care for 14 days, even if they traveled with a vaccinated companion.
- If the student develops a symptom from the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms*, they should self-isolate and get tested right away.
- Follow [federal quarantine requirements](#).

Household member has travelled outside of Canada

- If anyone in the household has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days, the person who travelled must self-isolate for 14 days if they do not meet the exemptions for [federal quarantine requirements](#).
- The other individuals in the household who have not travelled can attend school/child care/work, as long as they don't have symptoms of COVID-19.
- If the household member who travelled develops a symptom from the *full list of COVID-19 symptoms*, the student will need to stay home until COVID-19 is ruled out unless the student is *fully vaccinated* or has had a *previous recent COVID-19 infection*.

Back to School Confirmation Form

- Toronto Public Health does not recommend or require medical notes for return to school.
- It is the decision of each school or school board to decide if they choose to accept a *Back to School Confirmation Form*.

References

Government of Ontario (2021) [COVID-19 School and Childcare Screening](#)

Ministry of Health (2021) [COVID-19 School Case, Contact and Outbreak Management](#)

Ministry of Health (2021) [COVID-19 Fully Immunized and Previously Positive Individuals: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance](#)

Ministry of Health (2021) [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#)

Ministry of Health (2021) [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#)