

COVID-19 Decision Tool for Schools and Child Care Centres:

For students in JK-Grade 12, child care attendees, and staff/visitors

Version 4.5. Updated March 31, 2022

Please note: that the terms *listed in the definition below* 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:

Please note: Throughout the document the term "**individual**" is used. When this term is used, it is in reference to students, child care attendees and staff/visitors who attend a JK to Gr 12 School or Child Care Center

- **[5 or 10] days:** For the screening questions below, if the individual is fully vaccinated OR 11 years old or younger, use 5 days. If the individual is 12 years of age or older and not fully vaccinated OR if they are immune compromised or live in a high risk congregate setting, use 10 days.
 - To count isolation days: Day 0 is the day the symptoms started, or if no symptoms, the test date. Day 1 is the next day (i.e. the person is isolating for 5 days and symptoms started on Saturday, Sunday is day 1, Thursday is day 5 and they can come out of isolation on Friday if symptoms have been improving for 24 hours or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea) and they do not have a fever.
- **Booster Dose:** Additional COVID-19 booster dose 3 months or more after a primary vaccine series.
- **Close contact:** Means being in close proximity (less than 2 meters) with someone who tested positive or has symptoms of COVID-19, for at least 15 minutes or for multiple short periods of time without appropriate measures such as masking and use of personal protective equipment. This also includes contact that occurred in the 48 hours before the symptoms began (or the positive test result) or while they had symptoms.
- **Confirmed COVID-19 infection within 90 days:** If tested positive in the past 90 days on a Rapid Antigen, or a PCR test AND they have completed their isolation.
- **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](#).
- **Highest Risk Settings:** Hospitals (including complex continuing care facilities and paramedic services), home and community care workers and congregate living settings with medically and socially vulnerable individuals, including, but not limited to, Long-Term Care, retirement homes, First Nation elder care lodges, group homes, shelters, hospices, correctional institutions, Provincial Demonstration Schools and hospital schools.
- **Positive for COVID-19:** For the purposes of daily screening, an individual is considered to be positive for COVID-19 if they have received a positive COVID-19 result (eg. PCR, rapid antigen) or if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- **Symptoms:** The [daily screening tool](#) lists ten symptoms to screen for each day. The symptoms are: fever/chills, cough, difficulty breathing, decrease or loss of taste or smell, sore throat, runny nose/nasal congestion, headache, feeling very tired, muscle aches/joint pain, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea.

COVID-19 symptom screening:

All individuals must complete [a self-screening questionnaire](#) before entering school/child care each day.

Individuals with a chronic health issue that is medically diagnosed and unrelated to COVID-19 should look for **new, different or worsening symptoms**.

A) Does the individual or anyone in their household have 1 or more of these new or worsening symptoms, today, or in the last [5 or 10] days on the symptom screener?



Fever >37.8°C
and/or chills



Cough



Difficulty breathing



Decrease or loss of
taste or smell

B) Does the individual or anyone in their household have 2 or more of these new or worsening symptoms today, or in the last [5 or 10] days on the symptom screener?



Sore throat



Headache



Feeling very tired



Runny nose/nasal congestion



Muscle aches and joint pain



Nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea

Individual has 1 or more symptoms from list A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from list B) in the last [5 or 10] days

- The individual is presumed to be infected with COVID-19, must stay home and isolate, and not leave except to get tested or for a medical emergency.
- **If fully vaccinated, OR 11 years or younger, regardless of vaccination status:**
 - They must self-isolate for at least 5 days from the day symptoms started and stay in isolation until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea) and they do not have a fever, whichever is longer in duration.
 - Use test date if no symptoms
 - Once they come out of isolation they must continue to wear a mask when in public settings, including while exercising and are not to visit higher risk settings which include those who are immunocompromised, for 10 days from when symptoms started (use test date if no symptoms).
- **If 12 years of age or older AND not fully vaccinated, OR immune compromised**
 - They must self-isolate for 10 days from the day symptoms started AND stay in isolation until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea) and they do not have a fever, whichever is longer in duration.
 - Use test date if no symptoms
 - Once the immune compromised individual comes out of isolation they must continue to wear a mask when in public settings, including while exercising and are not to visit higher risk settings which include those who are immunocompromised, for 20 days from when symptoms started (use test date if no symptoms).
- **Household members of the symptomatic individual are not required to isolate if:**
 - They are 17 years of age or younger and fully vaccinated OR
 - They are 18 years of age or older and have received their COVID-19 booster dose AND/OR
 - They have previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 90 days and completed their isolation
- **Household members the symptomatic individual are required to isolate if they don't meet the above criteria.**
 - If they are immunocompromised they must self-isolate for 10 days
 - Everyone else in the household must isolate for the duration of the household members isolation period
- If household members develop symptoms, they should follow isolation directions for symptomatic individuals.

Individual has no symptoms from list A) and only one symptom from list B) in the last [5 or 10] days

- The individual is advised to self-isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea).
- If the individual has one symptom from 1B) AND was a close contact of someone in the household/community, they are presumed to be infected with COVID-19, must self-isolate and follow guidance under the section, "*Individual has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days*"
- The individual should seek assessment from their health care provider if needed.

- Their household members do not need to self-isolate.

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

- If the symptoms are from a known health condition diagnosed by a healthcare provider (not related to COVID-19), the individual does not have to self-isolate.
- If the symptoms are new, different, or worsening, the individual should stay home and self-isolate, and follow guidance under the section, *"Individual has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days"*

Testing eligibility and availability:

- Take-home PCR or Rapid Antigen Tests (RATs) may be available at school/child-care for individuals who develop symptoms.
 - If no testing is available, based on COVID-19 symptoms as outlined above in the section *COVID-19 Symptom Screening*, the individual is presumed to be infected with COVID-19 and has to stay home and self-isolate.

Individual had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last [5 or 10] days and has tested negative for COVID-19 on a single PCR test or on two rapid antigen tests and is not a close contact of someone in the community, or has a household member with symptoms/COVID-19 positive.

- If a single PCR test or two consecutive rapid antigen tests, separated by 24-48 hours, are both negative, the individual is advised to self-isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea) and no fever then can return to school/child care. Household members will no longer need to self-isolate. If one of the test results is positive for COVID-19, the individual is presumed to be infected with COVID-19 and should not repeat testing.

Individual has tested positive for COVID-19 on a PCR, rapid molecular, or rapid antigen test in the last [5 or 10] days

- They must stay home and self-isolate, and should only leave for a medical emergency.
- Follow guidance under the section *"Individual has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days"*.
- If one of the test results is positive for COVID-19, they are presumed to be infected with COVID-19 and should not repeat testing.

Individual has been identified as a close contact of someone in the community who currently has COVID-19. The individual has no symptoms.

- Close contact exposures in the community are notified by the person who has symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19. They can include playdates, indoor gatherings, indoor activities/sports. The Province of Ontario has stated that attending school/child care with someone who is symptomatic/positive for COVID-19 may not always be considered close contact. All cases in the school/child care settings are encouraged to notify their close contacts directly if they have significant one-on-one interactions, without wearing a well-fitted, high-quality mask. If the individual has no symptoms:
 - They do not need to self-isolate; the individual can attend school/child care. For 10 days: the individual should monitor for symptoms and wear a well fitted mask when in public settings (including schools and child care unless under 2 years of age). The individual must not visit people or settings that are at higher risk which include where there are seniors or those who are immunocompromised. They are to avoid activities where they need to take off their mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument in music class or removing their mask for sports). Reasonable exceptions would include removal for essential items like eating in shared spaces at school/work/child care and maintaining as much distance as possible. If exempt from masking (e.g. under the age of 2 yrs) may return to public settings without masking.
 - Household members are not required to stay home.
 - The individual must self-isolate right away if symptoms develop.

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

- Follow guidance under the section, *"Individual has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days"*.
- If the individual has one symptom from 1B) AND was a close contact of someone in the community, they are presumed to be infected with COVID-19, must self-isolate and follow guidance under the section, *"Individual has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days"*.

Household member has symptoms of COVID-19

- The child/student staff/visitor and rest of the household are not required to self-isolate, if they are 17 years or younger and fully vaccinated; 18 years or older and have received their COVID-19 booster dose AND/OR they had a confirmed COVID-19 infection in the past 90 days.
 - The individual should monitor for symptoms for 10 days and wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including schools and child care unless under 2 years of age) when leaving the home. The individual must not visit people or settings that are at higher risk which include where there are seniors or those who are immunocompromised. They are to avoid activities where they need to take off their mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument in music class or removing their mask for sports). Reasonable exceptions would include removal for essential items like eating in shared spaces at school/work/child care and maintaining as much distance as possible. If exempt from masking (e.g. under the age of 2 yrs) may return to public settings without masking.
 - The individual must self-isolate right away if symptoms develop
- If the child/student/staff/visitor and the rest of their household **doesn't meet the above criteria:**
 - And they are immunocompromised, they are to self-isolate for 10 days
 - For all others- they must self-isolate for the duration of the household member who has COVID-19 symptoms isolation period (see below)
 - **If the household member with symptoms or a positive test result is fully vaccinated, OR 11 years or younger, regardless of vaccination status:**
 - The child/student/staff/visitor must self-isolate for at least 5 days from the day the household member's symptoms started AND until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting and/or diarrhea), and they do not have a fever, whichever is longer in duration.
 - Use test date if no symptoms
 - From day 6 to 10 wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings (including schools and child care unless under 2 years of age when leaving the home. The individual must not visit people or settings that are at higher risk which include where there are seniors or those who are immunocompromised. They are to avoid activities where they need to take off their mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument in music class or removing their mask for sports). Reasonable exceptions would include removal for essential items like eating in shared spaces at school/work/child care and maintaining as much distance as possible. If exempt from masking (e.g. under the age of 2 yrs) may return to public settings without masking.
 - **If the household member with symptoms or a positive test result is 12 years of age or older AND not fully vaccinated, OR immunocompromised**
 - The child/student/staff visitor must self-isolate for 10 days from the day the household member's symptoms started AND until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting/diarrhea) and they do not have a fever, whichever is longer in duration.
 - Use test date if no symptoms.
- **If additional household members develop COVID-19 symptoms**
 - They should follow isolation directions for symptomatic individuals and if eligible for testing, they should seek testing.

- Household members who are 17 years of age or younger and fully vaccinated; 18 years of age or older and have received their COVID-19 booster AND/OR they had a confirmed COVID-19 infection in the last 90 days and have not developed COVID-19 symptoms are still not required to self-isolate
- Household members who do not meet the criteria above:
 - And are immunocompromised must isolate for 10 days.
 - All other household members should extend their self-isolation until the last symptomatic (or COVID-19 positive if applicable) person has finished their self-isolation period.
- The initial household member(s) with symptoms of COVID-19 do not have to extend their self-isolation based on other household members becoming ill.

Individual has travelled outside of Canada

- The individual must follow [federal requirements for travellers](#), for quarantine and testing after returning from international travel.

Back to School/Child Care Confirmation Form

- Toronto Public Health does not recommend or require medical notes for return to school/child care.
- It is the decision of each child care operator, school or school board to decide if they choose to accept a [Back to Child Care/School Confirmation Form](#).

References

- Ministry of Health (2022) [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#)
- Government of Ontario (2022) [COVID-19 School and child care screening](#)