



# COVID-19 SCHOOL PROTOCOL

What parents need to know when someone tests positive for COVID-19 in their child's school or class cohort (designated group).



## NOTIFICATION

Parents will be notified if there is a positive case in the school. The identity of the person who tested positive for COVID-19 will not be shared as this is personal health information. It is important to remember that not all students are at-risk if there is a positive case in the school. The main concern is for close contacts of the person who has COVID-19.



## CONTACT TRACING

Toronto Public Health will follow up with the person who tested positive in a school setting to find out where they may have gotten the infection, and who they may have exposed to the virus. Toronto Public Health will work with the school to find out who they were in contact with at the school while they were contagious.



## CLOSE CONTACTS

Someone who had close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 while they were contagious is at higher risk. Being in close contact is defined as:

- Any person who was within 2 metres of a person who was COVID-19 positive for a prolonged time or had many close encounters;
- Any person who had close contact with a person who was COVID-19 positive for more than a brief time and someone was not wearing a mask;
- Someone who hugged or had close personal contact with a COVID-19 positive person;
- Household members and anyone cared for by a COVID-19 positive individual in the same home.

If someone is a close contact, they should watch for the full list of symptoms, which includes 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.



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## PRINCIPAL CAN DISMISS COHORTS

When a person with COVID-19 is first identified in the school setting, the principal will dismiss all students in the same class cohort unless they are fully vaccinated\*. Toronto Public Health will do an investigation and determine who needs to self-isolate, for how many days, and when they can return to school. Students in a bus, extra-curricular or before/after school cohort will also be dismissed.



## TORONTO PUBLIC HEALTH INVESTIGATION

Once the investigation has been completed, Toronto Public Health may allow some of those cohorts back to school if the risk to the cohort is low. For example, if the person who tested positive did not get COVID-19 at school, and was not contagious while they were at school, then the class and other cohorts will not need to self-isolate.



## SELF-MONITORING AND SELF-ISOLATION

If someone was contagious while at school, all students who are identified by Toronto Public Health as close contacts of that person will be instructed to:

- Stay home and self-isolate for 10 days.
- Monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.
- Get tested if symptoms develop or as directed by Toronto Public Health.
- Get tested even if they do not have symptoms.
- Household members of close contacts are required to stay home except for essential reasons for the duration of the close contact's isolation period. Essential reasons include attending school/child care/ work and essential errands such as obtaining groceries, attending medical appointments or picking up prescriptions. Those who are fully vaccinated\* or had a previous recent COVID-19 infection\*\* are not required to stay home.

If the student who is a close contact is without symptoms and fully vaccinated\* or had a previous recent COVID-19 infection\*\*, they may not be required to self-isolate. They may still be required to monitor for symptoms for 10 days and go for testing.



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If Toronto Public Health determines that the students or staff did not have close contact with the person who had COVID-19, they will be allowed to end self-isolation.

Other students in the school should also monitor for symptoms if there is a positive case in the school.

## SELF-ISOLATION TIME PERIODS



The incubation period for COVID-19 is 10 days, and so if you were a close contact you must self-isolate for 10 days as that is how long it can take to develop symptoms. Close contacts who do not have symptoms and are fully vaccinated\* or had a previous recent COVID-19 infection\*\* may not need to self-isolate.

People with COVID-19 are infectious for 10 days. If you have tested positive for COVID-19 you need to self-isolate for 10 days. However, if you were hospitalized or have a weak immune system, you may need to self-isolate for a longer period of time.



## SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL

Toronto Public Health will advise students who have been asked to self-isolate when they can return to school.

## DECLARING AN OUTBREAK



Toronto Public Health is responsible for declaring an outbreak, and for providing directions during an outbreak. An outbreak is two or more positive COVID-19 cases in a school, within a 14-day period, with at least one infection traced back to the school environment. This may include transportation to and from school, or before and after school care. An outbreak can be declared for a class, grade or school.

\*Fully vaccinated is defined as 14 days or more after getting a second dose of a two dose COVID-19 vaccine series or as defined by the Ministry of Health.

\*\*Previous recent COVID-19 infection means that the 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.

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