

Update on COVID-19
Dr. Eileen de Villa, Medical Officer of Health
August 30, 2021 at 10 a.m.
Albion Heights Junior Middle School

- Thank you Mayor Tory, for your introduction and for joining us today at this clinic.
- I would also like to take a moment to thank Councilor Joe Cressy for joining us and for his consistent and constant support for our work at Toronto Public Health, including clinics like the one that we're at today.
- As you've just heard from the Mayor, Toronto Public Health is working hard to support students, staff, families and schools through the new school year.
- We are amongst many who are part of this effort, which is particularly important this year because of the Delta variant.
- Schools are being supported directly as you've just heard by more than a hundred Toronto Public Health school nurses and by partnerships between Toronto Public Health and the health care system to provide testing, so there is capacity to effectively identify infections and act to contain them.
- Toronto Public Health will continue to recommend testing of cohorts when exposure is found.
- Infection prevention and controls like masking, hand-washing, and cleaning protocols remain in place, as do protocols for COVID-19 screening of staff, students and visitors.
- Monitoring will assess the situation in schools daily.
- Toronto Public Health has recommended additional measures to further reduce spread of COVID-19 including confirming daily symptom screening and specific advice to support safer drop-off and pick-ups from school.

- Keeping a close eye on students is more important than ever, both at school and at home.
- To parents I say this year there's no such thing as 'could be coming down with something.'
- If you have even the slightest suspicion that your child is unwell, we need you to keep that child at home and apart until it's clear what is giving rise to their symptoms.
- I know for many families that this is easier said than done, many times for reasons you can't control. But I ask: please make a plan – as best you can – in anticipation of having one or more sick kids.
- It's easiest to cope with the unexpected when you've got a plan to deal with it.
- If you're an employer, please make a plan to support your business and your staff if people with sick children can't come to work.
- And finally, if you're not vaccinated, if you have a child eligible for vaccination who isn't yet vaccinated, please get that done. It's important for you, for them and for all of us.
- Mobile vaccination clinics will be sent to schools in communities identified as having low vaccination coverage, to offer vaccines to eligible youth and their families.
- There is no better option, no better protection against Delta, than vaccination. The vaccines are safe, the vaccines are effective, and they're protecting a couple million people in Toronto. Please become one of them, if you're not already.
- We need mutual support and understanding between all of us in what I hope is the last hard stretch of COVID-19.
- We need this especially in schools this fall and winter.

- With a planned, cautious and dedicated approach children will be able to learn in the setting where they learn best.

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