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January 13, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Re: Reducing the Spread of Respiratory Infections in Schools

At this time of year, respiratory illness can be more common as people gather indoors.

To help protect our school communities, staff, students, and visitors are reminded to:

- Check for [symptoms of respiratory infection](#) every day before going to school.
- Stay home when you have symptoms, even if they are mild.
- [Wash or sanitize your hands](#) often.
- [Cover coughs and sneezes with an elbow or a tissue](#).
- Get your [influenza and COVID-19 vaccines](#) at a participating pharmacy or your primary health care provider. These vaccines are the best way to protect against infection with influenza and COVID-19.
- Clean high-touch school surfaces often and when they are dirty.
- Consider wearing a tight-fitting, well-constructed mask in indoor public settings, especially if you are at higher risk of severe infection.

What to do if you or your child are sick

If you or your child have symptoms of a respiratory virus, stay home. This means:

- Stay home until you or your child have no fever and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if you or your child have gastrointestinal symptoms such as vomiting and/or diarrhea).
- The Ontario Ministry of Health advises that for 10 days after symptoms start, an ill person should wear a well-fitted, high-quality mask when out in public, including in school and childcare.

- Avoid visiting anyone who is immunocompromised or may be at higher risk of illness (for example, seniors).
- Avoid non-essential visits to high-risk settings such as hospitals and long-term care homes.
- Speak to your healthcare provider or call [8-1-1](tel:8-1-1) if you have questions about you or your family's health or if you are unsure where to access care.

More Information:

- Ontario College of Family Physicians [Family Doctor Tips on Caring for Children with Respiratory Symptoms \(https://ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/OCFP_Public_ActionsParentsCanTake_2024-10-23-2024_FINAL.pdf\)](https://ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/OCFP_Public_ActionsParentsCanTake_2024-10-23-2024_FINAL.pdf)
- Toronto Public Health [Respiratory Viruses – City of Toronto \(https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/respiratory-viruses/\)](https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/respiratory-viruses/)
- Public Health Ontario [How to Protect Yourself and Others from Respiratory Viruses \(https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/R/2023/respiratory-viruses-protect-yourself.pdf\)](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/R/2023/respiratory-viruses-protect-yourself.pdf)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Finkelstein', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dr. Michael Finkelstein
Deputy Medical Officer of Health
Health Protection