

# James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board – Northern Lights Secondary School

## 2021-2022 Return to School Plan – Last Revised August 17, 2021

The JBLSSB / NLSS return to school plan is based on the guidance provided by the Ministry of Education as approved by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the purposes of regulations made under the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020. Refer to: *COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) Version 2 (Revised August 13, 2021)*  
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>

### Introduction

This return to school plan is a continuation of JBLSSB/NLSS 2020-2021 reopening plan and will continue to ensure the Porcupine Health Unit's health and safety measures are at the forefront in adhering to the Ministry of Education's operational guidance for 2021-2022. This plan was reviewed by PHU on August 17, 2021 and guidance revisions, based on the information available at this time, have been incorporated.

### 1. Return to School

All students in grade 9 to 12 will attend in-person learning daily for the full school day (five instructional hours). For the fall semester, school boards have been instructed to timetable students with no more than two courses at a time in order to preserve the option of reverting to more restrictive measures, if needed.

### 2. Learning Recovery and Renewal

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the delivery of education in Ontario and across the globe over the past two school years. School boards, educators, students and their families have demonstrated resiliency and flexibility in responding to changes in their learning environments. While the COVID-19 pandemic has affected students differently, there are key themes emerging including the need to focus on:

- student mental health and well-being,
- supports for early reading and math and
- the re-engagement of students.

These themes make up the foundation of Ontario's plan to support learning recovery and renewal. The ministry is working with school boards to support these priorities.

*COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) Version 1*

### 3. Protective Strategies

Students, staff and families all need to take an active role in supporting the strategies being undertaken to safeguard all who enter and learn in the school building.

#### Screening

- All staff and students must self-screen every day before attending school
- Staff will complete NLSS on-line self-screen survey daily prior to attending school
- Parents / guardians need to support students in completing provided checklist to perform daily screening of their children before arriving at school (*link to screening tool will be emailed to students and parents*)

- All staff and students who are experiencing symptoms consistent with COVID-19, as identified in the screening tool, must not attend school and should follow the guidance provided in the screening tool
- Procedures will be in place to validate completion of staff & student self-screenings

### Student Masks

- Students in Grades 1 to 12 are required to wear properly fitted non-medical or cloth reusable masks indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes, as well as on school transportation (school bus, van, boats, helicopters)
- Reusable masks should be washed daily to ensure they are effective. Masks should fit so that it covers the nose and mouth
- Masks may be temporarily removed indoors for the following activities, with a minimum distance of two metres maintained between cohorts and as much distancing as possible within a cohort to:
  - consume food or drink
- Masking is encouraged for indoor sports where they can be worn safely based on the activity.
- Students are not required to wear masks outdoors, but distancing should be encouraged between cohorts as much as possible.
- Students are expected to bring their own masks to wear on student transportation and at school. Non-medical 3-ply masks will also be made available by schools for students if needed.

### Staff Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Medical masks (surgical/procedural) are required to be worn by school staff and visitors indoors in school, including in hallways and during classes
- Staff are not required to wear medical masks outdoors
- Staff must maintain at least two metres distance when consuming food/drinks
- Both medical masks and eye protection are required for education staff working in close contact with students who are not wearing masks
- Ministry of Education eye protection is not required for education staff working with students who wear masks.
- Eye protection for school bus drivers should not interfere with the safe operation of vehicles and is intended to protect drivers during close contact with students, such as during boarding and exiting.

### Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Everyone needs to be diligent in washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – posters are posted in classrooms, staffroom washroom, student washrooms
- Use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, when unable to wash hands, is encouraged; sanitizers are installed in all classroom environments, entrance to school building and common spaces
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Put your used tissue in the waste basket

*\*\*For more information, please refer to Appendix: COVID-19 REOPENING HEALTH & SAFETY / CLEANING & DISINFECTING PROTOCOL*

## **4. Ventilation**

- School boards are expected to continue optimizing air quality in classrooms and learning environments through improving ventilation and/or filtration. This is a key element in the multiple protective strategies to support healthy and safe learning environments for students and staff.

- Windows should be opened when feasible and if able to increase ventilation.
- Schools are encouraged to support outdoor education whenever possible.
- NLSS has a mechanical ventilation / air exchange system newly installed in 2015, the current ventilation system is inspected regularly and has on-going maintenance needs addressed by school board staff
- For 2021-2022, in addition to the ventilation system, all environments in the school building utilized by students will have stand-alone HEPA filtration units operating.

## 5. In-Person Learning Overview

- NLSS will be offering a 'Quadmester' timetable with enhanced public health protocols with students attending school every day (Monday to Friday), in classes that reflect reduced class sizes (most classes are under 20 students).
- Free breakfast program for all students will be available each morning in the cafeteria server from 8:30 am to 9:15 am, PHU measures will be followed.
- Student Success Well-being Counsellor and Student Success Community Connections Counsellor will plan / host Instructional Well-being Activities in the Library daily to support well-being and reengagement needs of our students.
- Physical Education teachers will plan / host Instructional Well-being Activities in the Gym daily to support well-being and reengagement needs of our students.
- Students divided into 3 groups based on existing gr. 9 & 10 and gr. 11 & 12 course cohort groupings and will remain in either Gym / Library or Café for the full lunch time – Teacher / Counsellor led Well-being sessions and supervision in place; masks and physical distancing will be expected and encouraged.
- NLSS operates their own School Store to ensure that ALL students have access to a healthy lunch – this is a student success initiative that addresses food insecurity challenges faced by our students.
- School Store / Lunch Program (individually packaged soup, sandwiches, veggies/dip, yogurt parfaits, milk, juice, cheese, granola bars & other healthy snack items) will be offered daily from 11:15 am to 11:45 am (Early Lunch) and from 11:45 am to 12:15 pm (Late Lunch). Physical distancing 'wait here' floor stickers in place and food handlers in masks / face shields and will directly serve students.
- Microwaves for student use will be available in the cafeteria over the lunch hour
- NLSS students will remain at school for lunch and clubs and extra-curriculars that are approved will take place during the lunch hour.
- Washroom / hand washing breaks during class time will be one student at a time.
- Water bottles will be required, and supplied by the school, to be filled rather than students and staff drinking directly from the mouthpiece of water fountains.
- Hand sanitizer to be used by students / staff upon entering and exiting classrooms and other spaces in the school (foyer library, cafeteria, gym).
- Signage will continue to be displayed in prominent locations to enforce safe practices and social distancing. Students and staff will be limited to how they travel throughout the building as some entrances and hallways will have specific access rules and directional arrows.

Quadmester Timetable in Place for 2021-2022 School Start-up:

## Grade 9 and 10 Courses

Time	Day 1
9:20 am to 11:15 am	Announcements / Period 1 Class (115 minutes)
11:15 am to 11:45 am	<b>Early Lunch (Store)</b> Cafeteria Area or Outside
11:45 am to 12:15 pm	<b>Well-being – Gym or Well-being – Library</b> (30 minutes)
12:15 pm to 2:10 pm	Period 2 Class (115 minutes)
2:10 pm to 2:40 pm	Student Transportation
2:40 pm to 3:20 pm	On-line Daily Reading Program / Literacy & Numeracy Teacher Supported Independent Study Time (40 minutes)

Time	Day 2
9:20 am to 11:15 am	Announcements / Period 2 Class (115 minutes)
11:15 am to 11:45 am	<b>Well-being – Gym or Well-being – Library</b> (30 minutes)
11:45 am to 12:15 pm	<b>Late Lunch (Store)</b> Cafeteria Area or Outside
12:15 pm to 2:10 pm	Period 1 Class (115 minutes)
2:10 pm to 2:40 pm	Student Transportation
2:40 pm to 3:20 pm	On-line Daily Reading Program / Literacy & Numeracy Teacher Supported Independent Study Time (40 minutes)

## Grade 11 and 12 Courses

Time	Day 1
9:20 am to 11:15 am	Announcements / Period 1 Class (115 minutes)
11:15 am to 11:45 am	<b>Well-being – Gym or Well-being – Library</b> (30 minutes)
11:45 am to 12:15 pm	<b>Late Lunch (Store)</b> Cafeteria Area or Outside
12:15 pm to 2:10 pm	Period 2 Class (115 minutes)
2:10 pm to 2:40 pm	Student Transportation
2:40 pm to 3:20 pm	On-line Daily Reading Program / Literacy & Numeracy Teacher Supported Independent Study Time (40 minutes)

Time	Day 2
9:20 am to 11:15 am	Announcements / Period 2 Class (115 minutes)
11:15 am to 11:45 am	<b>Early Lunch (Store)</b> Cafeteria Area or Outside
11:45 am to 12:15 pm	<b>Well-being – Gym or Well-being – Library</b> (30 minutes)
12:15 pm to 2:10 pm	Period 1 Class (115 minutes)
2:10 pm to 2:40 pm	Student Transportation
2:40 pm to 3:20 pm	On-line Daily Reading Program / Literacy & Numeracy Teacher Supported Independent Study Time (40 minutes)

### 9. Student Lockers

- Students will be able to use lockers for this school year to store their personal belongings and outerwear.
- All students will be assigned a locker and precautions will be put in place to have locker assignments based on cohort groups

### 10. Busing

- Students will only be allowed to board the bus from their designated pickup locations

- students living in the same household must occupy the same seat.
  - All seats on the bus will be assigned and daily tracking completed.
  - Students will be required to wear masks on the bus

\*\* If a student is showing any symptoms related to COVID-19, their access to the bus may be temporarily suspended.

### **11. Other Available Spaces**

- The Library and Outdoor Learning Space will be available for classroom cohort use, school sign-out procedures will be in place.
- Washrooms are available to students throughout the school day, classes will only allow one student at a time to leave the classroom and use the washroom.
- The staffroom will be available for staff use during preparation/lunch/break times, with staff following health and safety guidelines.

### **12. Mental Health and Student Supports**

- A tiered approach to mental health will be in place to support all students and target intensive help to those who have been most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Programming will be implemented by JBLSSB Mental Health and Well-being Lead, and maintained daily by NLSS Student Success Community Connections Counsellor and NLSS Student Success Well-being Counsellor
- Students requiring special education supports will be supported through an integrated service delivery model according to the needs identified in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### **13. Other School-Related Activities**

- Field trips, clubs, sports, and after-school programs are being permitted with physical distancing and masking (indoors); current public health requirements need to be followed.

### **14. Classroom Setup and Supplied Materials**

- Every student will be assigned their own Chromebook with charger cord to support learning
- NLSS will provide basic supplies for students including paper, notebooks, pencils, erasers, pens, rulers and other basic items. Students will keep these items in their packsack and or lockers
- Shared materials are important for learning and the use of shared materials is permitted.
- The risk associated with transmission with shared objects is low. At NLSS the focus will be on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection related to shared equipment
- Student desks will be physically distanced in classroom environments and facing forward.

### **15. Remote Learning**

- Remote learning options require a minimum of 225 minutes daily of synchronous learning for grades 9 to 12.
- As we plan for our return to school, there is a possibility that there may be the need to have to pivot to remote learning. As important information and updates become available, we will continue to keep our families informed.

## **Appendix:**

### **COVID-19 REOPENING HEALTH & SAFETY / CLEANING & DISINFECTING PROTOCOL**

## SICK STUDENT / STAFF – COVID-19 OUTBREAK PROTOCOL

## COVID-19 REOPENING HEALTH & SAFETY / CLEANING & DISINFECTING PROTOCOL

This protocol applies to staff and students participating in James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board's in-person learning taking place at Northern Lights Secondary School. This protocol has been developed in consultation with the local Public Health Unit to support additional risk management health and safety / cleaning and disinfecting measures due to COVID-19.

### **Guiding Principles:**

- The health and safety of individuals (staff and students) is of utmost importance.
- Public health prevention measures must be followed when in the school building.
- Staff need to be compliant and responsible for protecting the health of themselves and others.
- Students need to be compliant and responsible for protecting the health of themselves and others.

### **Health and Safety Prevention Measures:**

- Front entrance of the school is equipped with 'STOP! and Answer Before Entering' poster, 'Mandatory Wearing Masks' poster and signage.
- Every staff member, student or visitor must conduct and pass a COVID-19 self-assessment; this assessment needs to be done each time they enter the school building.
- Staff will complete a provided on-line google survey self-assessment prior to entering school building.
- Parents will need to complete provided checklist to perform daily screening of their children before arriving at school, this needs to be done to be eligible to attend in-person learning.
- Staff and students who develop symptoms of COVID-19 (or if someone who resides in their household develops symptoms) are to notify the school and stay home.
- Practicing Physical Distancing is **MANDATORY** when able (Physical distancing means keeping 2 meters or 6 feet between you and another person).
- Physical distancing needs to be in place while in the school building.
- While in the school building staff will need to wear a medical grade mask and students a cloth mask that cover both the mouth and nose – if able; masks are available at the school (*Wearing a Mask* information included below).
- Social distancing posters, mask wearing and floor stickers are posted all throughout the school.
- One-way hallways and one-way stairwells (up or down) are in place in the academic wing of school.
- Everyone needs to be diligent in washing their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – posters are posted in staffroom washrooms and 2 student washrooms, 2 change room washrooms and wheelchair accessible washroom (*Clean Hands Often* information included below).
- Encourage use of an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; sanitizers are installed in all classroom environments, and common spaces (foyer, library, café, office) Posters are placed to encourage use of hand sanitizer when entering and exiting the rooms (*Clean Hands Often* information included below).
- Sneeze and cough into their sleeve.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth.
- Lined, garbage cans without lids are in place in classrooms and common areas of the school.

### Wearing Masks

Safely Putting **ON** a Face Covering

- Wash your hands\*
- Put on the face covering, adjust it to face (cover nose and mouth)
- Avoid touching the inside of the face covering
- Do not share it with others
- If it gets slightly wet or dirty, change your face covering for a new one.

Safely Taking **OFF** a Face Covering

- Wash your hands\*
- Place it into lined garbage bin (if disposable)
- Wash your hands again.

\*Wash your hands before putting the mask on, before touching it or adjusting it, before taking it off and after taking it off.

### Clean Hands Often

Hand hygiene, washing thoroughly with soap and water or cleaning with an alcohol-based hand rub, is the single most effective way to both prevent infection and stop spread once an infection is present. Unclean hands are the most common means of transmitting infections when we touch our eyes, nose and mouth.

Hand hygiene decreases the number of disease-causing organisms on the surface of the skin and can be achieved by either traditional hand washing with soap and running water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer on the hands.

Promoting hand hygiene in school by:

- ensuring that washrooms and kitchen areas are regularly stocked with liquid pump soap and paper towels;
- posting instructional signage about hand hygiene in kitchens and washrooms;
- educating staff/students about cleaning hands properly, thoroughly and frequently;
- recommending students clean their hands prior to eating and after outdoor activities;
- promoting hand hygiene prior to any food preparation and handling by volunteers, staff and students;
- educating and supervising others in learning good hand washing methods;
- teaching children in a relaxed and fun manner such as singing the alphabet or a hand washing song;
- advocating for/providing easily accessible hand washing sinks or hand hygiene products; and
- advocating for/providing warm water in washrooms so children are not deterred from washing their hands.

### **Correct way to wash hands with soap and water** (posters in all student / staff washrooms)

- Clothing or items such as watches should be pushed back so as not to interfere with handwashing
- **Turn on tap**
- **Wet** hands with warm water
- **Apply soap** and lather
- **Rub** all over hand surfaces (concentrating on fingertips, between fingers, nail beds, back of hands and base of thumbs) for at least 15 seconds
- **Rinse** hands thoroughly under running water
- **Pat dry** using paper towel
- **Turn off taps** using paper towel and discard

It is important to wash hands for at least 15 seconds. Choose a song to sing such as "Happy Birthday" to help ensure hands are washed long enough. Students and staff whose hands are soiled with glue, paint or organic material, should always use soap and running water to clean their hands. For hands that are not visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizer is an effective alternative to soap and water.

### **Using alcohol-based hand sanitizer** (posters posted beside all hand sanitizer units in school building)

- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer is an acceptable method of hand hygiene except when hands are visibly soiled. If soap and water are not available, disposable hand wipes or towelettes may be used to remove dirt or soil prior to the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- The recommended concentration of alcohol is 60 to 90 per cent for general use.
- Using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer is safe for young children's hands, but its use should be supervised. Licking of the hands after the sanitizer is dry carries no chance of alcohol intoxication. Store it safely so that a child cannot accidentally ingest it. If it is ingested, please contact the Moosonee Clinic
- Be aware that alcohol may be flammable while wet

### **Correct way to clean hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer**

- **Squirt** a small amount (one to two full pumps or a "loonie" sized amount) onto the palm of one hand.
- **Swirl** the fingertips of your other hand into the product on your palm.
- **Switch** the product to the palm of your other hand.



- **Swirl** the fingertips of your other hand to clean, them, too.
- **Scrub** all surfaces of your hands - wrists, between fingers, backs of hands, thumbs - for at least 15 seconds until your hands are dry.

#### **Disinfecting and Cleaning:**

- Refer to PH Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings Resource <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/factsheet-covid-19-environmental-cleaning.pdf>
- Enhanced custodial staff will be on-site daily to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and shared resources such as doorknobs, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, students' chairs and desks / tabletops at least twice a day, and more frequently if soiled.
- Desk / tabletops will be cleaned over the lunch hour in all classroom environments (in both Conventional and Adaptive Models)
- Cleaning should be done from the least soiled surfaces to the most soiled surfaces.
- Feces, vomitus, blood and other large amounts of soiling should be removed with a disposable wipe and discarded in an appropriate container, such as a closed garbage bin.
- Multiple clean cloths and buckets should be used when cleaning. Used cloths should not be dipped back into cleaning solution because it may contaminate the solution. Rinse cloths in clean water and wring out excess water before dipping cloths in cleaning solution
- Wet mops should be laundered and thoroughly dried after use
- Hands should be washed after performing any cleaning and after removing household rubber gloves
- Daily checks on hand sanitizer units in classrooms / common spaces, refill units when needed
- Disinfectant wipes available in classrooms for student / staff use
- Student and Staff washrooms will be cleaned and disinfected at least once in the morning and once in the afternoon as well as immediately after the lunch hour is over as well as being monitored for extra cleaning needs – washroom cleaning accountability tracking process in place

#### **Using cleaning products:**

Use cleaning products according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

- Ensure there is sufficient fresh cleaning solution for daily cleaning.
- Dry cleaning containers before storage. (This will help minimize the growth of microorganisms in standing water.)
- Maintain a supply of disinfectant specifically for disinfection of areas following clean-up of blood and body fluid spills.
- Pre-mixed squirt bottles or wall mounted dispensing units for cleaning products are preferred. Spraying products that cause a misting effect are not recommended because of the potential for inhalation of the cleaning product.
- Pre-mixed products are preferred over those that require mixing or dilution prior to use.
- Store all chemicals in a locked storage compartment out of the reach of children and away from food.

#### **Using disinfectants:**

- Read the label for a description and the manufacturer's directions for use of the product.
- Choose products based on the type of surface the product will disinfect.
- Products for kitchen use must be safe for food-contact surfaces.
- Determine how to use the product. Pre-mixed disinfectants are preferred.
- Check for and read the cautionary statements and warnings on labels.

#### **Cleaning up after a blood or body fluid spill:**

- Secure the area to prevent people from walking through the spill area
- Put on a pair of household rubber gloves.
- If broken glass or other sharp objects are present, remove them carefully with tongs or heavy-duty disposable gloves and dispose in a puncture resistant container.

- Clean up the spill using paper towels, and then wash the area with detergent and water.
- Wipe the surface with a fresh solution of bleach:
  - Major blood spill - dilute 1-part bleach to 10 parts tap water (5,000 ppm)
  - Minor blood spill - dilute 1-part bleach to 100 parts tap water (500 ppm)
- Leave the solution in contact with the surface for at least 10 minutes. This will kill any germs left on the surface - Keep out of reach of children.
- Dispose of used paper towels in a garbage bin, remove gloves and wash hands.

**Cleaning toys and sports equipment (or other multi-use equipment):**

- Consider only using toys with hard surfaces so they can be easily cleaned.
- Develop a schedule to wash/clean toys and sports equipment on a regular basis.
- Steps for cleaning toys and sports equipment:
  - clean with soap and water;
  - rinse with clean, clear water; and
  - apply a disinfectant following the manufacturer's recommendations
- Students will be encouraged not to share personal items such as sports helmets, clothing and hairbrushes

**Cleaning in kitchens, lunchrooms and staff rooms:**

- Clean multi-use equipment after each use.
- Do not share cups, glasses, dishes or cutlery.
- Wash kitchenware in a dishwasher or wash in soap and water, rinse and followed by sanitizer

**Cleaning and maintaining heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems:**

- Clean and inspect HVAC systems regularly - particularly prior to switching from heating to cooling (and vice versa). Maintenance staff should refer to the manufacturer and ASHRAE standards for maintenance recommendations for HVAC systems.

## SICK STUDENT / STAFF – COVID-19 OUTBREAK PROTOCOL

This protocol applies to staff and students participating in James Bay Lowlands Secondary School Board's in-person learning program at Northern Lights Secondary School for return to school. Protocol has been developed in consultation with the local Public Health Unit to support additional risk management for when a student / staff member is suspected of having COVID-19 at school.

### **Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education Outbreak Management Resources:**

- COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools (2021-2022) Version 2 – August 13, 2021  
<https://www.ontario.ca/document/covid-19-health-safety-and-operational-guidance-schools-2021-2022>
- Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management – August 11, 2021  
[https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19\\_school\\_outbreak\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19_school_outbreak_guidance.pdf)

Symptoms of COVID-19 range from mild — like the flu and other common respiratory infections — to severe.

### **Call 911 if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:**

- severe difficulty breathing (struggling for each breath, can only speak in single words)
- severe chest pain (constant tightness or crushing sensation)
- feeling confused or unsure of where you are
- losing consciousness

### **Most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:**

- fever (feeling hot to the touch, a temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius or higher)
- chills
- cough that's new or worsening (continuous, more than usual)
- barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing (croup)
- shortness of breath (out of breath, unable to breathe deeply)
- sore throat
- difficulty swallowing
- runny, stuffy or congested nose (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions)
- lost sense of taste or smell
- pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- headache that's unusual or long lasting
- digestive issues (nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain)
- muscle aches
- extreme tiredness that is unusual (fatigue, lack of energy)
- falling down often
- for young children and infants: sluggishness or lack of appetite

### **Suspected Cases:**

- If a suspected case develops while at school, the school principal must be notified immediately; this can be done by calling the office through school phone system or calling the principal's cell phone
- If a staff member develops COVID-19 symptoms, they should return home and self-isolate immediately. If they cannot leave immediately, the staff member should be isolated in an office space at the main office of the school until they are able to leave.
- If a student begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending school, they will be immediately separated from others and placed in an office space at the main office until they can be picked up. In addition, where possible, anyone who is providing care to the individual should maintain a distance of at

least 2 metres. When 2 metre distancing can't be done, a medical mask is needed and eye protection, if the person they are caring for is symptomatic

- Principal will contact the student's home or staff home, if needed, to inform them of a suspected case of COVID-19.
- Principal will also contact the local Public Health Unit to alert them of the suspected COVID-19 case.
- A 'COVID-19 Kit' will be available at the office in case a student, staff or essential visitor becomes ill while at the school for use by the ill individual and staff member attending to them: the kit will contain alcohol-based hand sanitizer, gloves, surgical/procedural masks, eye protection, and a gown. Instructions on proper use of PPE will be available on the outside of the kit.
- Tissues should be provided to the individual to support proper respiratory etiquette, along with guidance on proper disposal of the tissues.
- Environmental cleaning/disinfection will be required of the office space and items used by the individual.
- Once staff / student has been isolated at the office, the principal will ascertain potential contaminated areas and carry out cleaning and disinfection procedures.
- Identify areas that may require cleaning plus disinfection (items used by the individual and all surfaces within 2 metres of the ill person) versus cleaning alone (such as a hallway or room where the individual has passed through).
- Use disposable cleaning equipment, such as disposable wipes, whenever possible
- All items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books, etc.) will be removed and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of 7 days.

#### **Schools are Responsible for Reporting:**

- A confirmed COVID-19 case associated with the school to the local PHU and to the Ministry of Education through the daily reporting tool where they have become aware of such a case
- Occupational illness to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, as well as to the workplace joint health and safety committee, the worker's labour union (if any), and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
- Absenteeism to the PHU and to the Ministry of Education through the daily reporting tool, in accordance with provincial and local PHU direction

#### **Case and Contact Management:**

- The Ministry of Health maintains case definitions for a probable case and a confirmed case of COVID-19. These definitions are maintained on the Ontario Ministry of Health site and are subject to updating. Please refer to this site for the most current version of these key definitions.
- Case and contact management are part of a broader plan to limit exposure to COVID-19 in schools.
- A "close contact" is a person with close, prolonged contact with a probable or confirmed case while the individual was ill.
- Records (e.g., name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, etc.) must be kept up to date and available to facilitate contact tracing.
- Principals are mandated to report infectious diseases under the Health Protection and Promotion Act.
- Principals will follow directions of local public health units (PHUs) and PHUs recommend closure, provide notices, or make other recommendations (additional testing, self-isolation, cleaning advice).

#### **Testing:**

- School will follow current provincial testing guidance.
- The local PHU will provide guidance on steps to take where an individual tests positive for COVID-19.
- If the staff member's illness is determined to be work-related, in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations, the employer must provide a written notice within four days of being advised that a staff member has an occupational illness, including an occupationally-acquired

infection, or if a claim has been made to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) by or on behalf of the staff member with respect to an occupational illness, including an occupational infection to the:

- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development;
- Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (or Health and Safety Representative)
- Trade Union (if applicable)

#### **Contact Tracing:**

- When a positive case is identified, PHUs conduct contact identification and follow-up with identified contacts. PHUs will require support from the school, e.g., student attendance records, contact information.
- Schools must keep daily records of anyone (e.g., students, parents/caregivers, staff and essential visitors) entering the school setting.
- Records (e.g., name, contact information, time of arrival/departure, screening completion, etc.) must be kept up to date and available to facilitate contact tracing in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case or outbreak.
- Contacts are informed that they have been exposed and are provided with public health guidance.
- Contact tracing should occur within the first 48 hours of a new positive case.
- To support successful case and contact management, schools should:
  - Keep up-to-date contact lists, including support staff and essential visitors;
  - Educate parents around contact tracing strategies;
  - Develop rapid response capability.

#### **School Outbreak Considerations:**

- As outlined in the *Ministry of Health COVID-19 guidance: school case, contact, and outbreak management*, an outbreak in a school is defined as two or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in students or staff (or other visitors) in a school with an epidemiological link, within a 14-day period, where at least one case could have reasonably acquired their infection in the school (including transportation and before or after school care).
- Coordinated rapid response based on well understood roles and responsibilities and defined protocols in place and shared with ministries, local school boards and schools, local public health and other key stakeholders is essential
- Embedding provincial policy approach, with local variability as appropriate, when available.
- Ensuring a proactive approach to suspected cases and outbreak management.
- Early identification of suspected cases to local public health for follow-up / surveillance.
- Consideration of case numbers, confidence in cohorting implementation, number of cohorts impacted, local epidemiology and consideration of the needs of vulnerable student populations.
- Closures and/or cohort quarantining to allow for case and contact management and investigations, environmental cleaning and/or to interrupt transmission.
- Consistent and coordinated communication to all stakeholders.

#### **Prevention and Outbreak Responsibilities:**

Schools are responsible for reporting:

- A confirmed COVID-19 case associated with the school to the local PHU and to the Ministry of Education through the daily reporting tool where they have become aware of such a case
- Occupational illness to the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, as well as to the workplace joint health and safety committee, the worker's labour union (if any), and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)
- Absenteeism to the PHU and to the Ministry of Education through the daily reporting tool, in accordance with provincial and local PHU direction

Local PHUs are responsible for:

- Determining if an outbreak in a school exists
- Managing the outbreak in collaboration with the school and other relevant partners

- Providing direction on when cohorts of students can return to school or when the school can reopen
- Conducting case and contact management activities
- Ensure measures will be taken to ensure privacy and avoid disclosure of details to the school community that would lead to identification of a confirmed or probable COVID-19 case.

#### **PHU Outbreak Responsibilities:**

1. Determining if an outbreak exists
  2. Declaring an outbreak
  3. Providing direction on outbreak control measures to be implemented
  4. Declaring that an outbreak is over
- The public health unit will determine which cohort(s) may be sent home (for self-isolation) in response to a case, an outbreak or if full school closure is required based on the extent of an outbreak. In some instances, the local public health unit may give school principals discretion, if necessary, to dismiss individuals or cohorts while awaiting the results of the public health investigation.
  - An outbreak can be declared over, when:
    1. at least 14 days have passed with no evidence of ongoing transmission that could reasonably be related to exposures in the school
    2. no further ill or symptomatic individuals have been reported by the school who are associated with the initial exposed cohorts

#### **Role of School Administrators and School Boards:**

School administrators and school boards should:

- Implement prevention measures found in guidance from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and their local PHU
  - This includes having an accessible process in place to implement on-site screening procedures
- Cooperate and coordinate with the local PHU, and other stakeholders as required
- Communicate with early years partners about COVID-19 in schools and school boards
- Maintain accurate records of staff, students and visitors for the last 30 days
- Provide PHUs with the name(s) and contact information of a designated point of contact for use during and/or after business hours, to ensure timely investigation and follow up cases, contacts and outbreaks (for example, classroom, bus, before and after school programs, extra-curricular activities)
- This information should include up-to-date attendance records for all common school locations attended by staff and students, and transportation seating charts (where applicable), and contact information for those groups. This information should be provided to the PHU within 24 hours of request to ensure timely follow-up.
- In general, schools should not report all instances of ill individuals in the school setting to the PHU as these are frequent occurrences and typically students have non-specific symptoms. However, as required by section 28 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act, school principals are required to report to the medical officer of health if they are of the opinion that a pupil has or may have a communicable disease. As such, principals should contact their local PHU if they have concerns about COVID-19 student related absences or attendance concerns within their school community.
- The local PHU may be consulted if there are questions about the management of individuals with symptoms, environmental cleaning, and other measures, as necessary.
- In collaboration with the PHU, communicate proactively with the school community about COVID-19 prevention measures and about how symptomatic or asymptomatic individuals, cases, and outbreaks will be handled.
- School administrators and boards will need to develop a communication plan, in collaboration with the local PHU, for managing concerns in the school setting, and use this proactively and responsively as needed in schools.
- Training with respect to outbreak prevention and control measures, including IPAC measures and the use of PPE should also be provided to school staff.

**Communicating with the School Community:**

- Parents, students and staff have an understandable interest in knowing when a COVID-19 positive case has been identified in their school.
- All school boards and schools will have a COVID-19 advisory section on their website where they will clearly post information and updates regarding confirmed cases of COVID-19 that involves a student or a staff member in a school setting. **\*\*Note that no personal information will be made public.**
- As cases for students or staff members are resolved, boards and schools will update the COVID-19 advisory section of their website to remove information about these cases.
- In the interests of privacy, information posted by boards to school communities will not identify the student or staff member that has received a positive COVID-19 test.
- If public health advises that a class, cohort or a school will be closed for a period of time, parents, students and staff will be notified immediately.
- Notice of any closures of classes, cohorts or schools will be posted on school and school board COVID-19 advisory sections.

**Reporting COVID-19 Absences in Schools:**

- School boards must report on a daily basis any confirmed cases of COVID-19 within schools to the Ministry of Education via the school absence online reporting tool (ART). COVID-19 board leads should verify the accuracy of this information. The purpose of collecting this data is to monitor the potential impact of COVID-19 across schools in Ontario. **\*\*Note that the absence data collected will not be for the purpose of contact tracing and no personal information will be collected by the Ministry of Education.**
- Any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the school must be reported to the local PHU to support case management and contact tracing and other activities in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Public health officials will determine any additional steps required, including but not limited to the declaration of an outbreak and closure of classes or schools. If requested by the PHU, school principals may dismiss individuals or cohorts while awaiting the results of the public health investigation.
- Cases that occur in itinerant workers and occasional staff should be flagged to the PHU.