

August 16, 2020

Schools JK to Grade 12

COVID-19 Prevention Checklist

APPENDIX 'E'

This is a checklist of required measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in JK to Grade 12 schools. It is a companion document to the Toronto Public Health (TPH) [COVID-19 Guidelines for Re-opening Non-Publically Funded Schools JK to Grade 12](#), and non-publically funded schools should review that document for more detailed information on how to keep schools safe.

For publically funded schools (i.e. Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), CS Viamonde, and CS Mon Avenir), when reviewing this checklist, where there is a difference between this checklist and your school board's re-opening plan and internal policies and procedures, your school board's plan should take precedence.

Before Re-Opening

A. Review Information

- Review updated information in the TPH [COVID-19 Fact Sheet](#).
- Review [COVID-19 Guidance for the Re-opening of Non-Publically Funded Schools](#), and the Ministry of Education's [Guide to Re-opening Ontario's Schools](#).
- For publically funded schools, review your school board's school re-opening plan and internal policies and procedures.
- Review other applicable resources (see other resources at the end of this checklist).

B. Develop/Update Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Policies and Procedures

- Develop and/or update administrative and IPAC policies and procedures to include mitigation measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Develop an attendance policy for staff to ensure they do not come to work sick. For more information, refer to TPHs [COVID-19 Guidance for Employers, Workplaces and Businesses](#).

C. Train Staff

- All school staff must be aware of the [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- Train staff to ensure they are aware of and can implement COVID-19 related policies and procedures.
- Train staff on proper use of personal protective equipment. Refer to [Public Health Ontario](#) resources or [Public Services Health and Safety Association](#).

D. Prepare the Physical Space

- Designate drop-off and pick up location(s) outside near the entrance of the school.
- Designate and clearly mark specific, separate entrances and exits, and only permit entry and exit through these doors.
- Download, print and post signs in visible locations to raise awareness about COVID-19 and to encourage healthy behaviours. Go to the TPH [COVID19: Spread the Word](#) website for applicable posters ([Wash Your Hands](#), [Cover Your Cough](#), [Protect Yourself](#), [How to Wear a Mask](#), etc.)
- Designate an area outside near the main entrance as a screening station. The area should be clearly identifiable as the screening station. Provide hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) at the screening station.
- Post signs in visible areas that clearly explain the screening process, and the rules and conditions for entry.
- Post [signs](#) at all entrances instructing employees and others not to enter the school if they are sick.
- Use visual markers/cues spaced two metres/six feet apart (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to assist student and any other individuals entering the school to maintain a two metre/six foot distance from each other if waiting to be screened.
- If possible, prepare the classroom so that students can physically distanced while seated in the class.
- Consider installing cues such as stickers or signs at frequently touched surfaces (e.g. water fountains, doors) to encourage persons to avoid directly touching with their hands.
- Where appropriate, design and implement a walking flow for the school, such as creating one-way routes with prominent signage and/or floor markings to prevent crowding (e.g. entrances, hallways, classrooms).
- Increase ventilation and air flow in areas, if possible.

During School Opening

A. Health Screening & Attendance

- Remind staff, students and their families to stay at home if they are sick.
- Provide staff, students and visitors a [screening questionnaire](#) to perform daily health self-screening before coming to school.
- It is strongly recommended that all school staff, students and visitors complete a COVID-19 [symptoms screening questionnaire](#) before entering the school. The questions can be completed on a paper-based questionnaire (i.e. asked directly and answers recorded), electronically, or verbally. Consider the use of smartphone applications, stickers or other innovative methods to indicate that individuals have completed their screening.
- If completion of the questionnaire is done at home before arriving, it is important to establish a process to ensure that it was completed.

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- Staff and students are advised to go home right away and self-isolate if they become ill while on the school premises. They are also advised to get tested at a COVID-19 [assessment centre](#), and/or to call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000 or their primary care provider to determine if further care is required.
- Individuals with [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and/or who have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 are not permitted to enter the school.
- Maintain daily attendance records of all individuals entering the school. There should be comprehensive attendance reporting of sick and well staff and students.
- Have attendance records available on-site at all times.

B. Cohorts

- Assign staff and students into designated cohorts to limit the mixing of students so that if a student or employee develops COVID-19 the number of exposures can be easily managed.
- Assign elementary school cohorts so that:
 - Students are in a single cohort with the same classmates and teacher within the one class, with limited contact with other subject teachers. Smaller elementary cohorts are preferred to maintain as much physical distance as possible and to reduce contacts with many students.
 - Students who are part of before and after school programs would be part of two cohorts.
- Assign secondary school cohorts so that:
 - If you are a secondary school that has opened in the adaptive model (TDSB, TCDSB) students are in cohorts of approximately 15 students on alternating schedules, with at least 50% of in-class instructions days, and the remainder on-line. *Designated school boards will be given notice to move to conventional delivery when it is determined safe to do so.*
 - Students are in a maximum of two in-person class cohorts, such as in a quadmester model.
- Ensure that at any given time, the size of a student's cohort is limited to approximately 50 in elementary and 100 direct or indirect contacts in secondary schools.
- Ensure the same teacher remains with the same class as much as possible. Where different teachers are required, have staff come to the classroom and keep a physical distance so students do not have to change rooms.
- Limit shared supplies, equipment and materials where possible to individual students, or to one cohort at a time.
- Clean and disinfect supplies, equipment and/or materials between use or change in cohort.
- Cohorts that utilize a room/space that is shared by cohorts or has other user groups must ensure that the room/space is cleaned and disinfected before and after the space is used.
- Ensure in shared outdoor spaces, two metres/six feet is maintained between cohort and other individuals outside of the cohort.

C. Masks or Face Coverings & Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Staff should wear a mask or face covering at all times when indoors, and outdoors when unable to maintain a physical distance of two metres/ six feet.
- Staff should consult with their Occupational Health and Safety lead on what PPE is required, and when and how to properly wear PPE.
 - A medical-grade mask may be recommended if teaching in a classroom where students are not masked and physical distancing cannot be maintained to allow for two-way protection for the staff.
 - PPE such as gloves, surgical/medical masks, and eye protection (face shield/goggles) are available on the premises for staff use when needed.
 - Staff are educated on proper use of masks/face coverings, including how to clean or discard used masks, and to change masks/face coverings when they become damp or soiled.
 - Staff are trained on the proper use of PPE.
- Students in Grades 4 to 12 wear non-medical or cloth mask indoors in school, including the hallways and during classes, with reasonable exceptions for medical conditions.
- Students in Kindergarten to Grade 3 are strongly recommended to wear masks in indoor spaces.
- Plan mask breaks during the day. Mask breaks are best to occur outdoors while maintaining physical distancing as best as possible.
- Teach students on the [proper use](#) of masks, and [how to safely put on and take off a mask](#).
- Ensure protocols are in place for PPE for staff, and develop policies on non-medical mask use.

D. Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfection

- Assign dedicated facility staff to complete environmental cleaning and disinfection duties.
- Review [Public Health Ontario's Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#) fact sheet.
- Refer to Health Canada's [list of hard surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers for use against coronavirus](#) (COVID-19) for approved products.
- Ensure frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces and shared objects (e.g. doorknobs, water fountain knobs, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, electronic devices, tabletops) at least twice a day and when visibly dirty.
- Clean and disinfect individual items handled by more than one individual such as electronic devices, toys, sporting equipment, balls and mats after each use. If items are difficult to disinfect consider not using them, or placing them in quarantine for a minimum of three days before using them again.
- Clean and disinfect the area used by any individuals suspected of having COVID-19. This includes all surfaces within two metres/six feet of the ill person. Remove all items that cannot be cleaned (paper, books etc.), and store them in a sealed container for a minimum of three days.

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- Educate facility staff on: how to use cleaning agents and disinfectants; use of safety precautions and required PPE; and, directions for where and how to securely store cleaning and disinfection supplies.
- Clean and disinfect staff/student washrooms and other areas as necessary throughout the day to maintain sanitation.
- Provide waste receptacles lined with a plastic bag, and empty as often as necessary.
- Monitor and clean the parking lot and school outdoor grounds daily and as necessary (e.g. for discarded gloves, masks, litter).

E. Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Educate staff and students on proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
 - [Wash your hands](#) with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70 – 90% alcohol), provided hands are not visibly soiled. Remind staff and students to avoid touching their face, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - [Cover your cough](#) or sneeze with a tissue.
- Monitor supplies to ensure adequate amounts of liquid soap, paper towel, (air dryer if paper towels are not available), hand sanitizer, tissues, and waste receptacles with lined plastic bags.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) in dispensers near entrances, service counters and other high touch locations for staff, student and visitor use. Monitor and refill as needed.
- Ensure that staff and students have the ability to practice hand hygiene when needed (i.e. recess, lunch breaks, before and after activity).

F. Physical Distancing

- Limit the number of visitors allowed in the school to assist in maintaining physical distance (two metres/six feet).
- Provide visual cues/guides on floors or sidewalks and signs and posters on walls to guide appropriate distances in lines at all time.
- Stagger periods of student movement and common activities (e.g. lunches, recess) around the school, and discourage students from congregating in the hallways.
- Encourage the use of stairs, when possible. [Elevator](#) use should be limited, but when required, ensure a physical distance of two metres/six feet can be maintained. If elevators must be used and physical distance cannot be maintained, masks should be used at all times.
- Remind students to:
 - Greet each other using non-physical gestures (e.g. wave or nod).
 - Not to share items, including food, toys, arts and crafts, costumes, hats, hair combs, make-up, masks, etc.
 - Maintain physical distancing as best as possible during the school day.
- Avoid activities that include shared objects or toys.

- Avoid activities involving singing, shouting or speaking loudly indoors.

G. Managing Students and Staff who become Ill while at School

- Ensure a plan is in place to manage sick students and staff, which includes:
 - A room to isolate staff and students that become ill.
 - Having a staff available to supervise student in the room.
 - Instructions to send staff who become home immediately with directions to [this webpage](#) to learn what to do next.
 - Instructions indicating that if a student becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms while in school, to immediately isolate them in a designated room and supervise them until they are picked-up. Parents/guardians or emergency contacts are to be notified to pick up the ill student as soon as possible. If it is an emergency, call 911.
 - Instructions that school staff and students with symptoms of COVID-19 should go to a [assessment centre](#) for testing as soon as possible, and to [self-isolate](#) at home until their result is available.
- Set up the isolation to room so that :
 - The room/space has a handwashing sink or hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol concentration) available.
 - Supplies are available for the ill individual and staff member who is with them (i.e. gloves, surgical mask, eye protection and gown, and instructions on their use).
 - Tissues are available to help support respiratory etiquette.
 - Doors and windows are open to increase air circulation, if possible.
- Staff supervising the ill student should maintain physical distancing as best as possible and wear PPE, including a surgical mask.
- Students within the room should wear a mask, if tolerated, and they are able to use it properly (e.g. donning and doffing carefully, avoiding touching while on).
- Clean and disinfect the area immediately after the student with symptoms has gone home.
- Be aware of the following:
 - School staff and students who are being managed by TPH (e.g. confirmed or probable cases of COVID-19, close contacts of cases) must follow TPH instructions to determine when to return to the school.
 - School staff and students exposed to a **confirmed case of COVID-19 will be advised by public health. Public health will complete a risk assessment and determine who had high risk exposure.** They will be excluded from the school setting for 14 days from the day of last exposure to the person who had COVID-19, if they had close contact.
 - **More guidance from TPH and the Ministry of Education will be coming for schools on how to manage ill students, staff, and their households.**

H. Reporting cases and outbreaks to Toronto Public Health

- Schools must immediately report:
 - Clusters of suspected cases or increased student/staff absenteeism.
 - Cases of COVID-19 among staff or students that are laboratory-confirmed or probable (symptoms occurring among a staff or student who has been exposed to a person with confirmed COVID-19).
- Report the above to the TPH intake e-mail address: CovidSchools@toronto.ca during the hours of 8:00 am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday, or call **3-1-1** after hours.
- Include the following information in your e-mail:
 - Name of school, address
 - Name of school contact and phone number and email
 - Name of ill staff/student
 - Contact information for staff/student (parent name if student is under 14 years old), including phone number, address, if possible, date of birth
 - Onset date of symptoms
 - Last day at school
 - Lab confirmed test (positive or negative)
 - Who reported the case to the school
 - Any other ill staff or student reports.

I. Other Considerations

- Modify food practices for snacks meals/lunch time. Students are encouraged to eat lunch in their classroom with their cohort to ensure chances of contact and transmission are minimized.
- Limit unnecessary students placements and movements to and between facilities/locations
- Consider alternative ways to facilitate learning other than in-person attendance.
- Gymnasiums should only be used when physical distancing measures can be followed.
- Capacity in change rooms should be limited.
- Activities should be planned that support physical distancing and limit the use of shared equipment.
- Instruments should not be shared between students.
- Choir practices/performances and band practices performances involving wind instruments may pose a higher risk of transmission and should be cancelled for the immediate future.
- Large gatherings/assemblies should be cancelled. Virtual options should be offered.
- Control the use of common spaces (e.g. gymnasiums) if possible or reconfigure to ensure physical distancing.
- Consider structural barriers and cordoning off of areas to restrict access to closed areas.
- Limit and discourage non-essential student gatherings.
- Cancel group activities and outings that require close contact between individuals, unless they are essential. Schools should not plan field trips and activities requiring group transportation.

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- Assign staff to dedicated work areas as much as possible, and discourage staff from sharing phones, desks and other tools and equipment. Consider a virtual staff room.
- Increase communication with students, families/guardians and other stakeholders using the school websites, email, or social media accounts, automated telephone messages and school newsletters.
- Encourage families to download the [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.
- Use telephone or video conferencing when possible for meetings between school staff and parents/guardians.

J. Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and Air Circulation

- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are adequately maintained.
 - Where provided, use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.
- Increase air exchanges if possible.
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
 - Arrange seating away from areas with high airflow (i.e. not in front of air vents).
- Ensure rooms with ceiling fans have an upward airflow rotation.
- If fans are used, position them to provide an upward movement of air.
- Open windows and doors, if possible, and if it can be done safely.
- Make plans for hot days for schools that do not have air conditioning (e.g. consider holding classes outdoors).

K. Transportation

- Establish protocols for the safe transportation of students.
- Encourage active forms of travel (e.g. walking, biking), or private transportation by parents and caregivers, where possible, to ease pressure on public transit.
- Review Transport Canada's [Federal Guidance for School Bus Operations](#).
- Review the Ministry of Education's [Student Transportation Guidance](#) and [Transportation](#) documents for further recommendations.
- Review the Public Services Health and Safety Association's [Health and Safety Guidance during COVID-19 for Student Transportation Employers](#).

L. Mental Health and Well-Being

- Schools should implement a tiered approach for mental health supports for all students, and target intensive help to those who have been most affected by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Promote [resources](#) to support the needs of students and families.

More Information

Information changes frequently. Please visit our website at toronto.ca/COVID19 for updated information or call us at 416-338-7600.

Other Resources

Note: TPH will be releasing school-specific resources soon.

Toronto Public Health: COVID-19: [Community & Workplace Settings](#) (includes sector-specific guidance)

Toronto Public Health: [COVID-19 Guidance for Employers, Workplaces and Businesses](#)

Toronto Public Health: [COVID-19 Guidance for Childcare Settings](#)

Toronto Public Health; [COVID-19 Guidance for Outdoor Playgrounds](#)

Toronto Public Health: [Pandemic Planning Guide for Schools.](#)

Toronto Public Health: [COVID-19 Spread the Word](#) (printable information cards and posters)

Toronto Public Health: [COVID-19 Mental Health Resources](#)

Toronto Public Health: [COVID-19 Guidance for In-Person Instructional Services](#)

Province of Ontario: [Ministry of Education Guide to Reopening Schools](#)

Government of Canada: [COVID-19 guidance for schools Kindergarten to Grade 12](#)