

Reopening Schools During COVID-19

September 2, 2020



Welcome to the “Reopening Schools During COVID-19” presentation.

Agenda

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- About COVID-19
 - Public Health Measures
 - WDG Public Health Roles
 - Case, Contact and Outbreak Management, Support, Resource Sharing

In this presentation, we will review COVID-19, Public Health Measures, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's roles and resources you are able to access to help keep schools safe and healthy. Resources will be linked throughout the slides – look for words that are underlined.

About COVID-19

- **COVID-19 is caused by the coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2)**
- **First identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019**
- **Spread through:**
 - **Droplets: coughing, sneezing**
 - **Contact: touching (shaking hands, high fives or touching a surface with the virus on it then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing hands)**
- **Symptoms can vary and are similar to other illnesses**
- **At risk groups:**
 - **Older than 65 years of age**
 - **Immunocompromised**
 - **Chronic condition**

- COVID-19 is caused by a new coronavirus (SARS-COV-2) that has not been identified in humans before. It was first identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019.
- COVID-19 is spread through droplets such as coughing or sneezing, and by close contact with other people (such as touching or shaking hands) or by touching a surface with the virus on it and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing hands.
- Coronaviruses can cause a wide range of illnesses and so COVID-19 symptoms vary and are similar to other illnesses (such as the common cold or other more severe respiratory illnesses)
- At risk groups include:
 - People older than 65 years of age
 - Those who are immunocompromised
 - And those who have an underlying medical condition or a chronic condition

Ministry of Education Guidance



- The Ministry of Education released guidelines for Reopening of Schools this fall. To keep students and staff safe, the Ministry and public health are recommending that multiple public health measures are employed.
 - The measures include:
 - Self-screening
 - Hand hygiene
 - Masks
 - Cohorting
 - Distancing
 - Limiting visitors

Self-screening

- **Staff, students and essential visitors should actively self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposures prior to leaving for school or work**
 - Including measuring temperature for fever
- **Screening is an important tool to help keep COVID-19 from entering the school environment**
- **WDG Public Health developed screening tools for three different audiences:**
 - Parents of children in elementary school
 - Secondary school students
 - School-based staff
- **Screening tools are available on wdgpublichealth.ca**

- Self-screening can be done using one the WDG Public Health screening tool or the provincial Self-Assessment Tool (covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/)
- Before leaving for school, all students and staff must self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms and potential exposures (i.e., travel history, exposure to confirmed case). This includes measuring temperature for fever.
- Though screening will not catch every case of COVID-19, it is an important tool to help keep COVID-19 from entering the school environment.
- If a student or staff member answers 'yes' to any of the questions on the self-screening tool, they must stay home from school and it is recommended they get tested.
- If a student or staff member is symptomatic and gets tested, they should isolate at home while waiting for their test results.
- WDG Public Health developed three screening tools that can be shared with your school's staff and parents, and also posted at your school's entrances and reception area. You can find these tools in the "Schools" section of our website (wdgpublichealth.ca).

Hand Hygiene

- **Hand hygiene is hand washing with soap and water or applying Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR)**
 - **ABHR must have at least 60% alcohol content**
- **Schools should provide their students and staff with hand hygiene education and have hand hygiene stations available throughout the school**
- **Hand hygiene should be practiced multiple times a day**
- **Hand hygiene etiquette posters should be placed throughout the school**



- Hand hygiene is one of the most important public health measures. Hand hygiene is hand washing with soap and water or applying Alcohol-Based Hand Rub (ABHR). ABHR must have at least 60% alcohol content.
- Schools should provide their students with hand hygiene education and should also have plenty of hand hygiene stations available throughout the school:
 - At entrances/exits
 - In classrooms and offices
 - In hallways
 - In other places that students or staff will frequent
- Hand hygiene should be practiced multiple times a day, including:
 - After entering the school
 - After using the washroom
 - After sneezing/coughing
 - Before/after eating
 - Before/after touching your face or handling a face covering
 - As required when putting on and taking off PPE
 - Whenever visibly soiled
- Teachers should incorporate frequent hand hygiene opportunities throughout the day
- Hand hygiene etiquette posters should be placed throughout the school:
 - In washrooms, in classrooms, hallways, and other common areas

Masks/Face Coverings

- **Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear face coverings**
 - Students in younger grades are strongly recommended to wear a face covering
- **School-based staff are required to wear medical masks**
- **Reasonable exceptions for staff and students with medical conditions**
- **More information about the proper wear and care of masks can be found on our [website](#)**



- Medical masks and eye protection (e.g. face shield) should be provided for all teachers and other staff of school.
- Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear face coverings (non-medical or cloth masks)
 - Students in younger grades are strongly recommended to wear a face covering or follow any school policies that may require wearing face coverings
- School-based staff are required to wear surgical/medical masks
- Reasonable exceptions are made for staff and students with medical conditions
- For more information on proper wear and care of masks, visit wdgpublichealth.ca

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- **The use of additional PPE in schools should be considered based on a risk assessment of the task, the individual and environment**
- **Staff who are in close contact with students (i.e., any physical distancing is not possible) must wear:**
 - **Medical masks**
 - **Eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles)**
 - **Where direct contact with a student is required, staff must also wear a gown and gloves**

- All school-based staff are required to wear a medical mask. They do not replace the need for appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as determined by the situation.
- The use of PPE in schools should be considered based on a risk assessment of the task, the individual, and the environment.
- Staff who are in close contact with students (i.e., any physical distancing is not possible) must wear:
 - Medical masks
 - Eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles)
 - Where direct contact with a student is required, staff must also wear a gown and gloves
- For information on safely reusing and disposing PPE, please visit the Teachers and Staff section of the Schools page on our website (www.wdgpUBLICHEALTH.ca)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff Role	Type of PPE
School staff providing care for a sick child (suspect case of COVID-19)	Droplet and Contact Precautions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical mask• Eye protection (e.g., face shield/goggles)• Gown• Gloves
School staff cleaning up bodily fluids with the risk of splashing/soiling of clothing	Droplet and Contact Precautions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical mask• Eye protection (e.g., face shield/goggles)• Gown• Gloves
Symptomatic student (suspect case of COVID-19)	• Medical mask (if tolerated)

- If the staff member or student finds themselves in a situation where they are either caring for a sick child or a student is ill, the types of PPE required changes.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff Role	Type of PPE
Custodial and caretaker staff (no direct care or close contact with students or other staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must wear a medical mask• Gloves, as required (as per manufacturer's instructions)• Practice physical distancing of 2 meters
Bus Driver	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must wear a medical mask• Eye protection* is encouraged when physical distancing cannot be maintained• Gloves, as required (as per manufacturer's instructions)• Practice physical distancing of 2 meters
Cook, food handler	
Maintenance staff	

- * *Eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles).*
- Other staff are also required to wear a medical mask, gloves (as required), and eye protection (as required).

Donning and Doffing PPE

- **Putting on (donning) and taking off PPE (doffing), properly is a very important part of preventing the spread of COVID-19**
- **WDG Public Health strongly recommends that all school-based staff watch the PPE training videos offered by Public Health Ontario**
 - Click on each link to watch the video

Topic

[7 Steps of Hand Hygiene](#)

[Putting on Gloves](#)

[Putting on Mask and Eye Protection](#)

[Putting on Full PPE](#)

[Taking off Mask and Eye Protection](#)

[Taking off a Gown and Gloves](#)

[Taking off Full PPE](#)

- Putting PPE on and off needs to be done correctly in order to prevent infection.
- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health strongly recommends that all school-based staff watch the PPE training videos offered by Public Health Ontario.
 - Click on each link to watch the video.

Cohorting

- **Cohorting is “the practice of keeping students together in a small group throughout their school day with limited exposure to multiple teachers or a wide variety of classmates”**
 - Cohorted classes will stay together with only their classmates and a single teacher where possible
 - Students can expect to see changes in the timing of recesses, lunches, and bathroom breaks as they are staggered to support cohorting
- Cohorting limits the number of potential exposures and contacts
- Members of a cohort should practice physical distancing and all the other infection control practices (e.g., hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, wearing a face covering)

- Cohorting is the practice of keeping students together in a small group throughout their school day with limited exposure to multiple teachers or a wide variety of classmates
 - Cohorted classes will stay together with only their classmates and a single teacher where possible
 - Students can expect to see changes in the timing of recesses, lunches, and bathroom breaks as they are staggered to support cohorting
- It limits the number of potential exposures and contacts
- Students should remain in contact with only their classmates and a single teacher for as much of the school day as possible
 - Cohorts should remain in the same classroom as much as possible, and if a different teacher is required, the teacher should switch classrooms and students should remain in their classroom to prevent student movement to other rooms
- Members of a cohort should continue to practice physical distancing at all times and other infection control practices such as hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and wearing a face covering

Physical Distancing

- **Physical distancing of 2 metres should be practiced**
 - Including indoor and outdoor learning and play spaces
- **Strategies to promote physical distancing should be implemented, such as:**
 - Removing unnecessary furniture
 - Increasing physical space between furniture in all rooms
 - Move class to a larger space or outdoors to support physical distancing
 - Desks facing forward rather than in a circle or groups
 - Create designated routes for students/staff to get to and from classrooms
 - Use markings on floors and walls to promote physical distancing, including for lines/queues (e.g., tape on floors, signs on walls)
 - Use a temporary, floor to ceiling physical barrier when two cohorts are using the same indoor space (e.g., gym)
 - Stagger student/staff lunch/break times, recess times and use of communal spaces (e.g., library, gym, cafeteria, staff room)

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Limiting visitors in school

- **Essential visitors may include:**
 - regulated health professionals,
 - regulated social service professionals,
 - paraprofessionals,
 - WDG Public Health School Liaison Nurse and,
 - any other necessary visitors as deemed by your school or school board
- **All visitors should conduct COVID-19 self-assessment tool prior to arrival at the school**
- **All visitors should wear a medical mask and perform hand hygiene upon entering the school and as required while in the school environment**

- To help control and prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is strongly recommended that schools keep visitors to only essential visitors such as regulated health professionals, social service professionals and paraprofessionals for the purpose of delivering school-based supports and services.
- All visitors should complete the COVID-19 self-assessment prior to arrival the school
- All visitors should self-screen prior to entering the school and should wear a mask and perform hand hygiene upon entering the school

Other important Public Health measures

Environmental Cleaning & Disinfection

Documentation

Managing students or staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms in school

- Other important Public Health measures include:
 - Environmental cleaning & disinfection
 - Documentation
 - Managing students or staff who develop COVID-19 symptoms in school

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

- **Only use cleaners and disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN) or Natural Product Number (NPN).**
 - Visit [Health Canada's website](#) for more information
- **Common areas and high touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handrails, light switches, sink and toilet handles) should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily and whenever visibly soiled.**
- **For more information about environmental cleaning and disinfection refer to:**
 - [Public Health Ontario – Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
 - [Public Health Agency of Canada – Cleaning and disinfecting public spaces during COVID-19](#)

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Documentation

- **Daily records should be maintained for school staff, students and essential visitors (last 30 days):**
 - **Keep track of attendance, class/cohort lists, before/after school child care lists, seating charts, bus seat assignments, special assignments/programs/activities**
 - **For any visitors: record name, contact information, time of arrival and departure**



- Schools must be prepared to provide WDG Public Health with student/staff/visitor record information in case of a positive COVID-19 test result. This information will be used to support contact tracing
- Student and staff contact information should be up to date
- Daily records should be maintained for school staff, students and essential visitors (last 30 days):
 - Keep track of attendance, class/cohort lists, before/after school child care lists, seating charts, bus seat assignments, special assignments/programs/activities
 - For any visitors: each record should include their name, contact information, time of arrival and departure

Managing students or staff with COVID-19 symptoms

- **If a staff becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms:**
 - Symptomatic staff are to notify their school administrator and go home immediately
- **If a student becomes ill with COVID-19 symptoms:**
 - Staff designated to care for symptomatic student in isolation room is alerted and follows school protocol for caring for symptomatic individuals
 - A PPE kit should be available for use in the isolation room and it should contain: ABHR, gloves, medical masks, eye protection and a gown
 - Parent/guardian is contacted for immediate pick-up
 - Siblings and/or household members from the same school should be assessed for symptoms and sent home
 - Provide parent/guardian/student with *Symptomatic Student Information* sheet
 - School contacts WDG Public Health school liaison nurse, if needed
 - School liaison nurse *may* follow up with family within 24 hours to the next school day to provide health teaching
 - School is prepared to provide WDG Public Health with the information needed pending test results for student(s) in case of positive COVID-19

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WDG Public Health Roles

Case, contact and outbreak management

Working with school boards and schools to manage cases, contacts and outbreaks in the school setting.

Staff support

Public Health Nurses will liaise with schools and provide COVID-19 infection prevention and control guidance.

Resource sharing

Developing and sharing tools and resources with most up-to-date evidence.

Case, Contact and Outbreak Management

- **Public Health is responsible for:**
 - **determining if an outbreak in a school exists,**
 - **managing the outbreak in collaboration with the school and,**
 - **determining when the outbreak can be declared over**



- For more information about Case, Contact and Outbreak Management view the:
 - Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management document (http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19_school_outbreak_guidance.pdf)
 - Ministry of Education Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/operational-guidance-covid-19-management-schools>)

Case, Contact and Outbreak Management

- **Every individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be contacted by their local Public Health Unit (PHU) for further follow-up.**
- **The local PHU will notify the school of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis.**
- **Having designated points of contact within the school and the PHU can assist with ensuring clear processes for communication are in place.**

- For more information about Case, Contact and Outbreak Management view the:
 - Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management document (http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19_school_outbreak_guidance.pdf)
 - Ministry of Education Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/operational-guidance-covid-19-management-schools>)

Case, Contact and Outbreak Management

- **Where the local PHU determines there was a transmission risk to others in the school, public health will perform a risk assessment for any contacts**
- **All students and staff determined to be at high risk of exposure will be directed to isolate and recommended to be tested (voluntary testing) within their isolation period.**
- **PHU will determine which cohorts should self-isolate or whether a partial or full school closure is necessary due to the scope of the outbreak.**

- For more information about Case, Contact and Outbreak Management view the:
 - Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management document (http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/COVID-19_school_outbreak_guidance.pdf)
 - Ministry of Education Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/operational-guidance-covid-19-management-schools>)

Support

- **School Liaison Nurses will be available to provide support and be an important liaison between schools and WDGPH**
 - One nurse will be assigned to multiple schools
- **Teachers can direct questions to their designated School Health Liaison Nurse via their school's Principal**
- **If parents have any COVID-19 questions or concerns:**
 - **WDG Public Health's COVID-19 Call Centre is available:**
 - **519-822-2715 ext. 7006**
 - **Visit our website at wdgpublichealth.ca**

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Resources

- **As new evidence emerges, WDG Public Health continues to update and create new COVID-19 tools and resources:**
 - **A Schools section with information for staff and parents including posters and signs and screening tools**
- **This presentation was informed by resources found on WDG Public Health's website, including:**
 - **Information from reliable sources such as Government of Canada, Ontario Ministry of Health, Public Health Agency of Canada, Public Health Ontario**

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Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to review this presentation on
Reopening Schools During COVID-19.

Please check our website regularly for updates and new
resources.

