



January 7, 2021

**VIA E-MAIL**

Martha Rogers [Martha.Rogers@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:Martha.Rogers@ugdsb.on.ca)  
Director of Education  
Upper Grand District School Board

Martha MacNeil [Martha.macneil@ugdsb.on.ca](mailto:Martha.macneil@ugdsb.on.ca)  
Chair, Upper Grand District School Board

Dear Ms. Rogers and Ms. MacNeil:

**Re: Recommendation to Move to Virtual Education on January 11, 2021**

The importance of in-class education on the overall health, well-being and development of our children remains the foundation of our education system. Since September of 2020, schools have successfully educated our children within the classroom with limited evidence of school-based transmission of COVID-19 due to the diligence of public health measures implemented in the schools and classrooms. Since the start of the Holiday break however, we have seen significant and worsening spread of COVID within the geography of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH).

As of January 6, 2021, the 7-day moving rate of cases per 100,000, per week, within WDGPH is 123. This is a significant increase since the last day of school in December and it continues to increase. We also continue to receive reports of cases in school age children within our jurisdiction because of community transmission of COVID-19. Balancing the overall benefits of in-class education for the healthy development of the child, the social and economic well-being of the child's family, along with the risk of transmission of COVID-19 both within the school environment and community, during this pandemic is not an easy decision but, the rapid spread of COVID-19, requires further measures to control its spread.

This letter thus outlines my instructions on additional measures required to control the spread of COVID-19 in our community. As Medical Officer of Health for WDGPH, I am now issuing this letter of instruction to all Chairs of School Boards and Directors of Education that operate schools within the geography of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health.

These instructions are being provided pursuant to my authority to give instructions pursuant to s. 2(2) of Schedule 1 to Ontario Regulation 82/20: Rules for Areas in Stage 1 made under

the Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to Covid-19) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c.17 (the “Reopening Ontario Act”, Formerly a regulation made under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (“EMCA”) and now a continued section 7.0.2 order under the reopening Ontario Act and in accordance with the provisions of s. 3 of Schedule 3 of Regulation 82/20, as amended from time to time.

All education for the period from January 11<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> inclusive for all elementary and secondary school students within the geography of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health must take place and be delivered virtually.

Students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning and who wish to attend a school or their private school for in-person instruction may remain within the classroom with public health measures in place and are exempt from these instructions so long as the school or private school operates in accordance with a return to school direction issued by the Ministry of Education and approved by the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

These Instructions, including any revisions to these instructions, are available on the Wellington -Dufferin-Guelph website at <https://www.wdgppublichealth.ca/your-health/covid-19-information-public/current-public-health-measures-and-restrictions>.

These additional measures are intended to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 where existing collective efforts of various sectors, including school boards are required to protect our employees and children.

Sincerely,



Dr. Nicola Mercer, MD, MBA, MPH, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health and CEO

- c.c. Premier Doug Ford – via e-mail
- c.c. The Honourable Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education – via e-mail
- c.c. Ted Arnott, MPP (Wellington-Halton-Hills) – via e-mail
- c.c. Randy Pettapiece, MPP (Perth-Wellington) – via e-mail
- c.c. Sylvia Jones, MPP (Dufferin-Caledon) – via e-mail
- c.c. Mike Schreiner, MPP (Guelph) – via e-mail