

School Protocol When Student/Staff Tests Positive for COVID-19

**Note: The following process is intended as a general guide and may be adapted based on circumstances. This document was last revised: Sept 1, 2021*

The Local Public Health Unit (LPHU) receives the positive test result and contacts the staff, student (or student's parent/guardian) to conduct case and contact management. Case and contact management will also be completed for Probable Cases (symptomatic individuals with known exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19). Confirms that individual attended school during period of communicability.

**Note: If the individual attended school during their incubation period but not their period of communicability, LPHU will notify School Board (SB) COVID-19 Lead and indicate whether or not further action is warranted.*

LPHU COVID-19 Lead or designate will contact School Board COVID-19 Lead and/or Child Care Operator to inform of positive case.

School Board COVID-19 Lead contacts school principal to inform that case and contact management have begun and information needs to be gathered and shared with LPHU.

LPHU's COVID-19 Case and Contact Management Team in collaboration with school public health nurses contacts the school administration to request information.

Students/staff who test positive for COVID-19 will remain in isolation until three conditions have been met:

- 1) Their follow-up with public health is complete and they have isolated for a minimum of 10 days after the onset of symptoms **AND**
- 2) They no longer have a fever **AND**
- 3) Their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours; if gastrointestinal symptoms, nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea must have been improving for at least 48 hours.

**Students or staff do not need to provide a medical note or proof of a negative result to return to school or child care.*

LPHU will provide guidance and conduct regular follow-up with the student/staff who have tested positive.

School board/school administrator provides information regarding contacts/cohorts to LPHU for student/staff who tested positive for COVID-19 (as soon as feasible)

LPHU will:

- 1) Perform risk assessment of contacts / cohorts of positive person and will advise all contacts of need for self-isolation or self-monitoring.
- 2) Support school board/school/child care operator with parent communication
- 3) Determine if an outbreak will be declared and when the outbreak is over

School board/school/child care operator distributes communications to parents, guardians, and staff and implements additional infection prevention and control measures

Information needed may include:

- Attendance records
- Class/cohort lists and seating charts
- Extracurricular activities, recess playmates
- Before/after school child care lists
- Transportation lists & seating charts
- Current contact info for students/staff
- Special assignments/programs/activities (e.g. Special Education)
- Records of essential visitors

LPHU are committed to protecting the personal and personal health information that may be disclosed to schools for the purpose of contact tracing and should only be used for that purpose. School boards/schools/child care operators have an obligation to protect the personal and personal health information of their students and staff. The identity of cases should not be disclosed to parents, or to other students unless deemed necessary by public health.

School Administrator Responsibilities

If a school board / school or LPHU are made aware of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis for staff or students, it is essential that the school board / school administrator prepare key information pertaining to staff and students quickly for the purposes of contact tracing. This information needs to be accessible by school board / school administrators on short notice, both during and outside of school hours.

Please prepare to have the following information available:

- attendance records for the specific dates that LPHU requests
- class lists and seating charts for every class
- names, DOB, and address for each student
- up-to-date contact information for the parent/guardian of each student, and for staff
- name and contact info for any staff/outside visitors who are not on the class list, that interacted with the class on the dates provided (e.g. Rotary teachers, service providers)
- before-and-after program child care lists
- transportation lists and seating charts (regular and after-school program bussing)
- special assignments and programs
- records of essential visitors

School boards and schools may be required by the Ministry of Education to post information to their websites if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 that involves a student or staff member and/or if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in a school setting. School boards and schools are recommended to initiate communication protocols and plans to update and inform necessary stakeholders with the school community (including before and after school programs) when there is a positive COVID-19 diagnosis in the school. In the interests of privacy, information provided to school communities will not identify the student or staff member who has received a positive COVID-19 test.

Public Health Responsibilities

LPHU will be responsible for conducting case and contact management activities for positive (laboratory confirmed) and probable (symptomatic individuals with known exposure to a confirmed case of COVID-19) cases of COVID-19. Measures will be taken to ensure privacy and avoid disclosure of details to the school community that would lead to the identification of a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 case.

Contacts of a case will be notified by the LPHU and provided further instructions regarding testing and isolation. Cohort contacts who are fully vaccinated (14 days since their 2nd dose) or previously within 90 days, and do not have symptoms are not required to isolate but should still get tested and must monitor for symptoms. If symptoms develop, they must isolate immediately and should seek testing again. Cohort contacts and other high-risk contacts who are not fully vaccinated are required to isolate for a minimum of 10 days.

LPHU may also post information about cases and outbreaks in schools, on their COVID-19 dashboard/website.

LPHU will provide school boards / schools with information that can be used to communicate with their school community. The purpose of this communication would be to provide reassurance and guidance and would **not** provide specific information or identifying details.

Declaring an Outbreak

LPHU will be responsible for determining if an outbreak exists, declaring an outbreak, and providing direction on outbreak control measures to be implemented. LPHU will assist in determining which cohort(s) should be sent home, or if a partial, or full, school closure is required. LPHU will also determine when an outbreak can be declared over.

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1-877-743-0101

www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca



1-800-841-2729 • www.durham.ca



1-866-888-4577

www.hkpr.on.ca