

October 7, 2021

Memorandum to: Chairs of District School Boards
Directors of Education
School Authorities

From: Stephen Lecce
Minister of Education

Subject: **Thanksgiving Weekend Health and Safety Reminder**

Traditionally, the Thanksgiving long weekend is a holiday when extended families and friends travel from near and far to gather, share a meal, and spend time together. While we have made huge gains against COVID-19 thanks to the efforts of all Ontarians, it is important to continue exercising caution. As a result, the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health has [released guidance](#) on how to celebrate holidays and festive events safely this fall season.

As we approach Thanksgiving weekend, we must continue our efforts to keep students, families, and staff safe and healthy. Please remind everyone to screen for symptoms each day, and to follow the direction in the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#) on whether to attend school or work. Should anyone experience COVID-19 symptoms, they should immediately self-isolate and seek testing. Anyone who is sick or develops any symptoms of illness, including those not listed in the school and child care screening tool, should stay home and seek assessment from their health care provider, if needed. We ask that you share this information with students, families, and staff.

Thank you for your collective efforts in upholding public health and safety measures, and for supporting approximately 2 million students attending in-person learning, which has critical benefits to mental and physical health. As the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health has confirmed, Ontario schools remain safe, with strong health and safety measures in place, along with improvements to air ventilation.

It is important that we all follow public health practices during the holidays in order to support a healthy and safer in-person experience in our schools and respective communities.

Please have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving Holiday.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce
Minister

c: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, Ontario
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