

August 27, 2021

**Memorandum to:** Directors of Education  
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

**From:** Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

**Subject:** **Updates to the School Screening Tool for the 2021-22 School Year**

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As the 2021-22 school year quickly approaches, I am writing to notify you of the updates made to the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#) and the [COVID-19 screening tool for employees and essential visitors in schools and child care settings](#).

Updates to the screening tools reflect the latest advice from the Ministry of Health for schools, child care and other workplace settings.

Key changes to the screening tools include:

- **Symptoms** – in alignment with the Ministry of Health’s [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#), the screeners now include a shortened list of symptoms that are most commonly associated with COVID-19. As per regular protocols, all sick individuals with any symptoms of illness – including those with symptoms not included on the screening tool – should stay home and seek assessment from their regular health care provider, if required.
- **Consideration for immunization status** - in alignment with the Ministry of Health’s [COVID-19 Fully Immunized and Previously Positive Individuals: Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance](#), asymptomatic individuals who are fully immunized (equal to or more than 14 days after receiving their second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine series or their first dose of a one-dose COVID-19 vaccine series) or who were previously positive within the past 90 days and have since been cleared, are not required to isolate if they are in contact with an individual who is symptomatic or who tests positive for COVID-19, unless otherwise directed by the public health unit.
- **Isolation period** – in alignment with the Ministry of Health’s [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#) and [COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management](#), asymptomatic high-risk close contacts of a case are now required to isolate for 10 days, unless they are fully immunized or previously tested positive, as above.
  - Siblings and other people in the household of the individual identified as a high-risk close contact can go to school, child care or work, but must not

leave the home for other non-essential reasons. Household members who are fully immunized or who previously tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have since been cleared are not required to stay home.

- **International travel** – unvaccinated children under the age of 12 are now exempt from federal quarantine if they travelled in the company of someone who qualified for an exemption from quarantine based on vaccination status. However, they may not attend school or child care for 14 days after their arrival.
  - Students may also continue to attend school or child care if their international travel was solely due to a cross border custody arrangement.
- **Rapid testing** – the screening tool now includes a question about a positive screen on a rapid antigen or home-based self-testing kit.

Copies of the new screener are available for download [here](#). Similar to the 2020-21 school year, the downloadable screening tool will be made available in multiple languages. These additional languages will be added online shortly.

We will continue to update the screening tool as public health guidance evolves and are committed to keeping schools and school boards informed of any changes. We ask that you continue to work with your public health units to review your own screening materials to ensure that they meet the minimum requirements outlined in provincial guidance. Public health units continue to have the authority to implement additional measures based on local circumstances.

### **On-site Screening:**

As outlined in the document entitled COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools (2021-22), the Ministry can direct school boards and schools to perform daily on-site confirmation of self-screening for all students, staff and visitors. We ask schools and school boards to implement the daily-on site confirmation of self-screening for all elementary and secondary students, staff and visitors for the first two weeks of the school year. Similarly, for schools and school boards that have already commenced their instructional year, we ask that this measure be immediately adopted. We encourage boards to implement confirmation of on-site screening processes during other periods of the year, where possible, as a frequent reminder of the importance of screening daily. This approach will support our collective efforts by ensuring that all students, staff and visitors are monitoring their symptoms so that only those who pass the screening procedures are allowed to attend school or work.

Thank you again for your continued support and collaboration as we work together to support students, staff and families across Ontario.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

c: Board COVID-19 Leads

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