

August 29, 2022

Dear Parent, Guardian,

As we enter a new school year, Ottawa Public Health continues to support schools with various aspects of health. Over the last two years, our primary focus has been supporting schools and families with COVID-19 and during that time, we paused most of our regular services offered to schools. We are excited to resume some of these important services relating to students' mental and physical health, including immunizations and dental screening. This new school year offers the opportunity for in-person learning and extracurricular activities at school which are so important for the mental and physical health of children and youth.

We want to recognize that COVID-19 and other viruses are still present in the community. As we continue to monitor the situation in Ottawa, our indicators are showing that the levels of COVID-19 in our community are still high. We anticipate that some respiratory viruses, such as influenza, will increase as we move into the fall season. This means that it is important for everyone to continue to [assess their personal risk](#) and the risk to those around them and add layers of protection to decrease the risk of respiratory illness.

What layers of protection can our family use?

- Ensure to complete the [provincial screening tool](#) every day before school and child care. Your child should stay home if they are unwell.
- Get your child [vaccinated](#) with all eligible doses of a COVID-19 vaccine and other [childhood vaccines](#).
- Keep your child home when they are sick and when required to [self-isolate](#).
 - The guidance related to self-isolation continues to change, and many parents might have questions about when their child is required to stay home from school. We encourage you to visit our [self-isolation](#) webpage to review the scenario that best describes your situation.
- Use [rapid antigen tests](#) when appropriate (they are available through the schools and the [community](#)).
- Consider wearing a mask indoors and outdoors if distancing can become challenging or is not possible.
- Remind your child to wash their hands often. Review these [hand-washing tips](#).

If you would like more information, please visit our [COVID-19 webpage](#), or call 613-580-6744 to speak with a Public Health Nurse. Any school-specific questions should be directed to your child's school.

Wishing you a smooth transition back to school,

Ottawa Public Health