



Special Focus: School-Based COVID-19 Rapid Testing Clinics

Update: February 18, 2021

Introduction

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) is collaborating with area school boards, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and regional testing partners to run school-based COVID-19 rapid testing clinics. The purpose of the clinics is to improve access to testing and identify any students, staff or family members with COVID-19 infections. People who are symptomatic, asymptomatic, or high-risk contacts with connections to the invited schools are eligible for this targeted testing. The goal is to prevent COVID-19 spread at home, in our schools and in our community, and ultimately keep our classes and schools open for in-person learning.

Both the rapid antigen test and the lab-based test are available on site. Rapid testing is used for those without any symptoms and without any known high-risk exposure and is used in conjunction with a confirmatory lab-based test for those with symptoms or a known high-risk exposure. While rapid testing allows for same day results, positive results require confirmation with a lab-based test available on site.

If an individual tests positive, the individual and their household contacts are called to return for a lab-based test (if not already completed) the same weekend to confirm the rapid test result. These families are advised to stay home until confirmatory lab-based results are received. If confirmed positive, they are required to complete their isolation period. The individuals and their families are supported by OPH case managers. Additional social supports are also available on site.

Summary of January 30 & 31, 2021, February 6 & 7 and February 13, 14 & 15, 2021 Clinics

The first three clinics were held on the weekends of January 30 to 31 at École élémentaire publique Gabrielle-Roy, February 6 to 7 at Ridgemont High School and February 13, 14 and 15 at École secondaire catholique Pierre-Savard. Students, staff, and their families from a total of 47 Ottawa schools were invited to the testing clinics. See Table 2 below for the schools invited each weekend. Schools were selected in areas of the city that had seen higher rates of COVID-19 infections in recent weeks.

Over the course of the three weekends, 2,336 individuals were tested for COVID-19. Of the 2,336 individuals tested, 994 were students (including asymptomatic students, symptomatic students, and students with high risk exposures). Nine students tested positive over the course of the three weekends. See Table 1 below.

Table 1. Test results from school-based COVID-19 rapid testing clinics held on the weekends of January 30-31, February 6-7 and February 13-15

	January 30-31		February 6-7		February 13-15	
Population	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive	Tested	Positive
Student	165	2	48	6	781	1
Other	92	3	127	8	1123	0
TOTAL	257	5	175	14	1904	1

Note: Data for January 30 to 31 and February 6 to 7 are based on the actual number of tests completed, while data for February 13 to 15 are based on the number of people registered for tests. The number of people who registered for tests may overestimate the number of people tested by less than 5%.

Limitations

It is important to note that the rates of positive results at rapid testing clinics are not representative of asymptomatic infections in the larger student population for the following reasons:

- Schools in neighbourhoods with higher COVID-19 rates were targeted
- People self-selected whether to seek testing; those with risk factors for exposure to COVID-19 may have been more likely to present for testing than those who did not present for testing
- Testing was not limited to those who were asymptomatic but included those with symptoms and high-risk contacts of cases
- Test results include family members (some of whom may also be students) who were asked to come for testing as high-risk contacts because another family member tested positive at the school-based clinic.

Next Steps

OPH and its partners will continue to identify opportunities for school-based testing to facilitate access and reduce barriers for students, staff and their families to get tested at or near their school. OPH works closely with school administration, staff and school boards to ensure that families of students in these settings are provided all necessary information to participate in these events. The locations of school-based testing are not communicated publicly in advance, as testing is not open to members of the general public.

As always, the Provincial [webpage](#) publishes information if anyone tests positive for COVID-19 related to a school setting. If there is a confirmed epidemiological link between two cases, this is considered an outbreak in a school and is listed on the OPH Daily COVID-19 [Dashboard](#) under the “Outbreaks” tab.

As schools operate in-person in Ottawa, rapid testing is one more tool in our toolbox to keep schools open for in-person learning. The most important tools to prevent transmission of COVID-19 are daily screening, staying home and getting tested when sick or when advised by OPH, mask wearing, isolation, physical distancing, physical barriers, hand hygiene, and cohorting in schools. OPH continues to encourage parents and students to screen every day for any symptoms of COVID-19, and to self-isolate and seek testing as per the [screening tool](#).

Table 2. Schools invited to the school-based testing clinics

Weekend	Schools Invited
January 30 and 31	Sainte-Bernadette Catholic Elementary School Gabrielle-Roy Public Elementary School Blossom Park Public School Sawmill Creek Elementary School Dunlop Public School Roberta Bondar Public School Vimy Ridge Public School St. Bernard School St. Marguerite d'Youville School
February 6 and 7	Ridgemont High School Brookfield High School Clifford Bowie Public School Charles H. Hulse Public School General Vanier Public School Marius-Barbeau Catholic Elementary School Marie-Curie Public Elementary School Lamoureux Catholic Elementary School
February 13, 14 and 15	Bernard Grandmaitre Ecole elementaire catholique Jean Robert Gauthier École élémentaire catholique Pierre-Elliott-Trudeau École secondaire catholique Pierre-Savard Jonathan Pitre Sainte Kateri Barrhaven Sud École élémentaire publique Michaëlle-Jean Adrienne Clarkson Elementary School Barrhaven Public School Berrigan Elementary School Cedarview Middle School Chapman Mills Elementary School Farley Mowat Elementary School Half Moon Bay Public School Jockvale Elementary School John McCrae High School Longfields Davidson Heights Secondary School

Weekend	Schools Invited
	Mary Honeywell Elementary School Crystal Bay Centre for Special Education Monsignor Paul Baxter Elementary School St Benedict Elementary School St Elizabeth Ann Seton Elementary School St Joseph High School St Luke (Nepean) Elementary School St Mother Teresa High School St. Cecilia Elementary School St. Emily Elementary School St. Patrick Elementary St. Andrew School

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