

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
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Date : March 4, 2022

To: Superintendents, School Principals and Staff

From : George Daley, Deputy Minister

Copies : Craig Caldwell, Assistant Deputy Minister; All District Directors

Subject : **The Lifting of Guidelines for Healthy and Safe School – School Winter Plans**

Please be advised effective March 14, 2022, the health and safety measures in the Healthy and Safe School 2021-22 Guidelines for COVID-19 and other Infectious Diseases and the Healthy and Safe School – School Winter Plans for Kindergarten to grade 12 will no longer be in effect. With the lifting of the COVID-19 guidelines, this may be a stressful or difficult time for those who are anxious or vulnerable. Please continue to practice kindness and acceptance to those who choose to continue to practice additional layers of protection.

Moving forward, the following best practices are highly recommended:

General Health Guidelines

It is very important that students and school personnel stay home when they are sick. Screening for COVID-19 symptoms are no longer required everyday to attend school. Proper handwashing and sanitization should continue for all students and school personnel before and after outdoor play, before and after meals, and after using the washroom.

Good respiratory hygiene practices will also continue, this includes covering the mouth and nose with a tissue or elbow when coughing or sneezing.

Mask Use

Masks will no longer be required for students, school personnel, visiting professionals, parent, etc. inside the classroom, in common areas or outdoors. Students and school personnel who wish to continue to wear a mask will be permitted to do so and their decision is to be respected.

Masks will continue to be provided to school personnel who wish to wear one, for as long as supplies last.

Mental Health

The school system is encouraged to focus on building a culture of respect and kindness and by promoting and modelling safe and healthy behavior as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. If needed, school district and school personnel are encouraged to access wellness support services such as professional counselling for teachers, Manulife Wellness Support and the Employee and Family Assistance program through Homewood Health.

Isolation

Isolation restrictions and requirements are no longer in effect; however, students and school personnel will continue to stay home when sick.

Exposure notices will no longer be sent out to school personnel or families to advise of positive cases in a school.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

The current cleaning and disinfecting protocols will continue to be in place to ensure that schools are healthy and safe. Custodians will disinfect daily all frequently touched surfaces, such as doorknobs, handrails, cafeteria tables, etc. Custodians are to continue using 2-in-1 cleaners/disinfectants for regular cleaning.

Disinfecting products will also continue to be available in classrooms so that students and school personnel can continue to clean. Cleaning of tables and desks is no longer required but as with all other good practices, teachers may continue to clean them.

The use of bubblers (spout) component on water fountains is permitted. The use of bottle fillers on fountains will still be considered best practice and should be used whenever possible.

Physical Education and Music Education

Physical Education and Music Education classes will return to regular practices. Physical Education and Music Education classes should be taught outdoors whenever weather permits. Learning outdoors continues to be encouraged in all areas of the curriculum, where and when possible.

Extracurricular and Intramural Activities

Extracurricular and Intramural activities are permitted without restrictions. These activities should be held outdoors whenever weather permits.

Student Transportation

School buses will no longer require daily disinfecting. Students and bus drivers are not required to wear a mask while on the bus. Curtains will remain installed on buses. Use of curtains is not required but will be used at the discretion of the bus driver.

Gatherings, Assemblies and Concerts

Assemblies and concerts will be permitted without any restrictions during and after school hours.

Spectators will also be permitted to attend all school gatherings, assemblies, concerts and extracurricular activities with no restrictions or regulations.

Parents and Visitors

Schools will be open to parents and visitors and no appointment times will be necessary.

Community Use of Schools

The Community Use of Schools will be permitted for all community groups and organizations. Schools will follow the requirements outlined in [Policy 407 – Community Use of Schools](#) and promote proper cleaning and disinfecting protocols. This is contingent on the availability of custodians and other operational considerations.

Ventilation

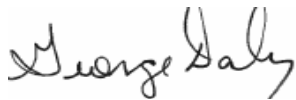
The portable HEPA filtration systems that have been installed in schools without integrated ventilation systems will continue to be used until such a time that the school receives mechanical ventilation.

Schools with mechanical ventilation systems will continue following best practices for use and maintenance of existing systems. Schools without mechanical ventilation systems shall continue to optimize fresh air exchange by using operable windows, opening doors, etc.

The use of fans in classrooms and other areas of the school are permitted.

We all recognize the impact of the ongoing changes to health measures and the additional stresses that COVID-19 has brought to the school system. We are extremely grateful for your dedication to your students and your school.

With the March Break upon us, I hope you take the opportunity to take time for yourself and your loved ones.



George Daley
Deputy Minister