



## Update for Staff and Families – January 14, 2022

### Return to In-Person Learning

In-person learning will resume for secondary students on Monday, January 17, 2022, and elementary students on Tuesday, January 18. Elementary schools have a PD Day on Monday, January 17, 2022.

Schools will continue to have in place all necessary health and safety strategies in line with the advice we are receiving from the province and from our local Public Health Units, including mandatory masking, promotion of physical distancing, ventilation improvements, frequent handwashing, and sanitation of high-touch surfaces.

On January 12, the province [announced](#) additional measures to keep students, parents, and staff safe as schools reopen.

### Masks

In line with public health recommendations, high-quality three-ply masks will be available for all students in schools starting on the week of Monday, January 17 and N95s masks will be available for staff.

### Vaccinations

To further encourage voluntary vaccination for children aged 5 to 11, the government has asked school boards to work with local Public Health Units (PHUs) to add school-day vaccination clinics for students during instructional hours.

In the coming days, parents will receive a form offering the opportunity to safely and conveniently provide Public Health Units the authority to vaccinate their child at a school-based vaccination clinic. **No child will be offered the opportunity of a vaccination without written consent from a parent/guardian.** More information about voluntary vaccination clinics within Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, will be communicated to you in the coming days.

### Rapid Tests

Two Rapid tests will be available in schools for all in-person elementary students and staff. Tests for secondary will be coming soon. These tests will be provided to students to be administered by parents. The use of the tests is for symptomatic individuals, who will be required to take two rapid tests 24 hours apart, and upon negative results can return to school. Rapid tests will become more widely available as provincial supply increases over the coming weeks.

### Reducing Contacts and Cohorting

When schools re-open on Monday, high-contact sports will continue to be paused and our Board will continue to monitor, and work with the Ministry of Education and Public Health Units, to see when they can resume. Steps will continue to be taken for physical distancing at lunch and during

recess which will include the reinstatement of cohorting outdoors during recess for elementary students.

### **Changes in Testing, Isolation, Screening Confirmation and Reporting Requirements**

The province has provided updated [guidance](#) for schools on handling the COVID-19 surge, including changes to testing, isolation, and reporting requirements.

#### **Evaluating Symptoms**

The province has updated its [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#). It is extremely important for all staff and students to work through the screening tool to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to attending school.

The updated guidance notes that if students are experiencing the symptoms listed below, they should assume they have COVID-19, not wait for confirmation from a PCR or rapid test, and self-isolate with their household immediately.

*Students should isolate if they have one or more of the following symptoms:*

- Fever and/or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Decrease or loss of taste or smell

*Students should isolate if they have two or more of the following symptoms:*

- Runny nose or nasal congestion
- Headache
- Extreme fatigue
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Vomiting or diarrhea

Where a student has **only one** of the following symptoms, or a different symptom (e.g., pink eye), the individual should isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhea are present), and household members are not required to isolate. Those symptoms include:

- Runny nose/nasal congestion
- Headache
- Extreme fatigue
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches/joint pain
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e., vomiting or diarrhea)

## Testing

A limited supply of PCR self-collection kits will only be provided to elementary and secondary students and staff who develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at school. Rapid tests will be available for all students and staff at their schools.

Those waiting for the result of a COVID-19 test, or who cannot access a test, must isolate at home regardless of vaccination status, along with others in their household.

## Self-Isolation Guidelines

Students or staff who are exposed to COVID-19 at school, should monitor symptoms but do not need to self-isolate. Classes and cohorts will no longer be dismissed.

Students, and their family members, are still expected to isolate if: 1) a household member either tests positive using a PCR test or rapid test OR 2) assumes they have COVID-19 using the province's [school screening tool](#).

Students may leave isolation if they meet the following criteria:

- **Students 11 years of age or younger (born in 2010 or later)** may return to school 5 days after a positive test or the first onset of symptoms if symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if symptoms such as vomiting, or diarrhea are present);
- **Students 12 years of age or older (born in 2009 or earlier) who are fully vaccinated** may return to school 5 days after a positive test or the first onset of symptoms if symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if symptoms such as vomiting, or diarrhea are present);
- **Students 12 years of age or older (born in 2009 or earlier) who are partially vaccinate or unvaccinated** must self-isolate for a minimum of **10 days** before returning to school after a positive test or the first onset of symptoms if symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours if symptoms such as vomiting, or diarrhea are present);
- **Immunocompromised and high-risk individuals** (regardless of age or vaccination status) must also isolate for 10 days.

## Screening

Secondary students will continue the practice of on-site confirmation of screening and starting in January, all elementary students will also be required to screen daily and confirm via the [Daily On-Site COVID-19 Confirmation](#). Please note that the form parents were given prior to the break has changed, and parents will be receiving an updated version.

## Reporting

The province announced in December that it will no longer collect COVID-19 case numbers from school boards and suspend the reporting of new cases among students and staff starting in January. Public Health Units will continue working closely with the board. The BHNCD SB will post attendance statistics daily on our [COVID-19 Reporting](#) page to keep parents informed. We will continue to work collaboratively with our local Public Health Units to incorporate the latest public health advice and keep you informed of any changes in COVID-19 case and contact management processes at schools.

### Continuity of Learning

If students are not able to attend school in person, they will be able to access their learning asynchronously through their Brightspace page as has been the case throughout the pandemic. If, as result of high rate of staff absenteeism due to COVID infection, we feel we cannot safely supervise students, we will pivot individual schools to remote learning temporarily. We will make every effort to inform staff and families as soon as possible when this decision is made.

Thank you for your continued patience and support as we work together to keep our students, staff, and school communities safe.