

September 1, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are sincerely looking forward to welcoming back all students to school on September 8th! Whether in the remote learning environment or returning to school, we have been planning and consulting with stakeholders, including parents and staff, the Renfrew County District Health Unit (RCDHU) and of course under the guidance of the Ministry of Education since the middle of June. You can review our updated Return to School Plan [here](#). We urge you to view this [video](#) by the Acting Medical Officer of Health for Renfrew County, Dr. Robert Cushman to re-assure you and indeed thank you for the collective efforts of Renfrew County residents to date in keeping COVID-19 largely out of our community. You can also access the [RCDHU frequently asked questions](#) about the return to school.

Schools and COVID-19 Management

In addition to keeping the virus out of schools, we have a clear plan now about what to do if a case or suspected case presents itself amongst students or staff. On August 27th, the Ministry of Education released its [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#) Plan. We would like to remind you about the actions we are taking to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in our schools. This letter also includes information about what you can do to protect yourself and your family.

The most common symptoms of COVID-19 include:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8 °C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- New olfactory or taste disorder(s)
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion (in absence of underlying reasons for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post-nasal drip, etc.)

You must screen your child for symptoms every day before they come to school. You can use the Ministry of Health's <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/> tool for this purpose. If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are ill, they should not attend school. You should report your child's absence from school by contacting the school. Students who become ill during the day will be isolated and must be picked up from school as soon as possible. Symptomatic students will not be able to use student transportation.

Please consult http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/2019_reference_doc_symptoms.pdf for other clinical features of COVID-19 and when atypical signs and symptoms of COVID-19 should be considered, particularly in children.

If you're worried your child or any member of your household has been exposed to COVID-19 or has symptoms, use [the COVID-19 assessment tool](#). You will get a recommendation on what to do next.

By now, you will have received more detailed information about your school's preventive measures such as enhanced cleaning and reducing the number of contacts among individuals in the school, including students, staff and others. We will continue to work with the RCDHU to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our schools and will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available. Another important way you can assist us is avoiding speculation about cases or suspected cases. The Board and schools will communicate if a case arises, take advice from the RCDHU and engage in contact tracing. As well, keeping your child's medical information up to date with the school will help us in differentiating between, for example, symptoms from seasonal allergies and **new** or **worsening** symptoms that would lead us request you to pick up your child.

The Ontario Ministry of Health advises everyone to take an active role in protecting themselves from COVID-19. Here are a few things that you and your family can do:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home and **isolate** if you or anyone in your household is sick

For more information on COVID-19 please visit [Ontario.ca/coronavirus](https://ontario.ca/coronavirus).

If you have any questions about what our school is doing, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Jaimie Perry
Director of Education