

January 10, 2022

To: Parents/Guardians

RE: Updates to COVID-19 screening and management in child care settings

**Health
Services**

PO Box 630
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peelregion.ca

In response to the Omicron surge, the Ministry of Health has directed local public health units to focus on managing COVID-19 in the highest risk settings like hospitals and long-term care homes. Since children generally experience milder disease, Ministry guidance has indicated that child care settings are not considered a high-risk setting.

This means that child care settings no longer require closures of classes or groupings after an exposure to a person with COVID-19. Similar to other respiratory illnesses, children and staff are expected to stay home when sick.

This letter provides a summary of the provincial guidance updates for COVID-19. For more information on actions to take when you or your child is exposed to a person with COVID-19, please refer to the provincial website: [What to do if you've been exposed to COVID-19 | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario.](#)

Screening

Continue to actively screen your children everyday. Follow your child care or school's screening instructions based on the online provincial self-assessment tool: [COVID-19 school and child care screening \(ontario.ca\).](#)

Due to the widespread transmission of Omicron in Ontario, anyone with COVID-19 symptoms is now deemed to have infection with COVID-19. **Testing is not required to confirm this infection and recent changes made to the provincial testing requirements means children in child care settings are no longer eligible for PCR testing.**

The symptoms below are consistent with COVID-19 infection and no test is necessary to confirm. Should your child have these symptoms, they and your whole household should isolate in accordance with the guidance provided later in this letter **If your child has 1 of the following symptoms:**

- Fever (37.8° C or higher) and/or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

- Decrease or loss of smell or taste

OR 2 or more of the following symptoms:

- Runny nose or stuffy/congested nose
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches or joint pain
- Extreme fatigue
- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea (Gastrointestinal symptoms)

If your child does **not** meet the symptom criteria listed above, it's less likely they have COVID-19. Your child should isolate with a caregiver until their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours OR 48 hours if they have diarrhea or vomiting (gastrointestinal symptoms). In these instances, household members do not need to self-isolate.

Rapid antigen testing

A positive rapid antigen test is now considered to be a confirmed COVID-19 infection and does not need to be confirmed with a PCR test.

If a symptomatic child has access to a rapid antigen test, they may be cleared from isolation if they have two negative rapid antigen tests taken 24-48 hours apart. For more details, see the rapid antigen testing section on: [What to do if you've been exposed to COVID-19 | COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) in Ontario](#).

Length of isolation

Individuals have COVID-19 if they:

- 1) Have a positive PCR or rapid antigen test AND/OR
- 2) Have [symptoms](#) of COVID-19 according to the criteria above

The isolation period is based upon age and vaccinations status.

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Isolation requirements for individuals with a positive COVID-19 test (PCR/rapid antigen test) OR with COVID-19 symptoms:

Child with COVID-19 (case)	Isolation period for Child (Note: Day 0 is the first day of symptoms or if no symptoms, the positive test date)	Household members with no symptoms
12 years and older who are fully vaccinated * or 11 years old or younger	Child isolates for 5 days after symptoms started/positive test date and can return to child care on Day 6 if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ no fever ▪ symptoms improving for at least 24 hours or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea) 	Isolate at home immediately for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 days since your last exposure to the COVID-19 case (when case started isolating) if you are fully vaccinated or are 11 years old or younger
12 years and older who are not fully vaccinated or immunocompromised	Child isolates for 10 days after symptoms started/positive test date and can return to child care on Day 11 if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ no fever ▪ symptoms improving for at least 24 hours or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms (e.g., vomiting, diarrhea), whichever is longer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 days since your last exposure to the case (when case started isolating) if you are partially vaccinated, unvaccinated or immunocompromised ▪ if co-isolating with the case, your isolation period starts when the case's isolation period ends (see above if 5 or 10 days)
If household members become symptomatic, they must extend their self-isolation based on the date their symptoms began and follow the guidance for isolation of cases.		

*To be [fully vaccinated](#), 14 days must have passed since receiving the final dose of the vaccine series

Calculating isolation date

Per provincial guidance, if your child develops COVID-19 symptom(s) on the weekend and they have resolved by Monday, your child must still isolate for 5-10 days after their symptoms started, based on the isolation requirements for their age and vaccination status.

For example, if your child (less than 12 years old) has a fever on Saturday, January 15th (Day 0) that resolves the next day, they must isolate until the end of Day 5 on Thursday, January 20th, 2022. They would be able to return to child care on Friday, January 21st, 2022.

Instructions for COVID-19 contacts with exposures outside the household

If your family has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 outside your household, visit the provincial website for further information on: [What to do if you've been exposed to COVID-19](#).

If you have any questions, please call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700, Monday to Friday, from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm.

Sincerely,

Peel Public Health