

# COVID-19 Decision Tool for School Students, Staff, and Visitors

For elementary and secondary school (JK-Grade 12) students and staff

Version 4.3. Updated January 14, 2021

**Please note:** that the terms *listed in the definition below* are referred to in this document. Their definitions for the purpose of this document are listed below and should only be interpreted exactly as defined.

## Definitions:

- **Fully vaccinated:** [Fully vaccinated](#) means 14 days or more after getting a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine series or as defined by the [Ontario Ministry of Health](#).
- **Symptoms:** The [daily screening tool](#) lists ten symptoms to screen for each day. The symptoms are: fever/chills, cough, difficulty breathing, decrease or loss of taste or smell, sore throat, runny nose/nasal congestion, headache, feeling very tired, muscle aches/joint pain, nausea/vomiting/diarrhea.
- **Positive for COVID-19:** for the purposes of daily screening, an individual is considered to be positive for COVID-19 if they have received a positive COVID-19 result (eg. PCR, rapid antigen) or if they have symptoms of COVID-19.
- **[5 or 10] days:** For the screening questions below, if the student/staff is fully vaccinated OR 11 years old or younger, use 5 days. If the student/staff is 12 years of age or older and not fully vaccinated OR if they are immune compromised, use 10 days.
- **Close contact:** Means being in close proximity (less than 2 meters) with someone who tested positive or has symptoms of COVID-19, for at least 15 minutes or for multiple short periods of time without appropriate measures as masking and use of personal protective equipment. Being in the same classroom cohort is not considered close contact.

## COVID-19 symptom screening:

All [students](#) and [staff](#) must complete a self-screening questionnaire before going to school each day.

Students/staff with a chronic health issue that is medically diagnosed and unrelated to COVID-19, should look for **new, different or worsening symptoms**.

### A) Does the student/staff or anyone in the household have 1 or more of these new or worsening symptoms, today, or in the last [5 or 10] days on the symptom screener?



Fever >37.8°C  
and/or chills



Cough



Difficulty breathing



Decrease or loss of  
taste or smell

### B) Does the student/staff or anyone in the household have 2 or more of these new or worsening symptoms today, or in the last [5 or 10] days on the symptom screener?



Sore throat



Headache



Feeling very tired



Runny nose/nasal  
congestion



Muscle aches/joint  
pain



Nausea, vomiting,  
diarrhea

### **Student/staff has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days**

- The student/staff must stay home and isolate, and not leave except to get tested or for a medical emergency.
- **If the student/staff is 12 years of age and older AND fully vaccinated, OR 11 years or younger, regardless of vaccination status:**
  - They must self-isolate for at least 5 days from the day symptoms started and stay in isolation until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting/diarrhea), whichever is longer in duration.
  - Use test date if no symptoms
- **If the student/staff is 12 years of age or older AND not fully vaccinated, OR immune compromised**
  - They must self-isolate for 10 days from the day symptoms started AND stay in isolation until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting/diarrhea) and they do not have a fever, whichever is longer in duration.
  - Use test date if no symptoms
- **All household members of student/staff, regardless of vaccination status should:**
  - Stay at home and self-isolate at the same time while the student is isolating
  - If household members develop symptoms, they should follow isolation directions for symptomatic individuals.

### **Student/staff has no symptoms from A) and only one symptom from list B) in the last [5 or 10] days**

- The student/staff is advised to self-isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting/diarrhea).
- The student/staff should seek assessment from their health care provider if needed.
- Household members do not need to self-isolate.

### **Student/staff has symptoms and has an alternative medical diagnosis. Not tested for COVID-19.**

- If the symptoms are from a known health condition diagnosed by a healthcare provider (not related to COVID-19), the student/staff does not have to self-isolate.
- If the symptoms are new, different, or worsening, the student/staff should stay home and self-isolate, and follow guidance under the section, "*Student/staff has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days*"

### **Testing eligibility and availability:**

- PCR tests or RATs (rapid antigen Test) may be used when a student or staff has COVID-19 symptoms, based on provincial supply.
- Take-home PCR self-collection kits can be used at the school if a student or staff develops symptoms while at school, based on provincial supply.
  - If no testing is available, based on COVID-19 symptoms as outlined above in the section *COVID-19 Symptom Screening*, the person is considered to have Omicron and has to stay home and self-isolate.

### **Student/staff had symptoms of COVID-19 in the last [5 or 10] days and has tested negative for COVID-19 on a single PCR test or on two rapid antigen tests**

- If a PCR or rapid antigen test is available to the student/staff, it may be used to assess if the symptoms are related to COVID-19.
- If a single PCR test or two consecutive rapid antigen tests, separated by 24-48 hours, are both negative, the student/staff is advised to self-isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting/diarrhea) and then can return to school. Household members will no longer need to self-isolate

### **Student/staff has tested positive for COVID-19 on a PCR, rapid molecular, or rapid antigen test in the last [5 or 10] days**

- The student/staff must stay home and self-isolate, and should only leave for a medical emergency.

- Follow guidance under the section “*Student/staff has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days*”.

### **Student/staff has been identified as a close contact with someone who currently has COVID-19 outside of the household and has no symptoms.**

- Close contact exposures in the community are notified by the person who has symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19. They can include playdates, indoor gatherings, indoor activities/sports. Students/staff only exposed at school with all public health measures in place are not generally considered close contacts.
- If the student/staff is fully vaccinated AND have no symptoms
  - They do not need to self-isolate; the student/staff can attend school/child care. The student/staff should monitor for symptoms for 10 days, wear a mask, keep a physical distance and take precautions when leaving the home. The student/staff must not visit a high risk setting or anyone who is at risk of getting very sick (e.g., senior, immunocompromised).
  - As long as the student/staff does not develop symptoms, household members are not required to stay home.
  - The student/staff must self-isolate right away if symptoms develop.
- If the student is under 11 years of age or younger AND either partially vaccinated or unvaccinated:
  - The student must stay home and self-isolate for 5 days from their last exposure.
- If the student/staff is 12 years of age and older and either partially vaccinated or unvaccinated, OR immune compromised:
  - The student/staff must stay home and self-isolate for 10 days from their last exposure.

### **Student has been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 and has one or more symptoms**

- Follow guidance under the section, “*Student/staff has 1 or more symptoms from A) and/or 2 or more symptoms from B) in the last [5 or 10] days*”.

### **Household member has symptoms of COVID-19**

- The student/staff and the rest of the household must self-isolate for the duration of the household member who has COVID-19 symptoms isolation period, whether they are fully vaccinated or not.
- **If the household member is 12 years of age and older AND fully vaccinated, OR 11 years or younger, regardless of vaccination status:**
  - The student/staff must self-isolate for at least 5 days from the day the household member’s symptoms started AND until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting/diarrhea), whichever is longer in duration.
  - Use test date if no symptoms
- **If the household member is 12 years of age or older AND not fully vaccinated, OR immunocompromised**
  - The student/staff must self-isolate for 10 days from the day the household member’s symptoms started AND until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if nausea/vomiting/diarrhea) and they do not have a fever, whichever is longer in duration.
  - Use test date if no symptoms.

### **Student/staff has travelled outside of Canada**

- The student/staff must follow [federal requirements for travellers](#), for quarantine and testing after returning from international travel.

### **Back to School Confirmation Form**

- Toronto Public Health does not recommend or require medical notes for return to school.
- It is the decision of each school or school board to decide if they choose to accept a [Back to School Confirmation Form](#).

**References**

- Ministry of Health (2022) [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge](#)
- Ministry of Health (2022) [COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care: Omicron Surge](#)
- Government of Ontario (2022) [COVID-19 School and child care screening](#)