

September 9, 2020

Dear School Principal,

Re: School Health Response and Services During COVID-19

Ensuring the health and safety of students and staff is our shared priority. As Toronto schools prepare to reopen this September, I would like to provide you with some important updates about Toronto Public Health (TPH) school health supports and services.

COVID-19 School Liaison Team

Toronto Public Health's new COVID-19 School Liaison Team will provide dedicated support to schools and school boards to help implement public health and prevention measures during the school year, including:

- assessing and consulting with schools as it relates to COVID-19 prevention measures;
- providing resources and supports to school staff, parents/caregivers on COVID-19 prevention, and mental health & well-being promotion;
- assisting school communities in navigating TPH COVID-19 supports and services such as reporting any COVID-19 cases; and
- supporting the school community in the event of an outbreak.

COVID-19 School Case and Contact and Outbreak Team

In the event that someone in the school community (student or staff) contracts COVID-19, TPH Communicable Disease Investigators will conduct an investigation and provide recommendations in accordance with public health guidance.

Toronto Public Health Resources

Toronto Public Health has developed a range of resources to support school reopening, including:

- [Guidance for Re-Opening Schools JK to Grade 12](#)
- [Schools JK to Grade 12 COVID-19 Prevention Checklist](#)
- [COVID-19 JK to Grade 12 School Resources](#)
- [Toronto Public Health COVID-19 Contact List for Schools 2020/2021](#)

School communities are also encouraged to download Health Canada's [COVID Alert app](#) so they can be notified directly if they have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19.

Request for School Information

In the first weeks of school openings, TPH will be collecting some information about your school community. Collecting this information proactively will assist TPH in responding to any COVID-19 cases or outbreaks. A TPH COVID-19 School Liaison Public Health Nurse will collect this information by telephone, or a survey will be sent to you to complete and submit.

Toronto Public Health School Services

General services that TPH has traditionally provided to school communities are suspended at this time as we focus our efforts on the local COVID-19 response. We will update you with any further changes. Information on the status of some school services is provided below:

- **Student Nutrition Programs**

Toronto Public Health is working with Student Nutrition Ontario-Toronto partners to support student nutrition programs. Our dietitians and inspectors are also available to support the safe opening and operation of student nutrition programs. Please send any student nutrition questions to:

- Food safety and/or COVID-19: dinesafe@toronto.ca
- Nutrition and menu planning: snp@toronto.ca

- **Vaccinations for Students**

Vaccinations for Hepatitis B, HPV and Menactra in Grade 7/8 schools are suspended for the fall of 2020. Students will be able to get vaccinated at TPH community clinics later in the fall, by appointment. We will notify you when these clinics open.

Reviews of immunization records for all students are also cancelled for the remainder of the year. Routine vaccinations are an essential health service, and are available from a student's health care provider. Vaccines provide individuals with protection from non-COVID-19 diseases. Students visiting their health care providers for scheduled or urgent visits should not delay vaccinations at this time.

- **Dental Services**

Dental screening services in schools are temporarily suspended, but are still available at TPH dental clinics, by appointment. Please call 416-338-6565 for more information.

- **Tobacco Enforcement**

All Tobacco, Vapor & Cannabis Enforcement programs are suspended at this time. For information on ensuring your school is compliant with the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*, please refer to the [Smoke-Free Ontario Act Fact Sheets](#).

As the COVID-19 pandemic is a rapidly evolving situation, we understand that this is a challenging time for schools, staff, students and parents. There are many resources available on the TPH website that may be of interest, including information about [mental health resources](#) to address the social and emotional needs of all members of the school community. Resources are also available online for [parents and caregivers](#).

Important Contact Information**To report COVID-19 cases:**

Schools must immediately report laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 among staff or students to TPH at: CovidSchools@toronto.ca (8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Friday; and 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Saturday, Sunday and Statutory Holidays), or call 3-1-1 after hours.

Please include the following information in your e-mail:

- Name of school, address
- Name of school contact and phone number and email
- Name of ill staff/student
- Contact information for staff/student (parent name if student is under age 14), (phone number, address, and, if possible, date of birth)
- Onset date of symptoms
- Last day at school
- Lab confirmed Y/N
- Who reported the case to the school
- Any other ill staff or student reports.

General COVID-19 information:

For general COVID-19 inquiries, please call the TPH Hotline at 416-338-7600. Also, visit www.toronto.ca/COVID19 to learn more about the current health situation, affected City services, and economic supports. For school-related information, visit [COVID-19 Guidance: Educational Institutions & Instructional Services](#).

We very much value our partnerships with you, and look forward to continuing to work together to keep your school community safe during this challenging time.

Sincerely,



Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health