

**Health
Services**

Office of the
Medical Officer
of Health

PO Box 667
RPO Streetsville
Mississauga, ON
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tel: 905-799-7700

peelregion.ca

March 15, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Recently, Peel Public Health has confirmed that COVID-19 cases of variants of concern have been identified in schools in Peel region. This is not surprising as there is community spread of variants of concern, and we know these new strains of COVID-19 are more contagious and spread faster.

While the variants of concern are worrisome, it is important to remember that these variants are not a new disease. The actions we already take every day to physically distance, mask, stay home and get tested if symptomatic or exposed, will help stop the disease. We need to continue taking these actions to break chains of transmission and save lives.

Please continue to:

1. **Screen your children every day for these new or worsening symptoms:**

- Fever and/or chills (≥ 37.8 degrees Celsius/100 degrees Fahrenheit)
- Cough or barking cough (croup)
- Shortness of breath
- Decreased or loss of taste/smell
- Sore throat or difficulty swallowing
- Runny nose or stuffy/congested nose
- Unusual or long-lasting headache
- Nausea, vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Unusual or extreme tiredness or muscle aches

Please refer to our updated screening tool attached and available in ten other [languages](#).

2. **Take your child to a [community-based testing site or assessment centre](#) to get tested for COVID- 19 if they have any new or worsening symptoms.** Without a COVID-19 test, your child must isolate for 10 days after their symptom(s) started or be diagnosed with another condition by your health care provider.

Community-based testing site information, including location and hours of operation, are found on the Region of Peel COVID-19 Testing Information:

<https://www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/testing/#locations>

All community-based testing sites will accept school students and staff for same day, walk-in testing.

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Enhanced Safety Measures in Response to Variants of Concern

In response to the variants of concern in schools, the following more stringent infection prevention control measures have been implemented in Peel schools. These include:

- Reducing capacity limits on school buses
- Masking for students in K-12 in schools (including hallways and during classes), on student transportation and outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Daily self-screening with verification for secondary students, all staff and all essential visitors
- Enhanced international travel screening criteria
- Having siblings stay at home when another child in their home is exposed to a person with COVID-19 at school
- Offering on-site testing options to schools with cases of variants of concern, those with multiple cases or schools in outbreak
- Completion of the attached Student Return to School Form when a child is off school due to illness or returning from a class dismissal

Given the increasing proportion of variant of concern cases in Peel Region, Peel Public Health will no longer be notifying classes if any dismissal is due to an individual that tested positive for a variant of concern.

Peel Public Health has recently updated information for parents and caregivers, available on our website at: www.peelregion.ca/coronavirus/schools. If you have COVID-19 questions, call Peel Public Health at 905-799-7700 (Caledon 905-584-2216), weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Thank you for your efforts to keep all children and staff safe, and schools and childcare open for learning.

Sincerely,



Lawrence C. Loh, MD, MPH, FCFP, FRCPC, FACPM
Medical Officer of Health