

**From:** Ministry of Education (EDU) <[MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca](mailto:MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca)>  
**Sent:** January 20, 2021 8:48 PM  
**To:** Ministry of Education (EDU) <[MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca](mailto:MinistryofEducation@ontario.ca)>  
**Subject:** Ministry of Education Updates | Mises à jour du ministère de l'Éducation

**Memorandum to:** Chairs of District School Boards  
Directors of Education  
School Authorities

**From:** Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education  
  
Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister of Education

**Subject:** Ministry of Education Updates

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Thank you for your continued support for students, families and staff.

Based on the most recent data and advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, elementary and secondary schools in the following Public Health Units will be permitted to resume in-person instruction on January 25, 2021:

- Grey Bruce Health Unit
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Health Unit
- Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit
- Peterborough Public Health
- Renfrew County and District Health Unit

Northern PHUs that were permitted to open on January 11, 2021 will continue in-person learning unless otherwise directed by local PHUs.

Schools located in all other PHUs will continue to learn remotely at this time. The Ministry of Education will continue to seek advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health on which PHU regions may reopen schools for in-person learning.

Boards are required to align with the direction provided for the PHU in which their schools are located. School boards should continue to follow direction provided by their local PHU.

In areas where in-person learning is not yet permitted, school board and school-based staff who can work from home will continue to be asked to do so. Schools will continue

to be open so that in-person instruction of students with special education needs who cannot be accommodated through remote learning continues throughout this period and to support staff who are unable to work from home.

## **Child Care**

Child care centres and home-based licensed and unlicensed child care for non-school aged children remain open during this time. In areas where in-person instruction for elementary students is suspended by the Province, emergency child care will continue for school-aged children.

Before and after school programs will reopen in alignment with the return to in-person learning in their PHUs.

We continue to ask school boards to make their school facilities available for the continuous delivery of child care, including emergency child care.

Child care centres and home-based licensed and unlicensed child care are required to align with the direction provided for the PHU in which they are located and enhanced health and safety guidelines.

## **Additional Health and Safety Measures**

On January 12, 2021, we announced the provision of additional health and safety measures to support the return to in-person learning, including:

- Mandatory masking for students in Grades 1-3 and outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained
- Enhanced screening protocols
- Discouraging students from congregating before and after school

Boards are encouraged to communicate to parents and guardians that new masking requirements for students in Grades 1-3 and for specified outdoor activities will take effect on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Effective January 25<sup>th</sup> for all elementary and secondary staff, and effective February 10<sup>th</sup> for all secondary students, all school boards are responsible for implementing confirmation of self-screening for staff and secondary students prior to or upon arrival to school.

Revised guidance is summarized in the attached document. An updated [Guide to Reopening Ontario's Schools](#) and [Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools](#) reflecting these additional health and safety measures will be available soon for use.

We also announced the expansion of targeted testing for students and staff. Testing will be voluntary and will include child care settings. We will work with school boards and local PHUs to identify schools and child care settings.

Thank you for the ongoing partnership as we have worked to keep schools safe and contributed to stopping the provincewide spread of COVID-19 during this time.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce  
Minister

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister