



September 3, 2020

Message to post-secondary administrators

RE: Statement from the Medical Officer of Health on the return to campus and the 2020- 2021 academic year

Over the last several months, Public Health Sudbury & Districts has worked with local and provincial partners and community residents to keep the spread of COVID-19 to a minimum in Greater Sudbury, and the districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin. Now, with the 2020-2021 academic year set to begin, many students are altering their living arrangements, travel plans, or learning environments while academic programs and campus services must change the way they operate to support a safe and successful return to school.

We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic raises many questions and brings new challenges and we all want our communities to be safe and healthy. Whether a returning student, staff, or faculty member, cooperation and adherence to public health guidelines influences whether or not we can keep our local businesses and services open and prevent our health care system from becoming overwhelmed.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts therefore urges all post-secondary students, staff, and faculty to recommit to COVID-19 prevention this academic year. We recommend that all post-secondary institutions remind those returning to campus (and distanced learning) of the following information and precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to support personal health and safety.

[Face covering \(mask\) requirements](#)

In July 2020, Public Health Sudbury & Districts issued an order under the [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#), where all businesses and organizations in the Public Health Sudbury & Districts service area must have policies in place to ensure that no person is permitted to enter or remain in an enclosed public space of a business or organization unless they are wearing a [face covering](#). This includes public transit. As you may be seeing an influx of people on campus, it may be a good time to provide or promote your policy.

Sudbury

1300 rue Paris Street
Sudbury ON P3E 3A3
t: 705.522.9200
f: 705.522.5182

Elm Place

10 rue Elm Street
Unit / Unité 130
Sudbury ON P3C 5N3
t: 705.522.9200
f: 705.677.9611

Sudbury East / Sudbury-Est

1 rue King Street
Box / Boîte 58
St.-Charles ON POM 2W0
t: 705.222.9201
f: 705.867.0474

Espanola

800 rue Centre Street
Unit / Unité 100 C
Espanola ON P5E 1J3
t: 705.222.9202
f: 705.869.5583

Île Manitoulin Island

6163 Highway / Route 542
Box / Boîte 87
Mindemoya ON POP 1S0
t: 705.370.9200
f: 705.377.5580

Chapleau

101 rue Pine Street E
Box / Boîte 485
Chapleau ON POM 1K0
t: 705.860.9200
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toll-free / sans frais

1.866.522.9200

phsd.ca



Under the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#) all measures made under the [Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act](#) remain in place to address the threat of COVID-19.

This means that while in Sudbury and districts, all students are expected to wear a face covering in all enclosed public spaces and when physical distancing cannot be maintained (unless an exemption applies). Individuals are not required to show proof of their exemption.

A person is exempt from wearing a face covering on the premises if:

- they are under the age of five years, either chronologically or developmentally, and refuse to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver
- they have medical conditions and cannot safely wear a face covering, for example, due to breathing difficulties, cognitive difficulties, hearing or communication difficulties
- they cannot wear or remove a face covering without assistance, including people who are accommodated under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* or are protected under the *Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c.H. 19* as amended
- they have any religious or cultural reason for not wearing a face covering, or for not covering the face in a manner that would cover the nose and mouth

Gatherings, physical distancing, and social circles

Public Health Sudbury & Districts recommends that all community members practise [physical distancing](#) by staying 2 metres (6 feet) apart to slow the spread of COVID-19. Unless people are from the same household or social circle, they should practice physical distancing and wear a face covering if distancing is not possible. Face coverings must be worn in all indoor public spaces and should be worn in other indoor or outdoor spaces where distancing is not possible.

Large [public gatherings](#) without physical distancing are not permitted. Although socially-distanced gatherings are permissible for up to 50 people indoors and 100 outdoors, non-essential in-person gatherings of any size should be limited. Limiting our in-person interactions with people outside of our social circle is critical in reducing transmission of COVID-19.

Per provincial guidelines, residents can establish a [social circle](#), or bubble, of no more than 10 people who can interact with one another without physical distancing. Close contact is permitted within social circles and among members from the same household. A social circle can only include up to 10 people and must always be with the same people.

Complaints pertaining to public health [orders and enforcement](#) and the [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020 S.O. 2020, c. 17](#) are investigated by:

- The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP)
- Greater Sudbury Police Service
- Greater Sudbury Bylaw Enforcement
- Public Health Sudbury & Districts

International students and quarantine requirements

International students can enter Canada for non-discretionary (not involving recreation, tourism or entertainment) and non-optional (for example, program requires in-person participation) purposes if they meet and follow specific criteria set out by the Government of Canada.

To limit the spread of COVID-19, the Public Health Agency of Canada requires that all travellers, including students, who have travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days must self-isolate for 14 days from their arrival regardless of symptoms. This means no contact with others. Students in this situation should seek services over the phone or internet or ask for help from friends, family, or neighbours with essential errands such as grocery shopping.

Additionally, the Government of Ontario is requiring that institutions ensure that both international and domestic students who are in quarantine as a result of having entered Canada within two weeks prior to the start of their studies be tested for the COVID-19 virus at least once during their quarantine period. This requirement is over and above the normal protocols for individuals who show symptoms. It is recommended that this testing take place within five to seven days after the arrival period. A student must also be tested if they become symptomatic during their quarantine period – even if they have already been tested.

To assist with screening processes, Public Health Sudbury & Districts also suggests that residences and campuses develop a 14-day health log to ensure proper monitoring of signs and symptoms. Students can complete the log online or on paper and present it to the school once they arrive from out of town or complete their self-isolation period.

Students arriving from within Canada

All students who are arriving to Sudbury and districts should be aware that COVID-19 is circulating at different levels around the province and country.

Recognizing that not all students are able to stay in the area of their home community or region, Public Health Sudbury & Districts recommends that students arriving to campus follow public health guidance during their travels:

- Always practise the usual personal protective measures such as physical distancing, wearing a face covering (mask) when that isn't possible, and frequent hand hygiene.

- Don't travel if you, or someone you are traveling with, have any symptoms or feel sick.
- Monitor yourself for [symptoms](#) when you travel and when you return. If you get symptoms, even if mild, isolate where you are and seek assessment and testing.
- Visit websites of provincial governments, the local public health unit and other authorities for the latest information as there may be variation between provinces and communities.

Upon arrival, it is a good idea for all students to limit contact with those outside their social circle, practise physical distancing, monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, and wear a face covering (mask) in enclosed public spaces or when physical distancing cannot be maintained. During the first 14 days in Sudbury and districts, students are strongly encouraged to:

- limit contact with anyone outside their household or social circle
- stay home unless for essential reasons and wear a face covering (mask) when it is essential to go out
- avoid public areas including public transportation, when possible
- complete campus or residence health logs as requested to show proper monitoring of signs and symptoms of COVID-19

Any students who have symptoms of COVID-19 should get tested and receive confirmation of a negative test prior to travelling to Sudbury and districts. You cannot travel if you are a known contact of a person with COVID -19 until you receive confirmation that you are allowed to do so by your local public health agency. Students from an area with active transmission or community outbreaks are encouraged to get tested for COVID-19 prior to travel to Sudbury and districts. Students testing positive for COVID-19 must delay travel to Sudbury and districts and follow local public health guidance. Arrangements should be made with their post-secondary institution if attendance is not possible at the start of their program.

[Travel during the academic year](#)

Students are reminded that while COVID-19 is still circulating around the province and country, the safest option is to stay local or within the region. Campuses should encourage students, staff, and faculty to reduce risk and potential spread of COVID-19 by:

- minimizing travel back and forth to home town or region
- practising physical distancing and keeping close contacts to a minimum
- self-isolating to the greatest extent possible when returning from domestic travel

[COVID-19 testing and assessment centres](#)

Public Health Sudbury & Districts recommends that any students or faculty returning to campus get tested if they have a [symptom](#) of COVID-19. People who are asymptomatic,

who are concerned that they have been exposed to COVID-19, or who are at risk of exposure to COVID-19 through their activities are also encouraged to contact an [assessment centre](#) and get [tested](#).

Assessment centres are located throughout Sudbury and districts and are available to students, staff, and faculty who require further assessment and possibly testing. Appointments are required. Walk-ins will not be seen. Drive-through or mobile testing options may be provided.

Check with your nearest [assessment centre](#) for hours of operation, appointment bookings, and specific instructions.

[Keeping informed and staying connected](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our lives in many ways, and it is important to stay informed and connected. Public Health Sudbury & Districts recommends that all students, staff, and faculty be mindful of their own mental health and the mental health of others during these uncertain times.

We encourage everyone to stay informed about COVID-19 by seeking [resources](#) and practical information from reputable and trusted sources like Public Health Sudbury & Districts, government organizations, and the World Health Organization.

It is also important to stay connected while physical distancing and while self-isolating. Encourage students, staff, and faculty to maintain social networks and to find new and innovative ways to stay connected to family and friends. Students may also consider [creating a safe social circle](#) in their new community.

[Actions matter—reduce risk](#)

On and off campus, individual actions matter to keep yourself and others COVID-safe. It is important to think ahead and understand risks for COVID-19 as risk levels may vary based on activity.

Currently, youth and young adults are the most at-risk group for becoming infected with COVID-19. This is because many young people continue to attend social gatherings and then unknowingly transmit the virus to people in the community, including older adults and those who are immunocompromised.

To protect our communities, the safest options are to avoid non-essential travel and to limit the number of outings, when possible. Remember, the lower the risk of the virus in our communities, the lower the risk on campus. We all have a responsibility to do the best we can to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Should you like assistance in sharing this communication with returning students, please let us know and we would be pleased to work with you in writing a letter addressing this group directly.

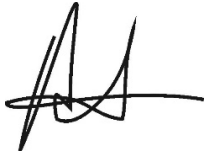
RE: Return to campus and the 2020- 2021 academic year

September 3, 2020

Page 6

Thank you in advance for your help in promoting COVID-safe behaviours among students, staff, and faculty and reducing the spread of COVID-19 on campus and in our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PS', written over a horizontal line.

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

For more information or if you have questions or concerns, please visit our website <http://www.phsd.ca/COVID-19>, keep connected with our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages, or call Public Health Sudbury & Districts at 705.522.9200 (toll-free 1.866.522.9200).