

What happens when: A positive COVID-19 case is identified in a school community



Notification of positive result

Public Health is notified of a positive COVID-19 result in a student, staff, or visitor.



Case follow-up

Public Health contacts the individual who tested positive (or their parent/guardian) to:

- ensure self-isolation
- assess symptoms and exposures
- identify close contacts



Communication to school principal or designate

Public Health notifies the school principal or designate of the positive COVID-19 test result.



Sharing of contact information

Within 24 hours, the school principal or designate provides Public Health with lists of individuals who may have been in contact with the individual who tested positive (e.g., in the classroom, before and after care, and on school busses).



Contact follow-up

Public Health follows up with contacts to provide them with further instruction, based on public health risk assessments. This may include testing, self-isolation, and/or self-monitoring.



Communication to school community

The school principal or designate informs the school community that a member of the school community has tested positive for COVID-19, and communicates any school, class, or cohort closures.





Ongoing follow-up calls

Public Health follows up daily with the individual who tested positive.

The frequency of follow-up calls for contacts varies depending on individual circumstances.



Discharge and clearance

Public Health discharges the individual who tested positive and their contacts from self-isolation and clears them to return to school.

Clearance of cases and contacts is based on provincial guidance outlined in the [Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario](#) and [COVID-19 Quick Reference Public Health Guidance on Testing and Clearance](#) documents.

Declaring an outbreak

An outbreak may be declared by the local public health unit when ([Ontario Ministry of Education](#)):

- within a 14-day period, there are two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases in students, staff or other visitors with an epidemiological link (for example, if cases are in the same class or cohort)
- at least one case could have been infected in the school (including on a school bus or in before or after school care)

The determination of an outbreak is made at the direction of the Medical Officer of Health. If an outbreak is declared in a school:

- The principal or designate will implement any required outbreak measures.
- Public Health will monitor the situation closely and complete daily phone calls with the principal or designate.
- Public Health will declare the outbreak over according to the criteria in the [Operational guidance: COVID-19 management in schools](#) and [COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management](#) provincial guidance documents.