

September 2, 2022

Dear Principal:

**Re: Public Health back-to-school supports and resources**

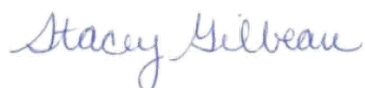
As we look ahead to a new school year, Public Health Sudbury & Districts would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing commitment to keeping your school safe and supporting the health and well-being of your staff, students, and families. Your school has shown remarkable resilience throughout the past two years as you have responded to pandemic disruptions.

As we return to a more “normal” school year—with students back in the classroom and with a full school experience that includes extracurricular activities, sports, and assemblies—school teachers and personnel are critical in supporting children's transition back to school this September, and Public Health Sudbury & Districts is here for you.

While the pandemic continues to demand our collective leadership and resources, we are committed to reinstating public health programs and services and contributing to post-pandemic strong and resilient school communities. In keeping with our [recovery priorities](#), we are excited to be able to offer school health promotion programming once again.

We want to ensure that schools in our service area have the public health supports and resources they need for a healthy and successful school year. We hope that you will find the following information and resources helpful.

Looking forward to our ongoing partnership and to working with you during this school year!



Stacey Gilbeau, Registered Nurse, BScN  
Director, Health Promotion Division

**Sudbury**

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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 P0M 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 P0P 1S0  
t: 705.370.9200  
f: 705.377.5580

**Chapleau**

34 rue Birch Street  
Box / Boîte 485  
Chapleau ON P0M 1K0  
t: 705.860.9200  
f: 705.864.0820

**toll-free / sans frais**

1.866.522.9200

[phsd.ca](http://phsd.ca)

## School Health Promotion Programming

Our School Health Promotion team consists of public health nurses, registered dietitians, and health promoters. We assist schools in meeting health and wellness needs by using a comprehensive school health approach. We provide [educators](#) with [tools and resources](#) on various health topics and support them with teaching the health and physical education curriculum in a fun and interactive way.

School teachers and personnel are critical in supporting our children's transition back to a more “normal” school year this September. Due to the impact of pandemic measures on mental health, students may need more support and patience during this transition period. The following resources can be used to help foster optimal student development and well-being, as well as enhance connections between staff, students, and families during the return to school.

- [Dear Student Poster](#)
- [Tell Me More - Get to Know Each Other Activity for Teachers](#)
- [Tell Me More - Get to Know Each Other Activity for Students](#)
- [Tell Me More - Get to Know Each Other Activity for School Staff](#)
- [Tell Me More - Get to Know Each Other Activity for Parents](#)
- [Creating Caring Connections and Supporting Well-Being During the Return to School](#) (School Mental Health Ontario)
- A letter for parents on [How to Support a Mentally Healthy Back to School for Your Child](#)
- [Mentally Healthy Back to School Support Package](#) (School Mental Health Ontario)

## Dental and Vision Health

Our dental team will resume the annual school oral health screening and preventive programming in all elementary schools starting September 2022. In addition, the vision screening program for senior kindergarten level students will commence in early 2023. All infection control protocols will be in place to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. These protocols are in line with infection control guidelines set out by Public Health Ontario and the College of Dental Hygienists of Ontario.

### **Support for Schools With Respect to Illnesses**

Daily self-screening must be completed by everyone prior to attending school, with the [school and childcare screening tool](#). It is important to follow the instructions within this screening tool. Anyone who is feeling sick or has symptoms of illness should stay home and seek assessment from their health care provider if needed.

The messaging is simple. “Stay home when sick.” Anyone who is feeling sick or has any new or worsening symptoms of illness should stay home. This means staying home until:

- Your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 for nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea), **and**
- You do not have a fever, **and**
- You do not develop any additional symptoms.

**Everyone is asked to take additional precautions following any illness, a positive COVID-19 test, or close contact exposure. Additional precautions include:**

- Wearing a well-fitted mask in all public settings for 10 days from when symptoms started, positive test date, or date of exposure, including in schools and childcare centres unless under the age of two.
- Avoid non-essential activities where mask removal is necessary (for example, playing a wind instrument in music class or removing a mask for sports). Removing one’s mask to eat lunch in the school cafeteria would be considered an essential activity. Physical distancing is highly recommended in this situation.
- Avoid non-essential visits with vulnerable individuals or to highest-risk settings (e.g. hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes and other congregate living settings) for 10 days from when symptoms started, positive test date, or date of exposure.

Public Health Sudbury & Districts encourages all staff, students, and families to continue practising [COVID-19 safe tips](#) to help reduce and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Public Health is recommending that all eligible individuals receive their COVID-19 vaccination and remain up to date on all routine vaccinations including COVID-19 booster doses. Individuals can book their appointment online at [How to book a COVID-19 vaccine appointment \(ontario.ca\)](#). Public Health’s local [COVID-19 Risk Index](#), which is updated weekly, is intended to help you make an informed decision to protect yourself and family from getting and spreading COVID-19.

### **Masking in Schools and Licensed Childcare Settings**

Wearing a well-fitted mask is an important way to protect yourself and others. Individuals should continue to wear a well-fitted mask:

- If it feels right for them,
- If they are at high risk for severe illness,
- If they are recovering from COVID-19 or other illness,
- If they have recently had symptoms of the virus, or
- If they are a close contact of someone with COVID-19.

Follow the masking recommendations described above.

Starting Fall 2022, students, staff, and visitors in childcare centres, schools, school board offices or on student transportation are not mandated by the province to wear a mask as they had been previously.

Public Health continues to encourage childcare centres, school boards, and schools to recommend masking for all staff, students, visitors and attendees as an added layer of protection when indoors. Thank you for continuing to promote respectful and inclusive environments for individuals who choose to wear, or not to wear, a mask within their childcare or school setting. Our ongoing kindness to one another and acknowledgement that everyone has different comfort levels when it comes to pandemic precautions make the world of difference!

### **COVID-19, Communicable Disease, and Absenteeism Reporting**

To help prevent and stop the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases in childcare and school settings, the Ministry of Education requires childcare centres and schools to monitor their own absenteeism rates and report student and staff absences to Public Health Sudbury & Districts. Childcare centres and schools are to report an absenteeism rate that is above what the childcare or school would typically experience, and absences that the administrator does not think are linked to other factors (e.g., holidays).

As required by section 28 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA)*, school principals are required to report to the medical officer of health if they are of the opinion that a pupil has or may have a communicable disease.

Public Health's School Focused Nurses (SFNs) will be available to provide guidance to schools and childcare centres.

For school health promotion programming, school and COVID-19, or communicable disease related inquiries and support, the following dedicated telephone lines are available to you and your families for information and support:

- School and childcare administrators and staff can call 705.522.9200, ext. 393 (toll-free at 1.866.522.9200) and parents can call 705.522.9200, ext. 748 (toll free at 1.866.522.9200).
- For school health promotion requests, you can email [earlyyears.schoolhealth@phsd.ca](mailto:earlyyears.schoolhealth@phsd.ca) or complete the [school health request form](#).
- For school and COVID-19 inquiries, you can email: [school\\_covid\\_team@phsd.ca](mailto:school_covid_team@phsd.ca)