

January 17, 2025

Dear Parents and Guardians,

**RE: Reducing the Spread of Respiratory Infections in Schools**

We are in the middle of respiratory season, when colds, flu and other respiratory illnesses spread easily. These respiratory illnesses are expected to continue through March or April. To help protect your school community, York Region Public Health reminds staff, students, and visitors to:

- Stay current and up to date with the [COVID-19](#) and [flu vaccine](#). Vaccines are the best way to protect against serious infection
- Check for [symptoms of respiratory infections](#) every morning before going to school
- Stay home when sick, even if symptoms are mild
  - If you must leave the home while sick, wear a tight-fitting, well-constructed mask when entering indoor spaces to protect others
  - Even when well, wearing a mask when indoors can help protect yourself, especially if you or people you live with are at higher risk
- [Wash your hands often](#)
- [Cough and sneeze](#) into your sleeve or a tissue, not in your hand
- Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces regularly

**What to do when you or your child(ren) are sick**

If anyone in your household has symptoms of a respiratory illness, [stay home](#). This means:

- Stay home until you have no fever, and your symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (48 hours for vomiting/diarrhea)
- It is recommended by Ontario's Ministry of Health to wear a well-fitted, high-quality mask in public (including in school and child care) for 10 days after symptoms start
- Avoid visiting those at higher risk of severe illness, including people living in long-term care, retirement homes or hospitals
- Speak to your healthcare provider or call [8-1-1](#) if you have questions about you or your family's health or if you are unsure where to access care

Additional Information:

- York Region Public Health [Layer Up to Stay Protected From Illness | York Region \(york.ca/VirusSeason\)](https://york.ca/VirusSeason)
- Ontario College of Family Physicians [Family Doctor Tips on Caring for Children with Respiratory Symptoms \(https://ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/OCFP\\_Public\\_ActionsParentsCanTake\\_2024-10-23-2024\\_FINAL.pdf\)](https://ontariofamilyphysicians.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/OCFP_Public_ActionsParentsCanTake_2024-10-23-2024_FINAL.pdf)
- Public Health Ontario [How to Protect Yourself and Others from Respiratory Viruses \(www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/R/2023/respiratory-viruses-protect-yourself.pdf\)](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/R/2023/respiratory-viruses-protect-yourself.pdf)

Sincerely,

Dr. Cheryl Young  
Associate Medical Officer of Health  
Infectious Diseases Control Division