



Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board
Believing, Achieving, Serving

February 22, 2021

Dear Parents & Guardians,

The Ministry of Education has just released new guidance on screening for schools and child care, and new isolation requirements for household contacts. The changes are part of the provincial government's enhanced health and safety protocols to keep students and staff safe as schools remain open for in-person learning. The school and child care screener comes into effect today and provides clear direction for symptomatic students as well as siblings and family members of symptomatic students regarding isolation requirements and the return to school.

Provincial school and child care screener

Parents/guardians are expected to screen their child(ren) each day before leaving for school.

An updated [provincial school and child care screener](#) was launched today using a single symptom screening criteria. Students with any **single** new COVID-19 symptom will now be required to isolate until they either test negative for COVID-19, receive an alternate diagnosis for the symptom, or have isolated for 10 days since symptom onset. This is a change from the previous guidance where students with a minor symptom were allowed to return after 24 hours.

Secondary students are reminded that they are required to provide daily validation of their self-screening prior to or upon their arrival at school. Individuals who do not pass the onsite screening procedure will be asked to return home and self-isolate until they meet the criteria for return.

Isolation requirement for household contacts of symptomatic individuals

As of February 12, the Ministry of Health has issued guidance to public health units regarding COVID-19 variants of concern that require all household contacts of symptomatic individuals to quarantine. Household members of a person with new COVID-19 symptoms are now required to isolate as well, pending the COVID-19 test result. This includes siblings of symptomatic students or children of symptomatic parents/guardians. Household members of international travellers who aren't exempt from quarantine requirements are also now required to isolate for 14-days.

For households with more than one child, the new guidance means that all children in a household will be asked to stay home if a single child fails the screen and all siblings will be sent home if one child becomes ill while at school.

If the symptomatic individual tests positive or is not tested and does not receive an alternative diagnosis from a health care professional, the symptomatic individual must isolate (including isolating from household members) for 10 days and all household contacts for 14 days from symptom onset.

These updates are included in the [provincial school and child care screener](#).

Lent: A Time for Renewing Faith, Hope and Love

In his message for Lent, Pope Francis calls this special point in our faith journey a time for renewing faith, hope and love. “In these times of trouble, when everything seems fragile and uncertain, it may appear challenging to speak of hope,” he writes. “Yet Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God who patiently continues to care for his creation which we have often mistreated.”

As we continue to navigate these uncertain times, we pray that the true hope of our loving God continues to fill your hearts and homes.



Patrick J. Daly
Chairperson of the Board



David Hansen
Director of Education