



January 8, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians:

School resumes in person on Monday, and at this time the benefits of keeping schools open in our region continues to outweigh the risks. In addition to providing an education, school also benefits children's social and emotional growth and overall health and wellbeing. In-person or virtual learning remains a personal choice for each family and your choice may depend on factors such as whether members of your household or social bubble are high risk and your ability to care for children at home. As parents and caregivers, you are the best person to make this choice.

So far, school cases of COVID-19 in our area have resulted in minimal or no transmission to other staff and students. However, we have seen an increase in cases in our region and we are asking that parents of students returning to in-person learning do their part to keep schools safe and open. It is important that children follow all prevention measures at school, and do not go to school if they are sick.

Testing is important for identifying cases and preventing spread of COVID-19. If anyone in your household had symptoms that would have failed the [school screening tool](#) (for students) or the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) (for adult household members) over the holidays, even if those symptoms are gone now, it could have been COVID-19. If the person with symptoms was not tested for COVID-19, other members of the household may unknowingly be infected with COVID-19 and can spread to others before symptoms appear.

Parents/Guardians are reminded to:

- Screen students daily before going to school using the [school screening tool](#) found on the Province of Ontario's website.
- Not send your child to school for 10 days if they have any COVID-19 like symptom, fail the school screening tool and have not been tested or are waiting for test results.
- Talk with your child about the importance of wearing their mask, washing their hands often and physically distancing at school.
- Get tested early if you or a household member is sick. Anyone with a symptom (even if mild) should take the [school screening tool](#) (for students) or the [COVID-19 self-assessment](#) (for adult household members) and immediately follow instructions on self-isolation and testing.
- Self-isolate for 14 days if you have travelled outside of Ontario, which is required under the provincial lockdown which remains in place in our area until January 25th.

Anyone with questions about how to get tested is asked to call their local assessment centre. For other COVID-19 information, call NWHU's COVID-19 hotline at 1-866-468-2240 or visit our website at www.nwhu.on.ca/covid19 .

School boards and NWHU will continue to work together as schools reopen for in-person learning. In addition to being extra vigilant with prevention measures, I strongly urge us all to be kind, patient, and respectful of one another as students and staff return to schools. Let's continue to practice personal preventive measures to keep our area's cases low and our communities healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Young Hoon", followed by a period.

Dr. Kit Young Hoon
Medical Officer of Health
Northwestern Health Unit