



Document: Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation (SBAR)  
Topic: School testing, tracing, and isolation  
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To: Federal Deputy Minister of Health, local and provincial Medical Health Officers, Urban Public Health Network, Variant of Concern Expert Panel, school divisions, colleges, and universities

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## Recommendations

### Federal Recommendations

- The Public Health Agency of Canada should outline clearly defined standardized national protocols for contact tracing and isolation in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary school settings.

### Provincial and Territorial Recommendations

- For schools in at-risk communities as identified by public health authorities:
  - Monitor and evaluate rapid antigen testing programs for SARS-CoV-2 where such programs exist, to determine the benefit of these programs in reducing the risk of transmission or unintended consequences (i.e., privacy concerns, resource utilization, uptake/compliance).
  - Require RT-PCR testing for all symptomatic staff and students, and close contacts.
  - Require self-isolation of unvaccinated close contacts for 10 days and self-monitor for 14 days (even if they are asymptomatic).
  - Require self-isolation of individuals with COVID-19 symptoms until they receive a negative test, or for 10 days if they choose not to be tested (or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer).
- Provide standardized instructions for schools to send to parents/guardians of positive cases and contacts. Provide staff with clear standards on adequate documentation for contact tracing.
- Provide staff with clear instructions for self-isolation and return to work following testing positive and/or identified as a close contact.

### Local/Regional Recommendations

- Provide clear standards for identifying at-risk communities and school divisions to implement risk-based testing, tracing, and isolation measures.
- Reduce barriers to RT-PCR testing for school staff and students where possible (e.g., ensure accessibility in rural areas).



## Situation

This SBAR explores public health best practices for testing, tracing, and isolation of students and teachers in elementary/secondary/post-secondary school settings for the remainder of the 2021-2022 academic year. Provinces and territories across Canada are taking different approaches to testing, contact tracing, and isolation requirements among students and teachers. This SBAR will aim to summarize and explore what provincial/territorial (PT) jurisdictions are recommending and practicing and make recommendations on evidence-informed best practices.

## Background

### Canadian Response

- Canada has been experiencing a 4<sup>th</sup> wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, largely driven by the Delta variant (98.9% of cases as of September 18, 2021) (1). The highest percentage (20.4%) of cases in Canada is currently represented by those 19 years or younger, with those aged 20-29 representing the second highest percentage (19.3%) of those infected (1).
- The majority of children and youth who become infected with SARS-CoV-2 either experience mild symptoms (cough, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, fever, or gastrointestinal symptoms), or are asymptomatic (2), although more research is needed to assess the impact of emergent variants, such as Delta, on children and youth.
- In-person learning is deemed essential for the overall well-being of children and youth. The Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table advises that, provided the majority of infections in children and youth continue to be mild or asymptomatic and, assuming that the impact of COVID-19 on the community is manageable (i.e., no variant with vaccine escape leading to a significant increase in severe disease or hospitalizations), an in-person school model can be maintained with appropriate health and safety measures in place (3).
- SARS-CoV-2 testing, tracing, and isolation are health and safety measures regarded as fundamental to reducing the risk of transmission of infectious disease in schools during a pandemic scenario (3). The recommendations regarding SARS-CoV-2 testing, tracing, and isolation vary by province and territory (PT) (see Appendix A). Whether these recommendations are mandated also varies by PT (see Appendix A).

### *Testing*

- Canada's COVID-19 Testing and Screening Expert Advisory Panel recommends focusing on five priority areas for action in elementary and secondary schools (4):
  - Ensure testing and screening strategies in schools take equity into account
  - Make diagnostic tests for symptomatic students and staff a priority



- Let community prevalence guide screening test strategies and frequency
- Create innovative partnerships to address staff requirements for screening
- Continue research to evaluate and inform testing and screening strategies
- The standard test required to confirm COVID-19 infection is reverse transcription PCR (RT-PCR). Results can take at least 24 hours to produce a result (5).
- In contrast to RT-PCR, rapid point-of-care tests can give results in minutes to hours; however, rapid tests are not sensitive enough to be used for diagnosis or screening (see below). Rapid tests consist of two types:
  - Antigen tests, which identify proteins on the virus (5)
    - Correctly identified COVID-19 infection in an average of 72% of people with symptoms compared to 58% of people without symptoms. However, a recent study undergoing peer review showed that rapid antigen detection tests demonstrate sensitivity as low as 28.6% in asymptomatic participants in a school-based prospective observational cohort study (6)
    - Are most accurate when used in the first week after the development of symptoms
    - In people who did not have COVID-19, antigen tests correctly ruled out infection in 99.5% of people with symptoms and 98.9% of people without
  - Molecular tests that detect the virus's genetic material (5)
    - 95.1% of infections correctly diagnosed and 99% correctly ruled out
  - It should be noted that these results (5) are from studies published up to June 10, 2021 and may not be reflective of the current dominant Delta strain.
- According to the Cochrane Network, rapid tests may be most useful when (5)
  - Quick decisions are needed about patient care
  - RT-PCR testing is not available
  - There is a need to identify outbreaks
  - People with symptoms are selected for further testing with RT-PCR
  - Self-isolation or contact tracing is allowed
  - It allows the burden on laboratory services to be reduced
- Rapid test programs are available in schools in SK, ON, QC, and NS (See Appendix A).
  - Although rapid test programs are currently available in some PTs, evidence demonstrating the reduced risk of transmission in school settings resulting from rapid test programs is lacking

### *Contact Tracing*

- The Government of Canada has posted guidelines for evaluating COVID-19 disease transmission and public health measures in elementary and secondary schools (7). According to these guidelines, public health officials will determine which contacts should be investigated based on information from the school itself such as cohort lists, attendance records, classroom layout/floor plan diagrams, and extra-curricular



activities. The key components of a COVID-19 epidemiologic investigation in a school include (7):

- The case's presence at the school or school activities while communicable
- If the case was at the school during the incubation period
- The case's movements and activities during the communicable period to identify potential contacts
- Further recommendations from the Government of Canada regarding contact tracing include:
  - Where risk of exposure is difficult to ascertain, an entire school cohort could be considered close contacts of a case if the case was communicable while at school
  - Post-secondary institutions are unlikely to monitor class attendance or track absenteeism. Jurisdictions may wish to consider digital programs (e.g., web-based apps, or QR codes) to aid public health in contact tracing.

### *Isolation*

- The Government of Canada provides some recommendations for isolation in their guidance document on planning for the 2021-2022 school year in the context of COVID-19 vaccination (8). For instance, the document recommends keeping parents/guardians informed of school expectations and having ill students stay at home and sending in notifications of absences. Communication should include references to the regional/local Public Health Authority, use plain language, provide strategies for equitable access to supports, and be accommodating (e.g., for families whose first language are not English or French) (8). However, specific recommendations for isolation protocols in school settings are not provided.

### International Response

Note: for the sake of brevity, this section only examines the protocols in the United Kingdom and the United States—countries similar to Canada that are in the latter phase of their vaccine rollouts.

- Throughout the pandemic, countries have applied different strategies to combat COVID-19 transmission in schools (9). In countries like Canada, where vaccine coverage among the general public is high, schools have begun the 2021-2022 academic with fewer restrictions and mitigation strategies, and an emphasis on in-person learning (10). Despite this, testing, tracing, and isolation strategies remain a key component of a layered approach in preventing COVID-19 transmission in schools (10–12).

### *Testing*



- The National Health Service (NHS) in England has developed a free at-home rapid testing programs for staff and students 11 and older who cannot receive testing at school (13). It is recommended that those who choose to order kits perform self-tests twice a week, to increase the chance of identifying positive asymptomatic cases. Since the launch of the program in April 2021, 95 million tests have been ordered, resulting in the identification of 620,000 cases (14). As of October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, participation in the program is voluntary and proof of a negative test is not required among staff or students to enter school premises, regardless of vaccination status (15). PCR tests provided by the NHS are free (16).
- In the United States, some jurisdictions, like Massachusetts, are implementing the “test to stay” program as a strategy to prevent mass student quarantining; students that are identified as close contacts perform rapid tests for at least five consecutive days following exposure; as long as they continue to test negative and remain asymptomatic they remain in school (17). PCR tests provided by the U.S. Department of Health & Human Service partners are free (18).

### *Tracing*

- Each nation in the United Kingdom has its own contact tracing service (services include contact tracing in schools): NHS Test and Trace in England; Test and Protect in Scotland; Test, Trace, Protect in Wales; Contact tracing service in Northern Ireland (19). However, it is worth noting that contact tracing callers are contracted from the private sector and are not public health officials in Scotland and England (20–22).

### *Isolation*

- In England, individuals below the age of 18 years and 6 months—i.e., most students—do not have to self-isolate when identified as a close contact; instead, they are requested to take a PCR test when contacted by NHS Test and Trace (12).
- The CDC recommends that all unvaccinated students, staff and educators identified as a close contact should get tested and begin quarantining if unvaccinated, while fully vaccinated asymptomatic individuals should just get tested; however, individual states ultimately decide their own protocols (23). In Massachusetts, schools can decide whether they will follow traditional isolation measures for close contacts or the ‘test to stay’ protocol (17). In Florida, asymptomatic close contacts do not have to quarantine, regardless of vaccination status (24).

### **Assessment**

- An emphasis on in-person learning during the 4<sup>th</sup> wave of the COVID-19 pandemic requires taking a risk-based approach to COVID-19 in elementary and secondary schools with multiple layers of mitigation measures (8). Evidence suggests the risk of



SARS-CoV-2 transmission in schools largely reflects community risk, and thus school-based mitigation strategies should be adjusted according to PT community transmission (3).

- PT vary on their recommendations for school setting testing, tracing, and isolation. Given the large number of COVID-19 cases in Canada represented by children and youth, clear guidelines on school testing, tracing, and isolation are critical to preventing outbreaks. PT guidelines are most defined for elementary and secondary school settings, with specific recommendations often not presented for post-secondary schools.
- Laboratory-based RT-PCR tests are preferred to rapid tests and are required for diagnosis (3). However, rapid antigen tests may be useful tools for screening symptomatic individuals in high COVID-19 risk communities, as identified by local public health authorities and close contact tracing. Further evaluation of rapid testing programs is needed, however, including monitoring of the unintended consequences of rapid testing programs which may include privacy concerns, resource utilization, or compliance.
- Local public health authorities are largely responsible for contact tracing. Transparent and clear contact tracing protocols are often not provided in PT school guidelines. Self-isolation guidelines for schools are more clearly defined, but not for all PT.
- The decision-making process and whether PT testing, tracing, and isolation recommendations are mandated is not transparent, or easily accessible for all PT.

### Appendix A: Provincial and territorial recommendations for SARS-CoV-2 testing, tracing, and isolation.

Jurisdiction	Testing Recommendations	Tracing Recommendations	Isolation Recommendations	Is it mandated/decision making
British Columbia	<p><u>Elementary School</u> (25)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals with one or more of the core<sup>1</sup> COVID-19 symptoms require testing.</li> <li>- Individuals with two or more of the other possible symptoms<sup>2</sup> require testing.</li> <li>- Close contacts with one or more of the core or other COVID-</li> </ul>	<p><u>Elementary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If a positive case is confirmed in a school, public health notifies close contacts within and outside the school. (26)</li> </ul> <p><u>Secondary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Same as elementary.</li> </ul> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u></p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students and staff must stay home if sick, regardless of vaccination status. (26)</li> <li>- Each school has a dedicated isolation room. (26)</li> <li>- Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate for a full 10 days and self-monitor for 14 days.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Six rapid response teams deployed across the province review school communicable disease plans to ensure provincial standards are met. (28)</li> <li>- Local Medical Health Officers will provide</li> </ul>



	<p>19 symptoms<sup>1,2</sup> must get tested. - Close contacts without symptoms do not need to be tested.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Fully vaccinated close contacts identified in schools must self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms for 14 days. (27) - Close contacts who are not fully vaccinated may need to self-isolate for 10 days and must self-monitor for 14 days. (27) - Local public health officials determine who is a close contact and whether they must self-isolate. - Individuals with core or other COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate until they receive their test results. (27)</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>regional recommendations (e.g., all exposed contacts should get tested) for schools in areas of increased risk. (26)</p>
<p><b>Alber ta</b></p>	<p><u>Elementary School (29)</u> - Individuals with one of the possible COVID-19 symptoms<sup>2</sup> should only get tested if the symptoms do not improve. - Individuals with two or more of the</p>	<p><u>Elementary School (30)</u> - As of October 6<sup>th</sup>, contact tracing resumed in schools. Parents will once again be notified if their child is a close contact.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School (31)</u> - Students and staff must stay home if sick. - Each school has a dedicated isolation room. - Individuals who test positive must self-</p>	<p>- As of October 6<sup>th</sup>, the responsibility of contact tracing in schools has returned to Alberta Health services, rather than at the</p>



	<p>possible COVID-19 symptoms<sup>2</sup> should get tested.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Close contacts only need to get tested if they develop symptoms.</li> <li>- Starting October 6<sup>th</sup>, students and staff will have access to at-home rapid test kits in K-6 schools experiencing outbreaks. (30)</li> <li>- School administration is not permitted to request medical testing results from families.</li> </ul> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - same as elementary</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Also effective October 6<sup>th</sup>, Alberta Health will resume reporting COVID-19 cases in schools online.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>isolate for 10 days or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Close contacts do not need to self-isolate, but it is recommended that unimmunized close contacts avoid gatherings.</li> <li>- Individuals experiencing core COVID-19 symptoms must self-isolate until they receive a negative test. If they choose not to be tested, they must self-isolate for 10 days or until symptoms improve, whichever is longer.</li> </ul> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>individual school board level. (30)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Schools must follow the public health guidance released by the Chief Medical Officer of Health. (32)</li> </ul>
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Individuals with any COVID-19 symptoms (both core<sup>1</sup> and other<sup>2</sup>) should get tested. (33)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public Health will notify close contacts if they need to be tested. (33)</li> <li>- A rapid test pilot enabling families in select schools to self-</li> </ul>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> (35)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As of Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the Saskatchewan Health Authority and Ministry of Health were reviewing the protocols around contact tracing in schools.</li> <li>- Outside schools, SHA Public Health contacts</li> </ul>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> (36)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students and staff should stay home when sick.</li> <li>- Each school has a dedicated isolation room.</li> <li>- COVID-19 positive individuals must self-isolate for 10 days.</li> </ul>	<p>School divisions enforce recommendations as they see fit. Back to School Plans do not need to be submitted or reviewed by the Ministry of Education. (37)</p>



	<p>test at home has been deployed to gauge public uptake of rapid tests as an effective screening tools for those who may be COVID-positive. (34)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals with a positive self-test must arrange a PCR test. Unvaccinated individuals should immediately start isolating, while vaccinated individuals should begin wearing a mask. (34)</li> </ul> <p><u>Secondary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Same as elementary</li> </ul> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific recommendations not provided.</li> </ul>	<p>COVID-19 positive individuals and provides an explanation of who is a close contact and what information to tell them. Afterwards, it is the responsibility of the COVID-19 positive individual to notify their close contacts.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Same as elementary.</li> </ul> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific recommendations not provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- K-12 students who are identified as close contacts do not need to self-isolate, as long as they do not have symptoms, regardless of vaccination status.</li> <li>- Staff who are identified as close contacts and are not fully immunized, must isolate for 14 days. If fully immunized and asymptomatic, staff do not need to isolate.</li> <li>- Individuals with core<sup>1</sup> or other<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate and call Healthline 811 for further instructions.</li> </ul> <p><u>Secondary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Same as elementary</li> </ul> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specific recommendations not provided.</li> </ul>	
<b>Manitoba</b>	<p><u>Elementary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Individuals with one or more of the core COVID symptoms<sup>1</sup> (MB includes sore throat and vomiting/diarrhea for more than 24 hours as core symptoms) should get tested.</li> <li>- Individuals with two or more of the other possible COVID-19</li> </ul>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> (42)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public Health will continue to do contact tracing in school settings and follow up with close contacts.</li> <li>- Schools will continue to document student attendance in class and at extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>	<p><u>Elementary School</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students and staff are required to stay home when sick. (42)</li> <li>- Those who test positive for COVID-19 must self-isolate for 10 days, or until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer. (38)</li> <li>- Close contacts must self-isolate for 10</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The administrator (i.e., the person who assigns duties to the staff member and/or their employer) is responsible for ensuring rapid testing of staff who do not show proof of full vaccination. (39)</li> </ul>



<p>symptoms<sup>2</sup> should get tested. - All close contacts are recommended to get tested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day after their exposure. (38) - As of October 18<sup>th</sup>, all staff who have not shown proof of full vaccination must provide a negative test result within 48 hours of attending work (e.g., if working all five business days, staff would need to be tested three times). All test results must be reported to their administrator. (39) - Staff who previously tested COVID-19 positive must provide a negative PCR test to return to work. (39) - Schools will notify Manitoba Education if a positive case is identified. (40)</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Rapid testing program is targeted for those who are not yet eligible for vaccination. (41) - Otherwise, same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>days, then self-monitor for four days. Public health officials may exempt close contacts from self-isolation if they have no symptoms and are fully vaccinated <u>or</u> had COVID-19 in the last six months. (43) - Individuals with core<sup>1</sup> or other<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate until they receive a negative test or for at least 10 days, if they choose not to get tested. (38)</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Manitoba Education partnered with public health officials to develop the Toolkit for Notification of Cases in Schools. This toolkit aims to streamline communication between public health and schools when positive cases are identified by standardizing definitions of close contacts, the notification process, forms and templates sent to parents and Manitoba Education, etc. (40)</p>
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<p><b>Ontario</b></p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Regardless of vaccination status, testing is recommended for all asymptomatic high-risk contacts. (44) - COVID-19 testing is recommended for anyone experience core<sup>1</sup> or other<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 symptoms. (45) - On Sept. 3<sup>rd</sup> the Ministry of Education stated that all staff who have not shown proof of full vaccination must provide proof of a negative test at least twice a week. (46) - Rapid antigen screening kits are available to unvaccinated students in select public health units. Students who choose to participate will be able to undergo routine asymptomatic testing at home. (41)</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Rapid testing program is targeted for those who are not yet eligible for vaccination. (41) - Otherwise, same as elementary.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School (44)</u> - Local public health units are responsible for contact tracing. Additional measures can be put in place depending on the local context. - During case investigation, schools must provide information on cohorts, school transportation, attendance, etc.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School (44)</u> - Students and staff are required to stay home when sick. - Students who develop symptoms at school will be isolated. - Individuals who test positive must self-isolate for 10 days. - Individuals with core<sup>1</sup> or other<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 symptoms should self-isolate until they receive a negative test and are symptom-free for 24 hours. If they choose not to be tested, they must self-isolate for at least 10 days. - Asymptomatic high-risk contacts who are fully immunized or have tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days are not required to self-isolate. - Asymptomatic high-risk contacts who are not fully immunized or have not tested positive for COVID in the last 90 days must self-isolate for at least 10 days, even if they receive a negative test.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary.</p>	<p>- It is the responsibility of the school board/administrators to implement the prevention measures outlined by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and local public health units. (44)</p>
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	<p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>		<p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	
<p><b>Quebec</b> (47,48)</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Students with symptoms of COVID-19 must be tested. - Rapid screening tests will be made available in education institutions where the risk of an outbreak is higher. - Use rapid antigen tests along with other measures if students show symptoms at school. If the test is negative, students can return to class with a mask. If the test is positive, have the student take a PCR test to confirm, either a gargle test on-site or at a testing clinic (self-isolate until the results are received).</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Immediately test the contacts at school of a person with COVID-19, using PCR gargle tests. - Modified self-isolation required for contacts, meaning that academic activities are permitted provided a mask is worn for 10 days. No other activities are permitted (extracurricular, etc.)</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - If appropriately protected (i.e., fully vaccinated, or partially vaccinated in addition to recovery from COVID-19 illness), self-isolation is not required for contacts. If the student is not appropriately protected, modified self-isolation is required.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Students with symptoms must self-isolate for 10 days. - Students who develop symptoms at school will be isolated.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Schools are responsible for administering rapid tests and disseminating results to parents. (49) - The preventative measures recommended by the Government of Quebec differ by school region, depending on the context of the local environment. (50)</p>



<p><b>New Brunswick</b> (51)</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - If students or school personnel have two or more symptoms, they are to get tested.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Following a positive COVID-19 test that has an impact on students, schools will switch to distance learning or may be closed as an operational day to allow for contact tracing and testing. Individuals identified as close contacts will be directed to learn or work from home.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Students and staff who have two or more symptoms or feel sick, stay home. - Public Health Officers will contact those individuals who must self-isolate. Public Health Officers will decide if a class, classes or the entire school population needs to be sent home to self-isolate. - Designated isolation area in schools for students or personnel who become symptomatic during the day.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Guidelines developed by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, in consultation with Public Health.</p>
<p><b>Nova Scotia</b> (52,53)</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Families of children in pre-primary to Grade 6 to receive free COVID-19 rapid testing kits.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u></p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Maintain attendance records to assist with public health contact tracing if needed. - Public Health will continue to do contact tracing in school settings. Students or staff identified as contacts who are fully vaccinated will not be required to isolate unless they have symptoms.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - If students develop symptoms of COVID-19, they should follow isolation and testing guidance as per the self-assessment tool found at: <a href="https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en">https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/en</a></p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p>	<p>The 2021-22 School Plan was created from the input, direction and guidance of public health officials, physicians at the IWK Health Centre, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Public School Administrators Association of</p>



	- Specific recommendations not provided.	<p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Public Health will follow up and test close contacts of the COVID-19 positive individual if those contacts are not fully vaccinated. Depending on the circumstances of the case, Public Health will work with the institution on any additional steps that must be taken, including communicating about the case to the community.</p>	<p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - If an individual tests positive, Public Health will direct them to self-isolate.</p>	Nova Scotia, support staff unions and teachers, survey results from parents, guardians and teachers, and recommendations from other key partners. The School Plan highlights core public health measures that must be met by all school divisions. (54)
<b>Prince Edward Island (55)</b>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - If experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, get tested. - If testing for COVID-19 is advised and the results are negative, the student/staff member may return to school if symptoms have resolved. - Schools should not notify staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill unless directed to do so by public health.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Schools to maintain accurate attendance records and class and bus lists to assist with contact tracing. - If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 connected with a school, public health will lead the response.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Students, staff, and visitors to stay home if unwell.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	- Back-to-school plan released by the Department of Education and Lifelong Learning, with guidance from the Chief Public Health Office.



	<p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>			
<p><b>Newfoundland and Labrador (56)</b></p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - On initial onset of symptoms individuals should contact Community Health (811) and follow advice regarding the need for testing, and when they can again attend school. - School administration is not permitted to request medical testing results from families. When a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-9, the school will follow the directions of public health.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - When a person is confirmed COVID-19 positive, public health officials will investigate, identify, and notify close contacts of a confirmed case, and provide public health advice related to testing and/or self-isolation. - Individuals who are contacts of someone with COVID-19 will be managed by public health.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - If a student or staff member has signs of illness they should stay home. The student is not to return to school until medical clearance is provided by medical authorities. - Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will be advised by public health on when they can return to school. - Those who have COVID-19 symptoms, test negative, and have no known exposure criteria must stay home for 24 hrs after their symptoms resolve. - Designated health room or area in schools for symptomatic students.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Both school districts in NL (Newfoundland and Labrador English School District and the Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador worked with the Provincial Department of Education to develop their joint school plan. (57)</p>



<p><b>Yukon Territory (58)</b></p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - All students and staff to arrange for testing if they have symptoms, no matter how mild.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - All students and staff to stay home if they have symptoms, no matter how mild. - Designated, supervised area in schools for symptomatic students.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Guidance provided by the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Department of Education.</p>
<p><b>NWT (59)</b></p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Students and staff will not be permitted to attend school if they have symptoms. - A health-care practitioner will determine when it is safe for a student to return to school following a period of self-isolation or illness. The health-care provider will provide a card that can be shared with the school as evidence of safe return to school. Should a student choose not to be tested or share their card, they will need to isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms.</p>	<p>- Schools will be following the recommendations of the NWT Chief Public Health Officer.</p>



			<p>- Each school has a dedicated isolation room.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	
<p><b>Nunavut</b> (60)</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Decisions about testing and return to school should be guided by the local public health office, in consultation with the CPHO. - If symptoms of COVID-19 are present, contact health care provider to determine if testing for COVID-19 is appropriate.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - If a positive case is confirmed at a school, Public Health will work closely with the Department of Education and school leaders to ensure individuals at higher risk are identified and provided with instructions and expectations.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p><u>Elementary School</u> - Students and staff who have symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 in the last 14 days are prohibited from entering a school. - Isolation room in schools established at the beginning of the school year.</p> <p><u>Secondary School</u> - Same as elementary school.</p> <p><u>Post-secondary School</u> - Specific recommendations not provided.</p>	<p>- Guidelines created by the Department of Education, in collaboration with Nunavut's Chief Public Health Officer. - Schools must assess risk and follow preventative health and safety measures based on guidance from the CPHO.</p>

<sup>1</sup> **Core COVID-19 symptoms:** cough, fever/chills, shortness of breath, and loss of taste or smell.

<sup>2</sup> **Other possible COVID-19 symptoms:** sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, painful swallowing, muscle aches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, conjunctivitis.

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### About CoVaRR-Net

Coronavirus Variants Rapid Response Network (CoVaRR-Net) is a network of interdisciplinary researchers from institutions across the country created to assist in the Government of Canada's overall strategy to address the potential threat of emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants. Pillar Six of CoVaRR-Net studies the impacts of Coronavirus variants on public health, our healthcare system, and on social policy, and reports these findings to decision-makers and government officials.

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