

# MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Niagara Region and Children in Schools or Childcare Settings

**FROM:** Niagara Region Public Health

**SUBJECT:** Update on Niagara Specific Guidance for COVID-19 in the School and Childcare Settings

**DATE:** February 5, 2021

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Good afternoon,

Please see an updated communication below from Niagara Region Public Health related to COVID-19 for children in school and child care.

**ACTIVE SCREENING, ESPECIALLY FOR ADULTS (E.G., STAFF, ESSENTIAL VISITORS), IS THE BEST LINE OF DEFENSE FOR PREVENTING COVID-19 IN THE SCHOOL OR CHILD CARE SETTING.**

## **NEW TESTING CRITERIA**

The NEW symptom screening criteria for children is:

If a child has **one or more** of the following new or worsening symptoms:

- Fever
- Cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Decrease or loss of smell or taste
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Fatigue, lethargy, or muscle aches

They must **self-isolate at home** immediately and then have a choice of the following options:

- Contact their health care provider, walk-in clinic, or online virtual clinic for guidance (which can be provided over the phone) **OR**
- Contact a Niagara Health COVID-19 Assessment Centre to book an appointment for testing. This can be done [on-line](#) or by calling Niagara Health at 905-378-4647 ext. 42819

If a child has no other symptoms and only has a runny nose **they need to self-isolate at home immediately**, but can wait 24 hours to see if there is improvement before doing anything further. If the runny nose improves after 24 hours, the child may return to school or child care when they feel well enough without an assessment or test. Household members do not need to be in self isolation while waiting 24 hours to see if the runny nose improves.

**Niagara Region Public Health will continue to monitor data associated with COVID-19 symptoms and will make changes for testing criteria when indicated.**

**Children who require an assessment for testing based on their symptom(s) are not permitted to return to school, child care, or go to any public setting until ONE of the following criteria is met:**

- The child had a test that was negative for COVID-19. They may return to school/child care 24 hours after fever, shortness of breath, sore throat, and headache have all resolved without use of fever reducing medications (e.g., Ibuprofen/Advil, Acetaminophen/Tylenol) AND any other symptoms are improving.
- Parents are advised by a health care provider that the symptom(s) are related to a chronic or pre-existing condition (e.g., allergies, post-nasal drip, migraines, asthma). In this case, they can return to the school/child care once they feel well enough, without waiting for symptoms to resolve.
- The child completed 10 days of self-isolation. After 10 days, the child can return to school as long as they do not have a fever, without use of fever reducing medications and they are feeling better. This includes individuals who have chosen not to be tested.

**Siblings and Other Household Members of a Symptomatic Individual**

- If a test is recommended by a health care provider for the symptomatic person, or a decision is made to pursue testing at an assessment centre, all household members are to self-isolate at least until the test results are back. If the test is negative, household members can leave self-isolation.
- If the test is positive, household members must stay in self-isolation and will receive further direction from Public Health.
- Obtaining an assessment (even over the phone) from a health care provider may take some time. Household members with no symptoms do not need to self-isolate immediately after a child develops symptoms. They can wait up to 24 hours until a decision is made about whether testing is needed. However, if it takes longer than 24 hours to obtain an assessment, all household members must self-isolate until a decision is made.
- If a health care provider then advises that a test for COVID-19 is not needed, household members can leave self-isolation.
- When there is a symptomatic child in a household, it is important that special attention is given to all adults in the household. If any adults have **even one symptom of COVID-19**, or recently had one or more symptoms and were not tested, they should self-refer for testing as soon as possible or contact the Public Health Info-Line if there are remaining questions.

**These procedures around self-isolation of household members also apply to home child care providers and/or any residents of the home, and will result in temporary closure of the home child care. For example, if a spouse of a home child care provider has symptoms.**

### **Symptomatic Staff/Adults**

If a staff member or other adult develops symptoms, including **any single new or worsening symptom**, they must always remain home and follow ONE of the following options:

- Contact their health care provider, walk-in clinic, or online virtual clinic for guidance (which can be provided over the phone) **OR**
- Contact a Niagara Health COVID-19 Assessment Centre to book an appointment for testing. This can be done [on-line](#) or by calling Niagara Health at 905-378-4647 ext. 42819

For adults with any minor symptom(s) who are tested, the whole household is to self-isolate until the test results come back.

**If parents or staff have remaining questions about COVID-19, contact the Public Health COVID-19 Info-Line at 905-688-8248, press 7.**