

COVID-19 Guidance for Schools

Additional COVID-19 Preventive Measures for School Settings in London, Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, and St. Thomas

August 31, 2021

Overview:

Southwestern Public Health and Middlesex-London Health Unit recommend additional COVID-19 preventive measures for school settings to decrease the risk of COVID-19 transmission and interruptions to in-person learning. The start of this school year is impacted by the highly contagious Delta variant driving the fourth wave now underway in Ontario. It is further complicated by children under 12 who remain ineligible to receive the vaccine. These restrictive measures are designed to protect the health of both staff and students.

This document is to be used in conjunction with the [COVID-19: Health, safety, and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\)](#). It does not replace the advice, guidelines, recommendations, or other directives of provincial Ministries. Schools should continue to monitor for new guidance from the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Health.

Recommendations:

Face-covering

- Face-coverings (masks) are required for all students, including JK and SK students.
- Students must wear a face-covering on school vehicles.
- Students must wear face-coverings outdoors if physical distancing cannot be maintained between cohorts.
- Staff must wear masks outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Recess and Breaks Outdoors

- Physical distancing should be maintained between cohorts at recess as much as possible. Consider staggering recess breaks to improve physical distancing.
- Students must wear face-coverings outdoors if physical distancing cannot be maintained between cohorts.

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Staff Meetings and Staff Rooms

- No in-person staff meetings.
- Physical distancing of at least two metres OR plexiglass or other impermeable barriers are required in shared spaces when face-coverings are removed to consume food or drink. Sign-in sheets are required to record which individuals are sharing a space and when.

Shared Spaces

- Shared indoor spaces should be used by one cohort at a time.
- Physical distancing must be maintained between cohorts if more than one cohort is using a shared space.

Cafeteria and Lunch Protocols

- Physical distancing should be maintained between cohorts.
- Physical distancing should be maintained within cohorts while masks are removed for eating.

Assemblies

- No indoor assemblies.

Singing

- Singing indoors is only permitted within a cohort. Face-covering and physical distancing are required.
- Singing permitted outdoors with physical distancing maintained between cohorts. Face-covering is required if physical distancing is not maintained among individuals within a cohort.

Wind instruments

- Use of wind instruments permitted outdoors with physical distancing maintained between cohorts.
- Use of wind instruments permitted indoors only in well-ventilated spaces and if physical distancing of at least 2 metres (preferably more) is maintained.

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Inter-School Sports and Activities

- If eligible, all participants should be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- High-contact and/or high-intensity physical activities permitted outdoors only.
- Low-contact activities are permitted indoors, with face-coverings and physical distancing encouraged. Face-coverings are required if physical distancing is not maintained.
- For additional guidance regarding sports, please see [Middlesex-London Health Unit's Sports League Guidance](#).

Extra-curricular activities

- Face-coverings required outdoors if physical distancing between cohorts is not maintained, including outdoor sports where masks can be safely worn.

Additional Resources

- [Ontario COVID-19: Health, safety, and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\)](#)
- [Ministry of Health COVID-19 Guidance: School Case, Contact, and Outbreak Management Case and Contact Management](#)
- [Southwestern Public Health COVID-19 Resources for Schools and Child Care Centres](#)