

Renfrew County and District Health Unit

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions: Back to School 2020-2021 for School Boards, Schools and Parents

1. COVID-19 Testing

Should I have my child tested for COVID-19 before they go back to school?

Testing your child before returning to school is generally not recommended if they do not have COVID-19 symptoms, unless they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is currently recommending testing for people showing symptoms of COVID-19. Those who are in close contact with a household contact (roommates and family that live in the same house as the individual with symptoms) who has tested positive for COVID-19 should continue to self-isolate and arrange for testing.

Should teachers and school staff be tested for COVID-19 before returning to work in schools?

Teachers and school staff do not need to be tested before returning to school, unless they have COVID-19 symptoms. Those who have been in close contact with a household contact (roommates and family that live in the same house as the individual with symptoms) who has tested positive for COVID-19 should continue to self-isolate and arrange for testing.

Does my child need to have a negative COVID-19 test result or a doctor's note in order to return to school after recovering from COVID-19?

No. Children can return to school if they have completed their 14 days of self-isolation, have no fever and their symptoms have been improving for at least 72 hours.

Do school staff need to have a negative COVID-19 test result or doctor's note in order to return to school after recovering from COVID-19?

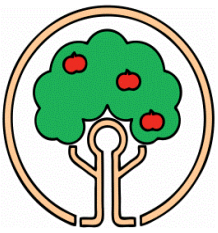
No. School staff can return to school if they have completed their 14 days of self-isolation, have no fever and their symptoms have been improving for at least 72 hours.

If someone in my child's school tests positive for COVID-19, do I need to get my child tested?

If someone from a school setting tests positive for COVID-19 and your child is **not** considered a close contact, you do **not** need to have your child tested or keep them home. RCDHU will reach out to parents directly if it is determined that their child is considered a close contact and provide advice on, if and when testing is required.

What happens if someone in my child's class tests positive for COVID-19

If someone in a school setting tests positive for COVID-19 and your child is a close contact, a RCDHU case and contact staff member will contact you directly with information on how and when to get tested for COVID-19 and further actions to take.



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2. COVID-19 Outbreak

What is considered an outbreak in a school?

An outbreak would be declared in a school once it has been determined that there are two positive cases with an epidemiological link (e.g. these children could have become infected with COVID-19 at school either from each other or a common source). Each case will need to be assessed and it would need to be determined that transmission occurred in the school before confirming it as an outbreak since it is possible that children could have been infected outside the school setting.

What happens when there is an outbreak in a school?

If an outbreak in a school is confirmed, RCDHU would reach out to parents of close contacts to let them know and help them with the next steps which include staying home, monitoring for symptoms and testing when it's appropriate. RCDHU would continue to investigate to determine any other close contacts and monitor the situation until an outbreak can be declared over. This includes whether a classroom and/or the entire school would need to be closed.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

What is Renfrew County and District Health Unit's Role?

- Support School Boards in their reopening plans and provide public health information and support implementing provincial standards and guidance.
- Facilitate knowledge exchange through various platforms with stakeholders and the school community by ensuring ongoing engagement and active listening.
- Provide infection prevention and control advice to schools for both in-school and transportation scenarios.
- Manage COVID-19 cases and outbreaks, including providing guidance to schools on confirming and controlling outbreaks.
- Support testing and surveillance of the school population.
- Provide ongoing support through a dedicated Public Health School Nurse who will be assigned to an area of schools and can assist in responding to school specific inquiries and make regular visits to the schools.
- Provide age-appropriate resources on COVID-19.
- Provide Mental Wellness Support including the development of school resources and tools on topics like resiliency, positive coping skills, and reducing stress and anxiety. Facilitate linkages to resources and community supports available for school staff, students and their families.

This material has been adapted from Ottawa Public Health.