



Renfrew County and  
District Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

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# Health for all Schools E-Newsletter

For Educators in Renfrew County and District

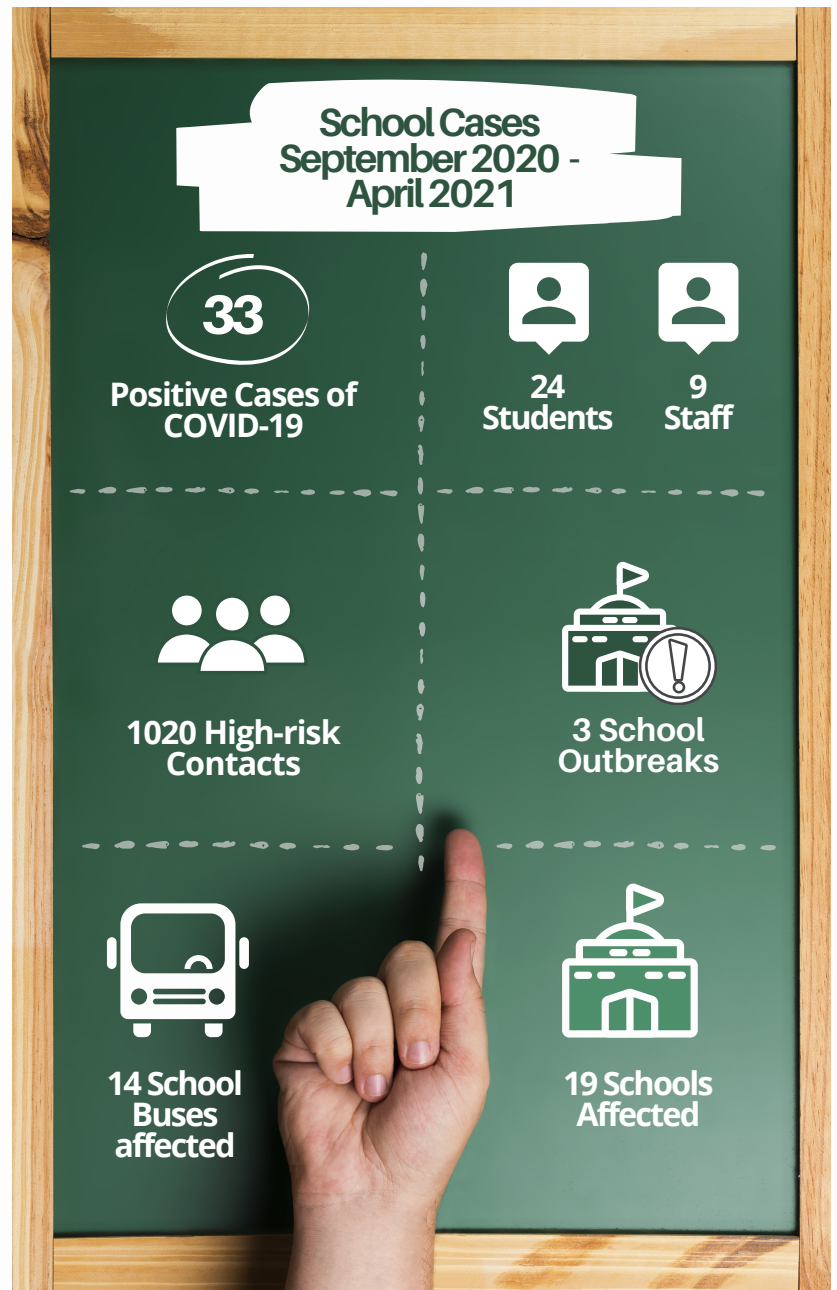
## COVID-19 School Snapshot

Since the beginning of the 2020/2021 school year, Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) has been working with our local schools to minimize transmission of COVID-19 and keep everyone safe. RCDHU would like to take this opportunity to commend the work of our local educators and all school staff, students and families for all your hard work in keeping our school communities safe. There has been minimal school transmission of COVID-19 so far. **Keep up the great work!**

This graphic provides a snapshot of what has happened up to April 28, 2021 in Renfrew County and District (RCD) schools.

## Number of COVID-19 cases in Schools

Between September 2020 and April 2021, RCDHU has confirmed **33 positive cases** of COVID-19, with potential exposure to school environment, in schools throughout the county, and has declared **three school outbreaks**. *Note: Daycare and post-secondary school cases not included.*



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# Oral Health Month!



## April is Oral Health Month!

Good oral health is important to the overall health of children and youth.

### Healthy Smiles Ontario

For some families paying for dental treatment can cause financial hardship. RCDHU can offer eligible families financial assistance through the [Healthy Smiles Ontario](#) (HSO) program. For low-income households, HSO is a publicly funded program that provides **free preventive, routine and emergency dental services** for eligible children and youth aged 17 years and under. This program includes:

- Check-ups and cleaning
- Fillings
- X-rays
- Scaling
- Tooth extraction
- Emergency dental care

**Note:** Children and youth are automatically enrolled in HSO when they or their family are receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program.

You know your students best. If you think a family could benefit from enrolling in HSO, suggest they contact RCDHU for assistance. RCDHU can also provide postcard sized HSO brochures that are easy to send home in back packs. Please contact Dental Services and a package can be assembled for you.

### Dental Screenings

RCDHU offers **free oral health screening assessments** by a Registered Dental Hygienist for children 0-17 years of age. Hygienists check for signs of dental disease and problems that need treatment by a dentist or hygienist. If an urgent dental need is identified, arrangements will be made with the teen or parent.

For further information on available services or to access a dental assessment, please contact:

#### RCDHU Dental Services



613-735-8661

1-800-267-1097 ext.661



[dentalservices@rcdhu.com](mailto:dentalservices@rcdhu.com)

### Additional Resources

- ➔ Visit RCDHU [Dental Services](#).
- ➔ Visit the **Canadian Dental Association** for [activities and teaching resources](#) that promote oral health to children in a fun way.
- ➔ Visit the [Ontario Dental Association](#) for oral health tips and recommendations.



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## Let's Focus on the Positive

We all know the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on those in schools. And every day, we see news about the pandemic that is hard to read and process. It is easy to see the challenges, to feel helpless.

But at the same time, we know truly amazing things are happening in schools each day. How extraordinary staff take the difficult circumstances that form school right now, and still connect with and enrich not just the learning, but the life of each student. That is a story that deserves to be told.

**#ShareTheGood** is a new bilingual campaign launched by [School Mental Health Ontario](https://www.ssmho.ca/) to share the good work that is already happening in schools and school boards across the province. The campaign, which has an emphasis on social media, will be the spark that, we hope, will ignite a widespread movement of positivity and optimism.

**#ShareTheGood** doesn't ignore how hard teaching and learning is during the pandemic. That is a daily reality for staff and students in school boards across the province. Instead, the goal is to spotlight the stories, big and small, of greatness in that reality. To amplify the good work so it is seen, heard, shared. Not just specifically about mental health, about all the efforts to support students.

This is a campaign to bring hope and to nurture optimism. There has never been a time when that has mattered more.

Follow School Mental Health Ontario on Twitter [@SMHO\\_SMSO](https://twitter.com/SMHO_SMSO), tag them in your tweets and use the **#ShareTheGood** hashtag. Share your stories and find out more ways to help at [smho-smso.ca/SharetheGood](https://smho-smso.ca/SharetheGood).



**#ShareTheGood**  
**#PartagerLePositif**



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# Nature and the Human Brain

Since ancient times, humans have had a sense that being outside in nature has a positive effect on mental health and mood, but it is not until recently that we've discovered, through technology and research advances, how it effects the brain and the entire body. There is now strong evidence to show that our level of stress, our mental state, our immunity, our achievement, our happiness and our resiliency are all chemically influenced by the nervous system and its response to the natural environment.



Research shows that spending time with nature, outside or with plants indoors, has positive effects on the body. Being outside in nature, or even just looking at pictures of nature, has chemical effects on our nervous system by reducing stress hormones, depression, blood pressure, and even heart rate - effects that can last up to a week. Studies have shown that nature also improves energy level, positive thoughts, grades, graduation rates, attentiveness, and, especially important during the threat of COVID-19, the immune system.

Outdoor play has added benefits; it promotes creativity, teaches responsibility, provides different stimulation, promotes physical activity, makes us think in different ways, and reduces stress and fatigue.

Here are some ideas for how to incorporate nature into the curriculum and the school day:

- Take your class on an outdoor scavenger or treasure hunt
- Grow plants in the classroom or in a school garden
- Hold class outdoors in the school yard
- Go for a nature walk
- Play games outdoors
- Bring the outdoors in with live plants and pictures of nature in the classroom and around the school

We are lucky in Renfrew County to be surrounded by natural spaces. Make the most of it with your students - for their benefit and yours!

**#PlaySafeOutdoors**

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Promoting and protecting the health and well-being of school aged children and youth is a provincial public health priority. RCDHU is using the Foundations for a Healthy School approach, which includes: creating supportive social and physical environments; supporting teaching and curriculum implementation; engaging children and youth; building home, school and community partnerships; and, protecting the health of students. We look forward to collaborating with you.

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