



September 3rd, 2020

Dear St. Joseph's Families,

With the 2020-21 school year about to get underway, the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board (BHNCDSB) and the Ministry of Education, want to inform you of the actions we are taking to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in our schools. This letter also includes details about what you can do to protect yourself and your family, as well as what happens if there is a positive COVID-19 case in our school or a COVID-19 outbreak is declared at St. Joseph's.

The most [common symptoms of COVID-19 \(PDF\)](#) include:

- Fever (temperature of 37.8°C or greater)
- New or worsening cough
- Shortness of breath (dyspnea)

Other symptoms of COVID-19 can include:

- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- New olfactory or taste disorder(s)
- Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion (in absence of underlying reasons for these symptoms such as seasonal allergies, post nasal drip, etc.)

Please consult the [Ministry of Health's COVID-19 reference document](#) for other clinical features of COVID-19, and when atypical signs and symptoms of COVID-19 should be considered, particularly in children.

If you're worried your child or any member of your household has been exposed to COVID-19 or has symptoms, you use Ministry of Health's Ontario [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#). You will get a recommendation on what to do next.

You must screen your child for symptoms every day before they come to school and upon re-entry. You can use the Ministry of Health's [COVID-19 self-assessment tool](#) for this purpose. **If your child has any symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are ill, they should not attend school.** You can report your child's absence to us by contacting: 519-426-0820.

Students who become ill during the school day will be isolated and must be picked up as soon as possible.

Additionally, students who become symptomatic during the day will not be able to use student transportation or the Before/After School Program (if applicable).

BHNCDSB and all schools are working closely with the [Brant County Health Unit](#) and the [Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit](#) to take steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our school. We will keep you updated with new information as it becomes available.

To reduce the risk of COVID-19 in our school, multiple measures have been implemented. Here is a quick overview of what BHNCDSB is doing:

- All non-essential furniture, supplies and equipment have been removed from classrooms to assist with physical distancing.

- Face coverings or masks are mandatory for students in Grades 4-12 and highly recommended for students in Kindergarten-Grade 3, both in the classroom and on student transportation. Students will need to supply and use their own reusable face covering or mask (disposable if they wish).
- Any student requiring a medical exemption from wearing a mask must submit a formal written request for approval. Contact your school principal.
- At a minimum, staff are required to wear a level 1 or level 2 mask and face shield.
- Regular hand washing and/or hand-sanitizing will be built into our school day and encouraged often.
- Where possible, adjustments have been made to the HVAC systems in schools. Additionally, windows will be opened if possible.
- There is extensive directional signage placed in all schools to encourage physical distancing. As well, maximum number of people in a single area, physical distancing, hand sanitizing reminders and many other signs have been placed throughout the school.
- There is increased cleaning and disinfecting of touch points, bathrooms and shared items.

The Ministry of Health advises everyone to take an active role in protecting themselves from COVID-19. Here are a few things that you and your family can do:

- wash your hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- sneeze and cough into your sleeve
- avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- avoid contact with people who are sick
- stay home and isolate if you, or anyone in your household, is sick

BHNCDSB will follow the Ministry of Education's [Operational Guidance for COVID-19 Management in Schools](#):

- **If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, you will be informed as soon as possible**
 - Understandably, for privacy reasons, the identity of students or staff members who test positive for COVID-19 will not be identified
 - The local health unit will provide public health guidance and direction to those affected, and will be in direct contact with students, staff and families for those who have been deemed a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case. A close contact would include any child or teacher in the case's class/cohort, but may also include others.
 - In most situations, individuals who would be classified as a close contact to a COVID-19 case, will be told to self-isolate for 14 days. Any siblings or family members who reside in the same household will also be directed to self-isolate
- **If a COVID-19 outbreak is declared in a school, you will be informed as soon as possible**
 - An outbreak is defined as two or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases within 14 days of each other.
 - The local Medical Officer of Health will provide public health guidance and direction when an outbreak is declared and BHNCDSB will follow this direction.
 - An outbreak may result in the closure of a school if all students and staff members are directed to self-isolate for 14 days by the Medical Officer of Health.

In either situation, BHNCDSB staff will work with impacted students and their families to ensure learning continues for those required to self-isolate.

For more information, visit: www.bhncdsb.ca or Ontario.ca/coronavirus.

Sincerely,

Heather Graham,
Principal