

September 18, 2020

To all school boards, school administrators, parents and guardians,

Given the current demand for COVID-19 testing in Ottawa, this letter intends to provide greater clarity on recommendations for who needs to be tested for COVID-19 in a school setting.

The current priority for testing at the Ottawa assessment centres includes:

- Any person (adult or child) with COVID-19 like symptoms. Please see below for a full list of symptoms
- Any person that Ottawa Public Health (OPH) has identified as a high-risk contact. You would be notified that you are a high-risk contact by OPH through a phone call, email, or an automated message

To be clear, COVID-19 testing is currently **NOT** recommended for:

- Individuals without symptoms, unless you have been identified as a high risk contact as above
- Family members without symptoms, who have other family members that have symptoms
- Family members without symptoms, who have other family members that are identified as a high-risk contact
- Students and staff members in schools who don't have symptoms and who have not been notified by OPH that they are high-risk contacts.

OPH has developed a Screening Tool to help parents and guardians make decisions about whether their child can attend school/child care. This screening tool should be completed daily before attending school/child care for each individual child separately. The screening tool can be found here:

<https://secureforms.ottawapublichealth.ca/School-Health-Sante-scolaire/COVID-19-Screening-Tool-for-Students>

For more information on assessment centres, please visit:

<https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/shared-content/assessment-centres.aspx>

COVID-19 symptoms could include:

- Fever (a temperature of 37.8 degrees or higher);
- Chills;
- New or worsening cough (continuous, more than usual, not related to other known causes or conditions);
- Barking cough, making whistling noise when breathing (croup; not related to other known causes or conditions);
- Shortness of breath - unable to breathe deeply or feeling unable to catch one's breath (not related to other known causes or conditions - for example, asthma);

- Sore throat (not related to seasonal allergies or other known conditions);
- Trouble/Difficulty swallowing (not related to other known causes or conditions);
- Runny nose, or nasal congestion (not related to seasonal allergies or other known causes or conditions);
- Headache that is unusual or long lasting (not related to other known causes or conditions such as migraines);
- Decrease or loss of taste or smell (not related to other known causes or conditions, such as allergies);
- Digestive issues like nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain (not related to other known causes or conditions; for example, irritable bowel syndrome, anxiety in children, menstrual cramps);
- Unexplained fatigue or lack of energy (not related to other known causes or conditions; for example, depression, insomnia)
- Muscle aches that are unusual or long lasting (not related to other known causes or conditions for example, a sudden injury, fibromyalgia)
- Pink eye (conjunctivitis, not related to other known causes or conditions; for example, reoccurring styes)
- Falling down often
- Sluggishness or lack of appetite (NOTE these symptoms may be more relevant to infants and young children);
- Unexplained rashes