



March 31, 2021

Dear parent/guardian:

It was just over a year ago that the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, and life changed dramatically for all of us. At Halton Region Public Health, we recognize the actions that each of you have taken to keep our schools and communities safe, such as keeping your child(ren) home when ill, encouraging them to frequently wash their hands, wearing a mask, and maintaining a physical distance of two meters from others when outside your home. We appreciate your efforts and thank you for doing your part; we know it has not been easy.

The availability of [COVID-19 vaccines](#) is good news in our collective response to stop the spread of the virus. While it is a light at the end of the tunnel, we must keep our guard up and continue practicing all public health measures that remain in place as we head into this upcoming long weekend and April break.

At this time, COVID-19 [variants of concern](#) are increasing in our community. They can spread more quickly and it is possible they can cause more severe illness. We are asking everyone to follow [public health guidance](#) to keep you, your loved ones, and the community safe. As a reminder, please complete the [COVID-19 school and child care screening tool](#) each day before going to school. **Do not send your child to school if they fail the screening tool.** Complete the screening tool on weekends as well. If your child had symptoms over the weekend, do not send them to school unless they have been tested for COVID-19 or received an alternate diagnosis from their health care provider.

Public Health investigation of COVID-19 cases in schools has shown that there is minimal transmission happening within school settings. The majority of cases are acquiring the infection either at home or in the community. Transmission sometimes occurs between siblings and playdate friends, then gets carried over into schools and results in multiple class cohorts being dismissed as high-risk contacts. When Halton Region Public Health is notified of a COVID-19 case at a school, high-risk contacts are identified and are required to self-isolate for 14 days from the date of dismissal.

We do hope you enjoy spending time outside and enjoy the warmer weather. If you are planning [spring celebrations](#) please:

- only gather with those in your immediate household. In-person celebrations with extended family and friends will be possible again soon – just not yet.
- maintain six feet of distance from those outside your household; and
- wear a mask.

Regional Municipality of Halton

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This has been a challenging year for families including our children and youth. I encourage you to read [HaltonParents blogs](#) where you can find reliable information and support to help you along your parenting journey during this pandemic.

- [Can I have a playdate... I see them at schools?](#)
- [Helping teens and tweens maintain mental well-being throughout the pandemic](#)
- [Navigating COVID-19 with your teen](#)

Please continue to visit [halton.ca/COVID19](https://halton.ca/COVID19) for the latest information on cases and public health guidance, including the Provincial COVID-19 Response Framework and what this means for Halton residents.

Have a safe and happy spring

Sincerely,

Dr. Hamidah Meghani