

**March 11, 2022**

**STATEMENT FROM THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION**

Good Afternoon,

Please find below statement from the Office of the Minister of Education regarding masking in Ontario schools.

“Earlier this week, the Chief Medical Officer of Health released the province’s plan to live with and manage COVID-19, including lifting mask mandates. Of all the provinces to release plans to lift masking requirements in schools, Ontario has one of the most cautious timelines.

School boards in this province are expected to implement this cautious plan, coupled with the ongoing improvement of air ventilation within Ontario classrooms.

While Ontario is among one the last provinces in Canada to lift mask mandates, based on the advice of Dr. Moore, we are also continuing to invest heavily to improve air ventilation by deploying an additional 49,000 HEPA units to schools and child care centers.

Additional ventilation investments, paired with over 7 million rapid tests every month for schools, as well as enhanced funding for cleaning and staffing, underscores our firm commitment to getting students back to more normal classrooms with strong protections in place as we know it is critical to their mental health.

Because of these many layers of protection, the increase in investments, and Ontario’s overall improved situation, all schools in the province are open.”