

Over 100,000 Ontario Students Return to Class Beginning Next week

Additional measures put in place to keep schools safe

January 20, 2021

TORONTO— Today, Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education, issued the following statement to provide an update on which schools can resume for in-person learning:

“On the advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the government is allowing seven public health units and over 100,000 students to return to class on Monday, January 25.

Getting students back into class is our top priority. According to Ontario’s Chief Medical Officer of Health and leading medical and scientific experts, including the Hospital for Sick Children, Ontario’s schools are safe places for learning.

To ensure schools remain safe, the government is introducing additional measures including provincewide targeted asymptomatic testing, enhanced screening, mandatory masking for students in Grades 1-3 and outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained.”

Background

Based on the most recent data and the advice of the Chief Medical Officer of Health, elementary and secondary schools in the following PHUs will be permitted to resume in-person learning on January 25, 2021:

- Grey Bruce Health Unit
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit
- Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Health Unit
- Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit
- Peterborough Public Health
- Renfrew County and District Health Unit

This means that all schools in the following schools boards will resume in-person learning on January 25:

- Limestone District School Board
- Renfrew County District School Board
- Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board
- Bruce-Grey Catholic District School Board
- Renfrew County Catholic District School Board
- Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board
- Bluewater District School Board

Some additional school boards span across multiple PHUs and may have some schools that resume in-person learning on January 25 and other schools that will continue to teach remotely. The local PHU should be contacted on the status of schools in these boards:

- Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board
- Trillium Lakelands District School Board
- Upper Canada District School Board
- Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario
- Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic DSB
- Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
- Conseil scolaire catholique Providence
- Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
- Conseil scolaire de district catholique du Centre-Est de l'Ontario

On January 12, 2021, Ontario [announced](#) that elementary and secondary students in Windsor-Essex, Region of Peel, Toronto, York Region and Hamilton Public Health Units (PHUs) will continue to learn remotely. The Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, will continue to closely monitor public health trends in these regions.

Northern PHUs that were permitted to return to in-person learning on January 11, 2021 will continue in-person learning unless otherwise directed by local PHUs. Schools located in all other PHUs across the province will continue to learn remotely at this time.

To support families during this period, child care will remain open and available for non-school aged children across the province. Where elementary schools continue to be closed for in-person learning, before and after school programs continue to be closed and prohibited from charging parent fees. Emergency child care will be extended to support those workers that require it during this period

To support students facing mental health difficulties, the Government announced an additional and immediate \$10 million from its phase 2 federal funding allocation to support student mental health and expand access to services in both rural and urban communities. This funding builds on the Government's investment of more than \$32.5 million in student mental health since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This investment supports up to 475 additional staff to support student mental health and compliments the addition of 625 school-based public health nurses and expanded mental health education.

In addition, direct financial supports through the Ontario's Support for Learners program remains open until February 8, 2021.

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