

August 5, 2021

Memorandum To: Directors of Education
School Authorities

From: Julia Danos
Executive Lead
Education Reopening Secretariat

Subject: COVID-19 School and Board Absence Reporting
requirements for 2021/22 school year & COVID-19 Board
Leads

Thank you for the significant work your teams have undertaken on daily reporting of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in your schools/school boards using the Absence Reporting Tool (ART) during the 2020/21 school year. Your efforts allowed us to monitor the impact of COVID-19 across schools in Ontario at both local and provincial levels, as well as to communicate to the general public in a timely manner with daily postings at [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca).

Based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, schools are permitted to open for in-person learning with health and safety measures in place for the 2021/22 school year. Boards are also allowed to offer in-person summer learning in August 2021.

As the government is committed to continue monitoring the COVID-19 situation for students and staff, daily reporting of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and school closures will continue for the 2021/22 school year using the ART at the school and board level. Schools/school boards will also continue to report confirmed COVID-19 cases and school closures on the advisory page of their board/school website.

Similar to the 2020-21 instructional year, the Ministry will post the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases and school closures on [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca). All schools and school boards are required to input case data on the first day of the instructional year. **The first public posting of data will be on Tuesday, September 14, 2021, using data inputted by schools and school boards on Monday, September 13, 2021.** Any data collected prior to September 13, 2021 will be added to the cumulative totals.

The ART was re-evaluated and changes were made to streamline the collection process, enhance data reliability, and to improve consistency of reporting at [Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca). As such, the ART user guides for school level and board level reporting have also been revised to reflect this streamlined process.

Reporting in the ART at school level

- Schools must report to the Ministry of Education on a daily basis any confirmed cases of COVID-19 for students and staff within the school.
- The expectation is that the reporting will be completed by the school Principal or their designate (i.e., Vice-Principal, Administrative Assistant, etc.) by **11 a.m.** every day once the school year begins. The reporting has to be completed daily, even if there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Those schools that are going to offer in-person summer school beginning in August 2021 are required to use the ART as soon as in-person instruction begins.

Reporting in the ART at board level

- COVID-19 board leads are to complete the report by **11 a.m.** daily even if there are no confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- Cases that are reported at the school board level include occasional school staff (for example, occasional teachers, occasional early childhood educators and occasional educational assistants), board staff who visit schools (for example, social workers, psychologists and resource teachers or staff) and centrally or regionally assigned school board staff.

Accessing the ART

As in the previous year, the ART can be accessed via the “Go-Secure” portal. Principals and/or their designates will require a “Go-Secure” account to access the ART.

To assist with the initial access setup, please provide the list of principals and/or their designates for each school that is operating to the Ministry by August 23, 2021.

Note that principals and/or their designates with an existing “Go-Secure” account will not be required to register again. Instructions on registering for “Go-Secure” access are provided in the attached *Go Secure Registration Guide*.

If the Principal or designate has difficulty logging in, contact information has been listed in the guide for assistance in setting up the “Go-Secure” account. **It is important that all school Principals and/or their designates ensure that they can access the ART before the beginning of the school year.**

Privacy of information collected in the ART

Please note that the ART data will not be used for the purpose of contact tracing. No personal information will be collected by the Ministry of Education. Any suspected cases of COVID-19 within the school must be reported to the local public health unit to

support case management and contact tracing and other activities in accordance with all applicable legislation, including the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#). Public health officials will determine any additional steps required, including but not limited to the declaration of an outbreak and closure of classes and/or schools.

For the purpose of COVID-19 reporting, your main point of contact will be the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education's Field Services Branch. Regional Offices will be liaising with school boards regularly to follow-up on the monitoring and managing of COVID-19 in schools. Please direct any questions about the ART to your regional office liaison.

COVID-19 Board Leads

As was the case for the previous year, to support the safe reopening of schools for the 2021/22 instructional year, **we are asking each board to identify a COVID-19 contact person (COVID-19 Board Lead) and to provide their name and contact information to the Field Services Branch regional manager by August 23, 2021.**

The purpose of identifying COVID-19 Board Leads is to facilitate the ministry's ongoing and timely communications with school boards in order to track cases and school closures and monitor the potential impact of COVID-19 across schools in Ontario. In case of an outbreak, COVID-19 Board Leads will be responsible for communicating information to the regional office liaison in a timely manner. As cross-sector work continues to unfold, COVID-19 Board Leads will be invited to participate in meetings and discussions as needed.

Please share this information within your boards, including with your school Principals and others as appropriate.

Thank you once again for your ongoing partnership in supporting safe and healthy school environments.

Sincerely,

Julia Danos

cc: COVID-19 Board Leads
Executive Director, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'ontario (ACÉPO)
Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)
Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)
Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)
Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)

Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)
General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)
General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)
General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)
President, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)
Chair, Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario (EWAO)
Co-ordinator, Canadian Union of Public Employees – Ontario (CUPE-ON)
Executive Director, Association des directions et directions adjointes des écoles franco-ontariennes (ADFO)
Executive Director, Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO)
Executive Director, Ontario Principals' Council (OPC)