

**September 1, 2021**

**Memorandum to:** Directors of Education  
Secretary/Treasurers of School Authorities

**From:** Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

**Subject:** **COVID-19 Guidance Updates**

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As students and education staff prepare to head back to school for the 2021-22 school year, and with the safety of school communities top of mind, the Ministry is making updates that will support our shared commitment to keeping schools open for in-person learning.

**Revised Staff Masking Requirements:**

In light of the current public health environment and based on advice from the Chief Medical Officer of Health, masking requirements for staff have been updated for the 2021-22 school year.

Medical masks (surgical/procedural) are required to be worn by school staff outdoors if two metres of distance from others cannot be maintained. Eye protection is also required if a staff member comes within two metres of an unmasked individual both indoors and outdoors, as per occupational health and safety requirements. At the advice of the local public health unit, schools and school boards may choose to implement additional masking measures based on local circumstances.

The ministry is working to update the [COVID-19: Health, Safety and Operational Guidance for Schools 2021-22](#) to reflect this change. This updated guidance will be posted shortly but we encourage you to communicate this information as soon as possible to your school communities and staff.

The government will monitor the COVID-19 situation and alignment with broader provincial guidance and direction. The ministry will continue to work with the Chief Medical Officer of Health and local public health units (PHUs) to assess key measures to inform and update provincial guidance and direction, including lifting measures when appropriate.

**Class Size:**

As part of our response to COVID-19, the Ontario government has provided school boards with investments to promote physical distancing in schools and support additional school staff.

School boards are to ensure that they plan for class sizes as close as possible to the funded average. While school boards may experience late student registration and/or late student timetabling request changes, all school boards must review the related impacts on class size to avoid even temporary large classes prior to the reorganization date that has been observed in the past particularly in the first few weeks following the start of classes.

Specifically, we are asking school boards to make every effort to prevent such a scenario by using the additional COVID-19 staffing supports of over \$380 million and deploying teachers that may be on holdback.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and for your continued collaboration on these important matters.

Sincerely,

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

- c: Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario  
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, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
Chair, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)  
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