

**February 10, 2022**

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

**From:** Stephen Lecce  
Minister of Education

Nancy Naylor  
Deputy Minister

**Subject: Updated School Health and Safety Guidance for Extra-Curricular Activities**

---

The Ministry of Education is committed to supporting a return to a more normal learning experience for students and continues to review health and safety guidance throughout the school year, so that we can best adapt to the broader health trends.

As you are aware, in consultation with Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH), the provincial government has begun to cautiously and gradually ease public health measures, including allowing facilities used for indoor sports and recreational fitness activities to open, while maintaining protective measures.

In alignment with the Reopening Ontario (*A Flexible Response to COVID-19*) Act, 2020 (ROA) expectations around community-based youth recreation, schools will be allowed to resume high-contact sports and activities effective immediately. This decision has been made with the full support of the OCMOH.

All individuals participating in extra-curricular sports and high contact/high intensity activities will be required to wear a mask while on school premises but may temporarily remove their mask for active participation in the activities (e.g., masks may be removed while actively playing basketball, but must be worn while on the bench; masks may be removed while actively playing a musical instrument, but must be worn while waiting for the musical activity to begin and after it ends).

Local public health units may advise schools and school boards to implement additional or enhanced health and safety measures.

Indoor curriculum-based programs (e.g. health and physical education and music) will also continue with the following requirements in place for students and staff:

- Wearing a mask while singing and maintain as much distancing as possible. Elementary students will also be required to stay within their cohort.

- Wearing a mask while participating in indoor sports where they can be worn safely. Masks may be removed during active participation but must be worn when not actively engaged

The ministry has updated its [COVID-19: Health, safety and operational guidance for schools \(2021-2022\)](#) to reflect this direction, as well as to align with other health and safety measures in the Ministry of Health's [Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care Omicron Surge](#).

As a reminder, all schools are required to reinstate daily on-site confirmation of screening for all students and staff as an additional layer of protection. Schools and boards are expected to continue this practice until further notice.

Strong health and safety measures remain in place at schools and the Ontario government has added layers of protection to support the return to more normal learning. These measures include expanded access to vaccines, optional non-fit-tested N95 masks for education staff and three-ply masks for students, and the deployment millions of rapid tests to help reduce the risk. The measures are in addition to more than \$600 million invested in ventilation improvements at schools, including the deployment of more than 70,000 HEPA filter units and other ventilation devices.

As always, the ministry will continue to work with the OCMOH to adjust health and safety requirements and update guidance as required based on the public health environment to ensure schools remain as safe as possible.

Sincerely,

Stephen Lecce

Minister

Nancy Naylor

Deputy Minister

- c: President, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)  
Executive Director, Association des conseils scolaires des écoles publiques de l'Ontario (ACÉPO)  
President, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)  
Executive Director, Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC)  
President, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)  
Executive Director, Ontario Catholic School Trustees' Association (OCSTA)  
President, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)  
Executive Director, Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA)  
Executive Director, Council of Ontario Directors of Education (CODE)  
President, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)  
Executive Director and Secretary-Treasurer, Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO)  
President, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
General Secretary, Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA)  
President, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
General Secretary, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO)  
President, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
General Secretary, Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF)  
Chair, Ontario Council of Educational Workers (OCEW)  
Chair, Education Workers' Alliance of Ontario (EWAO)  
President of OSBCU, Canadian Union of Public Employees – Ontario (CUPE-ON)  
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)