STOP THE SPREAD COVID-19

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL BOARDS AND SCHOOLS:
ACCESS BY STUDENTS OR FAMILIES TO SCHOOLS TO PICK UP PERSONAL EFFECTS OR RETURN SCHOOL PROPERTY

Ontario schools have been closed to students and families since March 15, 2020. In order to allow for students and families to retrieve any personal belongs that may have been left in schools, and to return any school or school board property they no longer require, the school closure order issued by the Minister of Education on May 15, 2020, permits temporary access to school premises for this purpose.

The following document has been prepared by the Eastern Ontario Health Unit in accordance with the Ministry of Education’s Personal Property Retrieval Guidelines for Schools, issued on May 27, 2020 to serve as guidelines for schools boards allowing access by students or families to pick-up personal effects or return school property. The guidelines are intended to support schools with implementing protocols to provide for the health and safety of students, families, and staff during school access.

Self-Assessment and Screening

- Any person accessing a school – including school staff, students, or families – should be directed to perform a COVID-19 self-assessment before arriving at the school.
- Assign an employee to perform active screening of everyone (school staff and students or families) prior to entry. Anyone who answers YES to any of the following questions should be denied entry and advised to put on a face covering or non-medical mask, go home immediately and self-isolate:
  - Do you have any COVID-19 symptoms, including the symptoms listed on the EOHU’s website? (Note: this site should be consulted on a weekly basis for any updates)
  - Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?
  - Has someone you are in close contact with tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
  - Are you in close contact with a person who is sick with new respiratory symptoms or who recently traveled outside of Canada?
Scheduling
- Students and families should be scheduled for access in designated timeslots to minimize the number of people in the building or waiting to access the school. Fifteen-minute timeslots are recommended.
- Anyone waiting for their designated timeslot should be directed to a waiting or line-up area with appropriate physical distancing markers (e.g., floor markings, pylons, etc.) spaced two metres apart.
- Schools may consider providing persons who miss their designated timeslot with an additional opportunity to access the school at a subsequent scheduled time.
- Where possible, allow only one person to retrieve student belongings except in extenuating circumstances.

Entrance and Exit
- Schools should designate and clearly mark specific entrances and exits for each visitor (school staff and students or families) as appropriate, and only permit entrance/exit through these doors.
- Portable hand washing stations (sink with water, soap and paper towel) or alcohol-based hand sanitizer should be provided.
- Where possible, doors and windows should be kept open to minimize touching of door handles and increase ventilation, while maintaining the appropriate security.
- Ensure school fire exit plan is clearly posted at entrance and throughout access areas.
- Post signage at the school entrance for visitor self-screening:
  - Visitors Notice (8.5x11 poster)
- Provide signage at the entrance and throughout access areas, such as:
  - Practice Physical Distancing (8.5x11 poster)
  - Practice Physical Distancing (11x17 poster)
  - How to safely put on and remove a face covering or non-medical mask

Physical Distancing and Crowd Control
- Assign a school staff at the entrance for crowd and flow control, while maintaining physical distance of at least 2 metres.
- Only allow a limited number of people within the school at one time. Keep count of number of people going in and coming out.
- Traffic flow and physical distancing markers should be visible throughout the school.
- Persons should be directed to stay only within the area(s) of the school they need to access and refrain from lingering.
- School staff should be on hand to direct people while maintaining physical distance of at least two metres.
- Where possible, use of stairs should be encouraged. Where required, elevator usage should be limited to one person or members of the same household.
- Washrooms should not be permitted for students and families.
• One designated washroom should be assigned for staff use.
  o Keep the designated washroom well stocked with soap and paper towel.
  o Users should be encouraged to flush the toilet with the lid down when possible.
  o Enhance cleaning of designated washroom, with appropriate disinfectants.
• Drinking fountains should not be permitted.
• Persons should not be permitted to gather in groups on the school premises.
• Wearing of face coverings (or non-medical masks) where physical distancing cannot be maintained or is difficult is recommended.
• People exiting the school should be directed away from people waiting to enter the school.

Return of Items
• A designated area for return of items should be provided.
• Returned items should be cleaned and disinfected if they need to be used or moved within three days. Otherwise, returned items should be left in the designated area for minimum of three days before they are used or moved.

Cleaning and Disinfection Procedures
• Custodial staff should be on-site throughout the access period to ensure surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at a minimum twice per day or as they become visibly dirty:
  o Use appropriate cleaner and disinfectant as per manufacturer’s instructions (consult the list of acceptable disinfectants).
  o Focus on high touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handrails, elevator buttons, buzzer systems, light switches, etc.).
  o Remove items from essential common areas if they cannot be easily cleaned.
• Custodial staff should also monitor the designated staff washroom to re-stock supplies, and clean and disinfect surfaces at a minimum twice per day or as they become visibly dirty (following same instructions as above).

Instructions for students and families entering the school
• Complete a COVID-19 self-assessment before arriving at the school.
• A face covering (or non-medical mask) is recommended to reduce the spread of the virus where physical distancing is not always possible.
• Use portable handwashing station or alcohol-based hand sanitizer provided to wash your hands before entering and upon exiting the school.
• Use designated doors for entering and exiting the school. Follow instructions from school staff.
• Always maintain a physical distance of at least 2 meters from others.
• Avoid touching building fixtures (door handles, etc.) as much as possible.
• Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue, not your hand. However, those coughing, and sneezing should avoid entering the school.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just cleaned your hands.
• Avoid socializing and do not gather in any area.
• Avoid the use of common areas.
• The use of washrooms and drinking fountains is not be permitted.
• Gather personal effects as quickly as possible.
• In the event of a fire alarm, exit the school by following the existing school fire plan.
• If you need to use the elevator, ask a school staff to direct you.

Instructions for School Staff
• Complete a COVID-19 self-assessment before arriving at the school.
• A face covering (or non-medical mask) is recommended to reduce the spread of the virus where physical distancing is not always possible.
• Use portable handwashing station or alcohol-based hand sanitizer provided to wash your hands before entering and upon exiting the school.
• Use designated doors for entering and exiting the school.
• Always maintain a physical distance of at least 2 meters from others.
• Avoid touching building fixtures (door handles, etc.) as much as possible.
• Sneeze and cough into your elbow or a tissue, not your hand. However, those coughing, and sneezing should avoid entering the school.
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth unless you have just cleaned your hands.
• Avoid socializing and do not gather in any area.
• Avoid the use of common areas.
• Use the designated staff washroom and wash hands with soap and water after use.
• In the event of a fire alarm, exit the school by following the existing school fire plan.

Resources
• COVID-19 self-assessment
• Symptoms and Treatment of COVID-19
• Physical (social) distancing
• Hand hygiene and Infection Prevention Resources
• Cleaning and disinfection for public settings
• Ministry of Health Guidance Document for Essential Workplaces

For more information about COVID-19, please consult EOHU.ca/coronavirus and Ontario’s website at Ontario.ca/coronavirus.