



Fact Sheet

Revised: September 30, 2020

What Should I Expect When the First Positive Case of COVID-19 is Confirmed at School?

The health, safety and well-being of students and staff is a top priority as schools are reopening.

Given the spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) around the world and in spite of the significant health and safety protocols that have been put into place in all schools, there is a strong likelihood that a positive case of COVID-19 will be confirmed in one or more of the schools within the Superior-Greenstone District School Board.

Superior-Greenstone District School Board recognizes that this news will cause concern and worry in our communities, and we want to take this opportunity to explain what will happen when the first positive case of COVID-19 is identified in one of our schools and/or buildings. This information may help ease your minds and answer some of your questions regarding your child(ren)'s safety. We will work closely with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) and adhere to their guidance and instructions for all suspected and confirmed cases. For further information regarding the role of Public Health Units, please see <https://www.ontario.ca/page/operational-guidance-covid-19-management-schools>.

Prevention of Spread in Schools/Buildings

The schools and buildings of the SGDSB are all required to adhere to strict health and safety protocols. We are utilizing a "layered approach" to safety, meaning that we have multiple measures in place to prevent, to the extent possible, the introduction or spread of the virus in schools/buildings. This includes the daily screening of children (required to be completed by parents) and staff, the necessity to remain at home and seek medical advice if showing symptoms, extensive hand hygiene routines, cough etiquette, cohorting (grouping) of students, physical distancing, and many other measures. Please refer to the SGDSB Fact Sheets located at www.sgdsb.on.ca for additional information.

What Steps Will Be Taken When A Positive Case of COVID-19 is Confirmed?

As we are all committed to keeping families and communities updated with timely and accurate information of any local COVID-19 spread, the following steps will be taken:

- 1. Once a positive case is confirmed locally, the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) will quickly inform the individual who tested positive for COVID-19.**
 - Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 will not attend school/work until they are cleared by the TBDHU and must remain in isolation for up to 14 days or must remain in isolation until they are cleared by the TBDHU.
 - Retesting is not recommended and will not alter the 14-day isolation requirement. Retesting should only be done if recommended by the TBDHU.



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2. **The TBDHU will notify the school of a positive COVID-19 diagnosis (if the person who tested positive was at school during the infectious period).**
 - The school will provide information to the TBDHU to determine if there is a risk of transmission to others in the school/home. This will include contact tracing. Contact tracing involves identifying everyone who has been in close physical contact with the individual who tested positive for COVID-19 and letting them know that they may have been exposed to the virus. A close contact is defined as an individual who has been within 2 meters of the individual who tested positive for COVID-19 for a prolonged period of time, usually for more than 15 minutes (i.e. people who live in the same house, caregivers, healthcare providers, essential service providers, etc.), and is thus considered to be at high risk of exposure.
 - TBDHU will determine if contacts are high risk or low risk based on their investigation and risk assessment. Classroom cohorts (students and staff affiliated with the cohort) will generally be considered at high risk of exposure and will be directed to isolate and recommended to be tested (voluntarily) within their isolation period.
 - High risk contacts will be notified and will be asked to self-isolate for 14 days from last exposure. All close contacts of the individual who tested positive for COVID-19 will be asked to self-isolate for a minimum of 14 days and the TBDHU will provide direction when and if they should be tested. Low risk contacts who are asymptomatic would only self-monitor for 14 days from last exposure.
 - Parents will be notified immediately by the school. **Information provided to families will not identify the student or staff member that has received a positive COVID-19 test, under the Personal Health Information and Protection Act, 2004. SGDSB will not release any information regarding the student or staff who has tested positive.**

3. **The Superior-Greenstone District School Board will provide notification of a Positive COVID-19 Diagnosis to the community through the www.sgdsb.on.ca website.**
 - The school board will post daily updates regarding any confirmed cases of COVID-19 (staff and students) in our schools and buildings.
 - These updates will reflect the data for the entire school board.
 - Notices of closures of cohorts or schools will be posted on this page for parents and community members.
 - **Information provided to families and the community will not identify the student or staff member that has received a positive COVID-19 test, under the Personal Health Information and Protection Act, 2004.**



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Closure of a Class/School/Cohort

In the case where students in a class, cohort and/or school are required to self-isolate at home, students and staff will pivot to “remote learning” to avoid the interruption to in-person learning. This means that learning will occur at a distance from the children’s homes. Families are asked to notify the school if their children are unable to participate, as per the normal absence reporting procedures.

Remote learning will include a combination of synchronous learning that happens in real time with the classroom teacher (and involves using text, video, or voice communication) that enables the educators and other members of the school to instruct and connect with students, and asynchronous learning that students will engage in independently at home (and includes the watching of video lessons, completing assigned tasks or contributing to online discussions). Families will be provided with a timetable for this period of remote learning, which will include 300 minutes of daily synchronous and asynchronous instruction. Students will be loaned a board owned device (e.g. laptop or iPad) to support their learning if necessary and arrangements will be made for students to retrieve essential materials from school. Families who require support in connecting to the Internet are asked to contact their child’s school principal to explore options. Edsby will continue to be the main point of contact for families to receive information from their child’s school. Students with special education needs will continue to be supported by school staff.

We encourage all families to ensure that they have a backup plan for childcare in the case that their child’s school or classroom is required to self-isolate and engage in remote learning at home.

A Reminder to Be Kind and to Offer Support: Avoid Stigma

SGDSB remains committed to promoting a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the benefit of students, staff and community members. We recognize that having a positive case of COVID-19 in our communities will be concerning and that it could lead to heightened stress, anxiety and worry. We assure you that it’s normal to feel frightened and anxious at times like these. We also understand that dealing with these difficult emotions is not always easy and it can sometimes impact the way we treat others. As things continue to be tough for many, we encourage you to remain respectful towards each other. Everyone needs to take on these responsibilities and do everything they can to support our communities and prevent the spread of the virus, while maintaining civility, compassion, understanding and kindness.

Please remember that discrimination including harassment or bullying is prohibited. Any person could be stigmatized if they have, have had or are perceived to have COVID-19. Stigmatization can lead to the

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creation of harmful stereotypes that unfairly single out individuals or groups. It could manifest as negative behaviours such as bullying or harassment that targets individuals including racially minoritized groups, Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities. It is discriminatory. This type of negative treatment for reasons unrelated to health and safety, can have a detrimental impact on the mental, physical or emotional well-being of all community members. Let's remember to always be kind to each other, to offer support, to be respectful and to reach out if we need help.

This Fact Sheet has been designed to provide information for school communities considering the changes required by COVID-19. For any questions, concerns, or accommodations, please contact your child's school principal.

*** Adapted from the North of Superior Healthcare Group's article "Preparing for a Positive Case" and the Operational Guidance: COVID-19 Management in Schools documents.*