



Thunder Bay District Health Unit

MAIN OFFICE

999 Balmoral Street
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6E7
Tel: (807) 625-5900
Toll-Free in 807 area code
1-888-294-6630
Fax: (807) 623-2369

GERALDTON

P.O. Box 1360
510 Hogarth Avenue, W.
Geraldton, ON P0T 1M0
Tel: (807) 854-0454
Fax: (807) 854-1871

MANITOUWADGE

1-888-294-6630

MARATHON

P.O. Box 384
Marathon High School
building,
14 Hemlo Drive, Suite B
Marathon, ON P0T 2E0
Tel: (807) 229-1820
Fax: (807) 229-3356

RED ROCK

P.O. Box 196
Superior Greenstone District
School Board Learning Centre
46 Salls Street
Suite #2
Red Rock, ON P0T 2P0
Tel: (807) 886-1060
Fax: (807) 886-1096

TERRACE BAY

P.O. Box 1030
19 Hudson Drive, Suite 100
Terrace Bay, ON P0T 2W0
Tel: (807) 825-7770
Fax: (807) 825-7774

TBDHU.COM

January 20, 2022

Open letter to all parents and caregivers in the TBDHU region

Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) is sharing some important reminders and updates as children return to in-person learning. It's understandable that the transition back to the classroom may bring up some questions and mixed feelings. TBDHU has been working with school boards across the region to plan for this return.

To support a return to in-person learning that is as safe as possible, please remember to do the following:

1. Complete the screening tool every day.

- All students must self-screen daily using the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) before attending school. Note that this screening tool was recently updated. If you use a printed copy, please make sure it is the current version.
- Regardless of vaccination status, DO NOT send your child to school or to any activities if they (or anyone in the household) have symptoms of illness. If your child has completed a self-isolation period, they may return to school if symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or have resolved for at least 48 hours if symptoms affected the digestive system).
- If your child is experiencing any symptoms, follow the instructions provided within the screening tool. An overview of self-isolation guidance is also provided in Ministry of Health flowcharts available at [TBDHU.com/covidexposure](https://www.tbdhu.com/covidexposure).
- Most children are not eligible for PCR testing at an assessment centre. Visit [COVID-19.ontario.ca/exposed](https://www.covid-19.ontario.ca/exposed) for testing eligibility.
- If you have been provided with a COVID-19 rapid antigen test or PCR self-collection kit by your school, please follow the instructions carefully on how to do the test and read the results. One negative result on a rapid antigen test does not guarantee that a person does not have COVID-19.

2. Be diligent with basic public health measures in and outside the classroom to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

- Remind your child to wear a mask, keep a physical distance from people outside of your household, and wash their hands often.
- Reduce the number of contacts your child has outside of school, especially informal gatherings. Social events like family get-togethers, play dates, and activities with other families are spreading the virus. When a child passes it on to other children, more families, schools and child care settings are impacted. No one should attend a gathering or activity if they have any symptoms.
- Follow the infection prevention and control measures implemented by your school board. These are in place to keep schools operating as safely as possible.

3. Get vaccinated against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and offer the best protection from serious illness from COVID-19.

- All individuals aged five years and older are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with at least two doses of vaccine, and a third dose, if eligible (18+ years).
- It is recommended that children aged 5-11 wait 8 weeks between first and second doses of vaccine.
- Visit [TBDHU.com/youthvaccine](https://www.tbdhu.com/youthvaccine) to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine for kids
- Visit [TBDHU.com/covidclinics](https://www.tbdhu.com/covidclinics) for information on where to access vaccines.

Update: Case and Contact Management for Schools and Child care Settings

The provincial government has updated COVID-19 case, contact and outbreak management guidelines and health units are responsible for following up with people who are connected to cases in high risk-settings. Schools are not considered high-risk settings.

- If there is a case in a school, classmates who were following all protocols such as keeping a physical distance and wearing a mask are generally not considered close contacts. Children may have friends that they spend time with outside of school who may be close contacts.
- If you are notified by someone who has symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 that your child is a close contact, follow the instructions found at [TBDHU.com/covidexposure](https://www.tbdhu.com/covidexposure). TBDHU will no longer notify parents about cases in schools and you are not required to report a positive test to TBDHU.
- TBDHU continues to work with schools to monitor for higher levels of absenteeism related to illness and will notify parents if this occurs. Generally, schools will remain open to staff and students who pass the daily screen.

Further information about COVID-19 and schools, vaccination, infection prevention, and more, is available at [TBDHU.com/coronavirus](https://www.tbdhu.com/coronavirus) or check out our social media channels. If you have specific questions, please send us a message through [Contact Us](#).

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation to support the health of our communities throughout this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Dr. Janet DeMille, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Thunder Bay District Health Unit