



February 5, 2021

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Yesterday morning Minister of Education Jennifer Whiteside and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry [announced changes](#) to safety protocols in our schools. Over the past year, as the pandemic evolved, scientists have learned more about the behaviour of the COVID-19 virus and, as a result, the province has strengthened school health and safety guidelines. All of the changes are captured in the updated [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#), with a summary of key changes highlighted in yellow.

We will work with schools in the next little while and all school districts are expected to confirm they've implemented the enhanced safety measures by February 26. Below are the highlights of the important changes that will be coming to our schools, including mask requirements and strengthened guidelines for physical education and music.

All **middle and secondary students** and **K-12 staff** will now be required to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas, including when they are with their learning groups. The only exceptions are when:

- Sitting or standing at their seat or workstation in a classroom;
- There is a barrier in place; or
- They are eating or drinking; and
- Outdoors.

Students who are unable to wear a mask due to health or other reasons are still permitted to not wear one. For elementary students, wearing a mask remains a personal choice.

High intensity physical activities are to be held outside as much as possible. Shared equipment or items, such as weight machines, treadmills or musical instruments, can be used only if they are cleaned between use according to strict sanitization guidelines. Students using equipment or playing instruments should also be spaced at least two metres apart and masks are to be used when singing.

Also, a new mobile Health Check App has been developed for students and their families. Parents and students are encouraged to [download the K to 12 Health Check Mobile App](#) and use it daily.

We will be updating our district Safety Plan to reflect these recent changes with additional information to come from the district or your child's school over the next few weeks.

Sincerely,

Rohan Arul-pragasam
Interim School Superintendent