

# RESTORING SAFE SCHOOLS



## Toolkit for Notification of Cases in Schools

Manitoba Education/Manitoba Health and Seniors Care

Last Updated: September 20, 2021

### Introduction

When students returned to class for the 2021/22 school year, it had been almost 18 months since the first case of COVID-19 was detected in Manitoba. Having a vaccine approved and currently available for every Manitoban born in 2009 or earlier has changed the context for the return to school. Student safety remains a top priority; however, safety is not just about not catching COVID-19. It is about children being as healthy as possible.

Public health officials will continue to monitor cases and transmission trends of COVID-19 in the 2021/22 school year to determine if actions should be taken or modified to prevent or control spread, including updating this guidance as necessary.

### What's New?

The definition of close contacts has been updated, as have isolation (quarantine) requirements.

A form is provided to assist school leaders with reviewing existing preventive measures within the school to support the public health investigation.

Schools will continue to use the e-form to notify Manitoba Education but copies of notification letters will no longer be sent to Manitoba Education.

A 10-day period of self-isolation (quarantine) and remote learning for the class/cohort may be required if ongoing in-class or in-school transmission is suspected (e.g., meets definition of an outbreak). For Kindergarten to Grade 6, it is encouraged to keep the cohort size as small as feasible to avoid large group disruptions to in-person learning. In Grades 7 to 12 the recommendation for self-isolation (quarantine) and remote learning for close contacts in classrooms would only be for those students who are not fully immunized at the time of the exposure or recently infected (i.e. within the previous six months). Students who are close contacts but who provide proof of vaccination for COVID-19 to the school and are asymptomatic can continue to attend classes while waiting for the public health investigation to be completed.

## Self-Isolation (Quarantine) and Testing Requirements for Close Contacts and Household Members

Individuals identified as close contacts are required to self-isolate (quarantine) for 10 days. After their 10-day self-isolation (quarantine), they can then return to school and other activities as long as they are asymptomatic, but they should be vigilant in self-monitoring for symptoms for an additional four days.

Public health officials may exempt close contacts from self-isolation (quarantine) requirements if they are asymptomatic and are fully immunized (i.e. two weeks since their last dose of the vaccine series) at the time of exposure, and do not have a medical condition (e.g., immunocompromised) that would impact vaccine effectiveness, or were recently infected (i.e. within the previous six months).

Public health officials will also review whether the close contact was consistently wearing non-medical or medical masks during the period of exposure. If masks are used consistently, it may be considered a low risk exposure. If the exposure is assessed to be low-risk contact, students and staff will be advised to self-monitor for symptoms and not be required to self-isolate (quarantine) if asymptomatic.

In addition, school officials may also exempt close contacts from self-isolation requirements if they are asymptomatic and provide proof of vaccination while the public health investigation is underway.

There may be circumstances where public health officials determine that these exceptions do not apply (e.g., large outbreak or vaccine breakthrough cases).

Individuals who are exempt from self-isolation (quarantine) should still self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days following any exposure, and isolate immediately and get tested if any symptoms develop.

Close contacts who are required to self-isolate (quarantine) are recommended to go for testing at day 7 after their last exposure to the case, or if symptoms develop. Regardless of whether the close contact tests negative, they must complete their 10 days of self-isolation (quarantine).

Public health officials will determine requirements for household members. Currently, household members of close contacts in general are not required to self-isolate (quarantine) as long as the close contact is asymptomatic and there are no other cases in the household. Household members should wear a mask and physical distance where possible when outside the household, and avoid leaving the home for non-essential reasons until the test results of the close contact are available. Public health officials may determine that some siblings and household members may be required to self-isolate depending on the level of risk.

If the close contact develops COVID-19 symptoms, all household members must self-isolate (quarantine) until the close contact's test results are known, unless household members are asymptomatic and exempt due to recent infection (i.e. within the previous six months) or are fully immunized (14 days since their second dose of vaccine) AND they do not have a medical condition that could compromise vaccine effectiveness.

## Notification of Cases in Schools Toolkit

This toolkit has been developed in partnership with public health officials and Manitoba Education. For 2021/22, the toolkit will support school officials in managing school exposures while minimizing the disruption to student learning as much as possible and layering public health measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in schools.

- When public health officials identify a school as a possible exposure location, they contact the school principal to collect the information gathered to assess the existing preventive measures in place within the school and potentially identify close contacts.
- When students, parents, caregivers, or staff self-identify as a positive case to schools, principals or other school officials may have received this information before notification by a public health official. Collecting relevant information as early as possible will help expedite processes once public health officials contact the school.

This toolkit includes:

- ✓ Notification process steps
- ✓ Definition and examples of close contacts
- ✓ Positive COVID-19 Cases in Schools—Notification Process Checklist (Appendix 1)
- ✓ Forms and Templates:
  - Assessment of Existing Preventive Measures Form (Appendix 2)
  - Case Contact and Potential Close Contact Form (Appendix 3)
  - Sample Letters (Appendix 4)
  - Frequently Asked Questions (Appendix 5)

School officials should refer to the *Notification of COVID-19 Cases in Schools: Quick Reference Guide for Schools and Public Health Officials (QRG)* for reference material and contact links specific to cases in schools.

School officials will continue to play an important role in the notification process. This toolkit is not intended to put schools in the position of making health decisions, but rather to assist school officials in collecting the information public health officials need as part of their investigation. Public health officials are responsible for contact tracing.

**Shifts to remote learning will be directed by public health officials based on a risk assessment. School-wide shifts to remote learning will be a measure of last resort.**

Public health officials and their designates will contact students and staff to confirm if they are close contacts and to ensure they have the necessary information on self-isolation (quarantine) requirements to reinforce the information provided to them by the school. Public health officials will also communicate further instructions to the school to:

- validate or modify any interim actions taken by the school when parents/caregivers of a student or staff self-identify as a case so that the school may follow up with students and families
- advise on actions to be taken at the school when public health officials advise of a confirmed case

Manitoba Education has established a Notification Support Team to respond to official school inquiries, and to support the process. The Notification Support Team will be available to school officials, excluding statutory holidays.

NOTE: This document does not provide answers for all individual situations. Schools and school divisions need to consider how to best integrate this guidance within their local realities and specific situations, in consultation with their local regional health authority. For the purposes of this document, the term 'school officials' refers to principals and/or their delegate.

## School-level Information Gathering

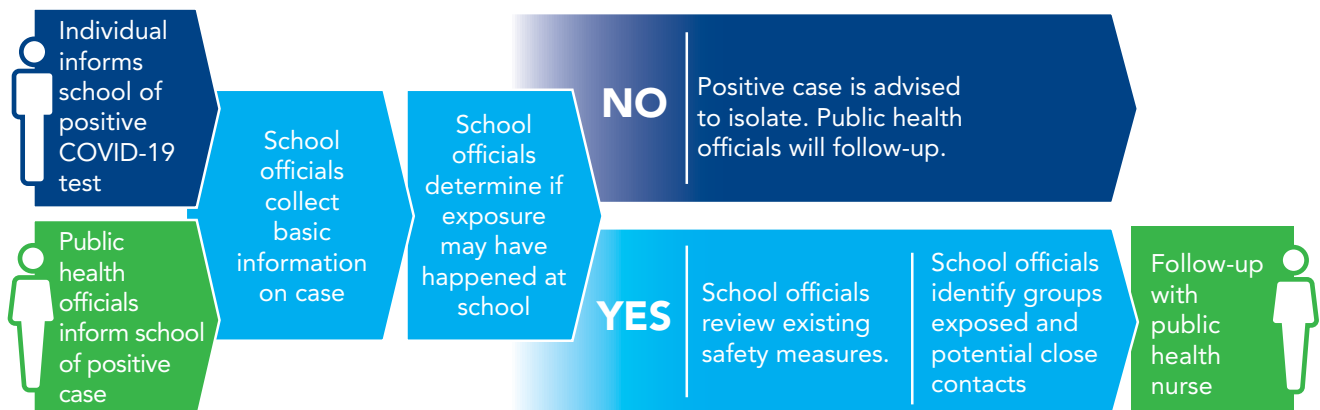
School officials will gather the necessary information when either:

- A parent/caregiver of a student or a staff member informs the school that they have received a positive COVID-19 test, OR
- Public health officials contact the school and inform them of a positive case in their school.

The following diagram provides a high-level overview of the notification process. The detailed steps of the notification processes are explained below.

### Notification Process – Overview

#### Notification Process Steps



A checklist of the following steps is included in Appendix 1.

## **Step 1: Collect information from the individual**

School officials collect information, including:

- the person's name and contact information
- the affected grade and cohort, or classes the case was in, if applicable
- confirming whether the case wore a mask consistently in the school/classroom (*Consistently means that masks are worn indoors and indoor mask breaks are infrequent, occur for only a short period of time (e.g., lunch or snack break), and only occur when 2 metres of physical distancing is maintained.*)
- recording the date symptoms started or the COVID-19 test date if the individual has no symptoms, and the date the individual was last at school, if a positive case is disclosed to the school directly

## **Step 2: Determine if there was risk of exposure at school**

School officials will determine if the student/staff member was at school:

- within 48 hours of symptoms, OR
- 48 hours before their COVID-19 test date, if there are no symptoms.

**If Yes:** Notify Manitoba Education of the potential case in school by completing a brief e-form that includes the period of communicability. The e-form link will be distributed directly to superintendents and principals by Manitoba Education. Please refer to the *Quick Reference Guide* (QRG).

Proceed to the interim notification process outlined below (see Step 3).

**If No:** School officials can reiterate current public health guidance to the individual. The individual will need to wait for direction from public health officials and self-isolate along with their household.

**NOTE:** If the individual was not at school during the communicable period, a public health nurse would not need to contact the school because a school contact investigation is not required. Notification of the school community by school officials is not required in this case.

Communicable period refers to the period extending from 48 hours prior to the development of symptoms (or prior to the COVID-19 test date if asymptomatic), until the case is determined to be no longer infectious. This is usually 10 days after symptom onset (or after the COVID-19 test date if asymptomatic), but could be longer if symptoms persist.

### **Step 3: Review existing preventive measures in place within the school/classroom**

School officials should review the existing preventive measures in place within the classroom or other setting in the school. Note whether:

- reminders are sent to students and staff to self-screen for symptoms
- masks are worn consistently by all students and staff
- seating plans are in effect
- physical distancing is maintained between students and how much distance is maintained, and whether physical distancing is consistently used in the classroom (Note: Physical distancing is recommended to be maintained to the greatest extent possible, but may not be consistently applied in all settings and ages. This information will provide an overview of how much close physical interaction occurs in the setting.)
- there are identifiable issues or concerns with following the ventilation guidance for schools. See ventilation guidance for schools for further information at [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/covid/index.html)
- there are any other cases that have been reported in the school/class/cohort in the past 14 days
- other staff or students are ill and not confirmed to have COVID-19 (may be waiting for test results or may not have been tested or it may be unknown whether they were tested)
- hand hygiene is encouraged upon entry and exit of the class/school and before and after meals/snacks
- cleaning and disinfection of high-touch surfaces or bathrooms is maintained

The Assessment of Existing Preventive Measures Form (Appendix 2) can be used to capture this information. School officials may use the information recorded in this form when contacted by their regional health authority to aid the investigation.

### **Step 4: Identify groups exposed, and potential close contacts if applicable**

School officials begin to compile a list of all the groups or classes who were exposed to the case within the school during the communicable period. The **Case and Potential Close Contact Form** (Appendix 3) can be used to capture this information if schools have not already developed their own form. School officials will use the information in the form when contacted by their regional health authority as part of an investigation. If no potential close contacts are identified, then school officials do not continue with any further information collection.

**A close contact is defined as an individual who was within less than two metres (six feet) from the identified person, for a cumulative 10 minutes over 24 hours, during the communicable period without appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). The use of non-medical and medical masks in the school setting will be considered in the assessment of close contacts in schools, as it is a controlled setting where other preventive measures are also in place.**

**As well, a person would be considered a close contact if they had very close face-to-face interactions with someone who has COVID-19 without the use of appropriate PPE, even if the interaction was for a cumulative total of less than ten minutes. This includes people who provided care for the case or had direct contact with infectious body fluids without the use of appropriate PPE. This information will be verified by public health officials. It also includes individuals who had close contact such as hugging, sharing of food and personal items, etc.**

Public health officials may also require the names, phone numbers, and date of birth of all individuals in the exposed groups if in-school transmission is suspected and self-isolation (quarantine) and remote learning is recommended for the class/cohort.


### **Step 5: Consult with public health officials**

School officials will discuss the information the school collected. Public health officials will work with the school to collect the completed information and will provide direction and guidance on formal notifications.

Public health officials will complete the investigation. Public health officials typically contact the case within 24 to 48 hours of receiving the positive test result. Once public health officials determine that there may have been in-school exposure, they will contact school officials shortly thereafter. If a school official has not been contacted by a public health official within 48 hours, they may reach out to the Notification Support Team. Contact information is found in the *Quick Reference Guide* (QRG).

If school officials are awaiting information from public health officials:

- It is reasonable to allow students in classes or cohorts to attend school if they are asymptomatic, have been wearing masks consistently, and other preventive measures have been in place, while awaiting further investigation by public health officials.
- If potential close contacts are identified and they have not been wearing masks consistently, school officials should notify potential close contacts and advise them to self-isolate (quarantine) until contacted by public health officials. Students who are potential close contacts but who are fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic can continue to attend classes while waiting for the public health investigation to be completed. School officials may choose to send an optional letter/ email notifying the potential close contacts, pending public health investigation.



Note: If only a single case is reported in the school, or if there is more than one case but the cases have most likely acquired the infection outside the school, the students (excluding the case[s] and confirmed close contacts) can continue to attend school with preventive measures in place, as long as they self-monitor for symptoms and isolate and get tested if symptoms occur.

### **Step 6: Notification of school community and confirmed close contacts**

After confirmation with public health officials, school officials will notify the school community and confirmed close contacts, if identified, and advise them of the exposure. Public health officials will validate the information schools have collected and school officials will then send out the appropriate confirming letter(s) to the identified recipients.

Individuals confirmed as close contacts by public health officials will be required to self-isolate (quarantine).

Frequently asked questions can be found in Appendix 5.

### **Step 7: Public health officials continue their investigation**

Public health officials continue their case and contact investigation, beyond the school investigation.



## Appendix 1: Positive COVID-19 Cases in Schools – Notification Process Checklist

### 1. Collect information from the individual

- ✓ Gather preliminary information: contact information; affected grade and cohort. If applicable; confirm whether the case wore a mask consistently in school/classroom; the date symptoms started (if the individual has no symptoms, school officials will collect the COVID-19 test date); and the date the individual was last at school.

### 2. Determine if there was risk of exposure at the school

- ✓ Find out if the student or staff person was at school within the 48 hours before symptom onset or 48 hours before their COVID-19 test date, if there are no symptoms.
  - If no, nothing more needs to be done. School officials can reiterate current public health guidance to self-isolate and wait for direction from public health officials.
  - If yes, notify Manitoba Education about the case by completing a brief e-form and proceed to step 3.

### 3. Review existing preventive measures in place within the school/classroom

- ✓ Complete the Assessment of Existing Preventive Measures Form to record preventive measures in place to prepare for contact by your regional public health authority.

### 4. Identify groups exposed and potential close contacts, if applicable.

- If no potential close contacts, nothing more needs to be done.
- If yes, complete Case Contact and Potential Close Contact Form to collect basic information, including the number and description of potential close contacts.

### 5. Consult with public health officials

When the public health nurse contacts the school to do the contact investigation, school officials will discuss the information the school collected.

### 6. Notify the school community and confirmed close contacts

After public health officials validate the information schools have collected, school officials will send out the appropriate confirming letter to the identified recipients. Schools can send the optional letters pending the outcome of consultation with public health officials.

### 7. Public health officials continue their investigation

The school's role is complete. A public health nurse completes the case summary e-form.

## Appendix 2: Assessment of Existing Preventive Measures Form

### Assessment of Existing Preventive Measures Form

School officials can use this form to capture existing preventive measures in place within a classroom or other settings to prepare for contact by their regional health authority as part of an investigation.

#### Previous Cases and Potential Cases

1. Have any other COVID-19 cases been reported in the school/class/cohort in the past **14 days**?

Yes  No

If yes, provide details (e.g., number of cases, which class/cohort).

[Enter response here.](#)

2. Are there any other students or staff who are suspected and not confirmed to have COVID-19 (e.g., may be waiting for test results or may not have been tested or may be unknown whether they were tested)?

Yes  No

If yes, provide details (e.g., number/percentage of absent students or staff, which class/cohort).

[Enter response here.](#)

#### Preventive Measures

3. Are reminders sent to students and staff to self-screen for symptoms?

Yes  No

4. Is hand hygiene encouraged upon entry and exit of the class/school and before and after meals/snacks?

Yes  No

5. Are there routine cleaning and disinfection processes in place for high-touch surfaces and bathrooms?

Yes  No

6. Are masks worn consistently by all students and staff, focusing on the class/cohort that may have been exposed?

Yes  No

If no, provide details.

[Enter response here.](#)

7. Is distancing to the greatest extent possible reliably maintained? Is it consistently used in the school setting?

Yes  No

Please specify.

[Enter response here.](#)

8. Are seating plans available?

Yes  No

If yes, provide details below or attach additional documentation.

[Enter response here.](#)

9. Are there any issues or concerns with the ventilation system?

Yes  No

If yes, please describe.

[Enter response here.](#)

**Other**

10. Are there any other concerns relevant to the situation of which you want public health officials to be aware?

Yes  No

If yes, provide this information below.

[Enter response here.](#)

## Appendix 3:

### Case Contact and Potential Close Contact Form

School officials can use this form to capture information about a case and potential close contacts within a classroom or other setting. This information helps prepare for contact by your regional health authority as part of an investigation.

**COMPLETE ALL APPLICABLE FIELDS SHADED IN GREY**

Date initiated \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date updated \_\_\_\_\_  
 Completed by \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Regional Health Authority \_\_\_\_\_

**School Positive Section 1 - Basic Information**

1. School Name *(Ensure full name entered as shown in drop down list)* type all or part of school name here, then click down arrow for options \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. Affected grade/cohort \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. Role \_\_\_\_\_  
 4. First name \_\_\_\_\_  
 5. Last name \_\_\_\_\_  
 6. Phone number \_\_\_\_\_  
 7. Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 8. Date symptoms started \_\_\_\_\_  
 9. Date Tested (if not symptomatic) \_\_\_\_\_  
 10. Was the student/staff member at school within 48 hours of symptoms OR 48 hours before their COVID-19 test date, if there are no symptoms?  Yes  No

A close contact is defined as an individual who was not consistently 6 feet (2 meters) away from a case for a cumulative 10 minutes over a day without appropriate personal protective equipment.

seating charts used to populate Section 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Name	Birthdate	Sex	Phone #	Classroom	Washroom	- (check all that apply)			Bus (Route/#)	Other (specify)	Date of last contact
						Lunchroom	Mask Use	Other			
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## Appendix 4: Sample Letters

### Potential Close Contact Letter (Optional)

Insert School Letterhead

<Date>

<Name of School, Institution or Facility>

<Address>

RE: POTENTIAL CLOSE CONTACT LETTER

A member of our school community has informed us that they have tested positive for COVID-19. Public health officials have not yet completed their case investigation. However, based on our assessment of the situation, we believe your child may have been a close contact of this case.

We believe the following groups may have been in close contact with this individual:

<Cohort, class, or other subgroup>

**As a member of this group, public health officials require your child to self-isolate (quarantine) until you are contacted by public health or school officials. Self-isolating means staying home, avoiding others, and not leaving the house for school, work, or to go to other public places until further direction is provided by a public health official. Household members without symptoms do not need to self-isolate (quarantine), as long as your child remains without symptoms.**

More information about self-isolation (quarantine) can be found at [http://Manitoba.ca/asset\\_library/en/covid/factsheet-isolation-selfmonitoring-returningtravellers-contacts.pdf](http://Manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/factsheet-isolation-selfmonitoring-returningtravellers-contacts.pdf).

If you have questions before a public health official contacts you, you can call Health Links—Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

Please note: We are not permitted to release the name or any identifying information about a self-identified or confirmed case of COVID-19 to any member of the school, facility, community, or media.

However, public health officials advise that if anyone develops any one symptom listed in Column A or any two or more symptoms listed in Column B (see table below), even if they are mild, they should immediately self-isolate (quarantine). They also recommend testing for COVID-19 as soon as symptoms appear. Call Health Links—Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257 for information on testing and isolation.

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A	B
Fever/Chills	Runny nose
Cough	Muscle aches
Sore throat/hoarse voice	Fatigue
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
Loss of taste or smell	Headache
Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours	Skin rash of unknown cause
	Nausea or loss of appetite
	Poor feeding (if an infant)

Please note: Individuals with symptoms outlined in Columns A and B, who choose not to be tested, must isolate for a minimum of 10 days following the start of symptoms. Isolation can be stopped at day 10 if the individual has been symptom-free for 24 hours.

For more public health information about COVID-19, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.

Sincerely,

Principal/Manager/Supervisor  
<Name of School, Institution or Facility>

## Close Contact Letter for Parent/Guardian (Required)



Health and Seniors Care  
Population and Public Health  
300 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 3M9  
T 204-788-6701  
www.manitoba.ca

Insert Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: Close Contact Notification Letter—Insert Name of School/Child Care Centre**

If you have received more than one letter, please follow the direction **in this letter**.

Manitoba public health officials advised the school of at least one confirmed case of COVID-19 in **Insert Classroom/Cohort/Bus or other location (as applicable)** on **Insert Date** when the individual(s) may have been infectious. **Your child has been identified as a close contact of this/these case(s).**

The school is working closely with public health officials and is following their recommendations. **Your child must self-isolate (quarantine) effective today up to and including Insert Date or as directed by public health officials.** They can return to school after that date as long as they have no symptoms, however, you should continue to monitor your child for symptoms for another 4 days after the 10-day self-isolation (quarantine) has ended.

Testing is recommended for close contacts who remain asymptomatic 7 days after the last exposure to the case. The test at day 7 is important in identifying asymptomatic cases, and ensuring they self-isolate while they are infectious. If test results are negative, they should continue to self-isolate (quarantine) until the end date above.

Household members who have no symptoms should wear a mask and physical distance where possible when outside the household, and avoid leaving the home for non-essential reasons until your child's test result is available. If your child develops symptoms they should get tested and all household members should self-isolate until your child's test result is known. Public health officials may recommend additional isolation requirements for household members if required.

Exemptions are in place for self-isolation (quarantine) for close contacts and household members who have no symptoms and are fully immunized or recently infected with COVID-19 in the past six months. Public health officials will advise you if you and/or your child meet the exemption criteria.

You can expect a phone call from a public health official before the end of your child's self-isolation (quarantine) period. Given the scale of Manitoba's response, public health officials include regional public health staff, the Public Health COVID-19 Contact Centre, Canadian Red Cross, 24-7 Intouch, and other partners.

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They will confirm your identity, and ask about your child's temperature checks and whether they have any symptoms or about any issues related to their self-isolation (quarantine). If you have questions the contact centre agent is not able to answer, they will transfer you to a health professional that can answer your question and give you further direction.

If you have questions in the meantime, you can call Health Links—Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

If your child develops a new onset or worsening of any one symptom listed in Column A or any two or more symptoms listed in Column B (see table below), even if they are mild, immediately isolate them from others (if you have not already done so). It is recommended your child get tested for COVID-19 as soon as symptoms appear. You may go directly to the nearest COVID-19 testing location during their open hours. For the testing site nearest you, please visit <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing/locations.html> or call Health Links—Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

A	B
Fever/Chills	Runny nose
Cough	Muscle aches
Sore throat/hoarse voice	Fatigue
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
Loss of taste or smell	Headache
Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours	Skin rash of unknown cause
	Nausea or loss of appetite
	Poor feeding (if an infant)

Please note the following:

- Public health officials strongly encourage testing so it can be determined whether COVID-19 transmission has occurred within the school.
- The school is not permitted to release the name or any identifying information about the confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 to any member of the school, community, or media.

More information about self-isolation (quarantine) can be found at [http://www.manitoba.ca/asset\\_library/en/covid/factsheet-isolation-selfmonitoring-returningtravellers-contacts.pdf](http://www.manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/factsheet-isolation-selfmonitoring-returningtravellers-contacts.pdf)

For more public health information about COVID-19, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.

Sincerely,

Office of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer  
Manitoba Health and Seniors Care



## Close Contact Letter for Staff (Required)



**Health and Seniors Care**  
Population and Public Health  
300 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 3M9  
T 204-788-6701  
www.manitoba.ca

Insert Date

Dear Staff Member,

**Re: Close Contact Notification Letter—Insert Name of School/Child Care Centre**

If you have received more than one letter, please follow the direction in this letter.

Manitoba public health officials advised the school of at least one confirmed case of COVID-19 in [Insert Classroom/Cohort/Bus or other location \(as applicable\)](#) on [Insert Date](#) when the individual(s) may have been infectious. **You have been identified as a close contact of this/these case(s).**

The school is working closely with public health officials and is following their recommendations. **You must self-isolate (quarantine) effective today up to and including [Insert Date](#) or as directed by public health officials.** You can return to school after that date as long as you have no symptoms, however, you should continue to monitor yourself for symptoms for another 4 days after the 10-day self-isolation (quarantine) has ended.

Testing is recommended for close contacts who remain asymptomatic 7 days after the last exposure to the case. The test at day 7 is important in identifying asymptomatic cases, and ensuring they self-isolate while they are infectious. If test results are negative, they should continue to self-isolate (quarantine) until the end date above.

Household members who have no symptoms should wear a mask and physical distance where possible when outside the household, and avoid leaving the home for non-essential reasons until your test result is available. If you develop symptoms you should get tested and all household members should self-isolate until your test result is known. Public health officials may recommend additional isolation requirements for household members if required.

Exemptions are in place for self-isolation (quarantine) for close contacts and household members who have no symptoms and are fully immunized or recently infected with COVID-19 in the past six months. Public health officials will advise you if you and/or your household members meet the exemption criteria.

You can expect a phone call from a public health official before the end of your self-isolation (quarantine) period. Given the scale of Manitoba's response, public health officials include regional public health staff, the Public Health COVID-19 Contact Centre, Canadian Red Cross, 24-7 Intouch, and other partners.

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They will confirm your identity, and ask about your temperature checks and whether you have any symptoms or about any issues related to your self-isolation (quarantine). If you have questions the contact centre agent is not able to answer, they will transfer you to a health professional that can answer your question and give you further direction.

If you have questions in the meantime, you can call Health Links—Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

If you develop a new onset or worsening of any one symptom listed in Column A or any two or more symptoms listed in Column B (see table below), even if they are mild, immediately isolate from others (if you have not already done so). It is recommended you get tested for COVID-19 as soon as symptoms appear. You may go directly to the nearest COVID-19 testing location during their open hours. For the testing site nearest you, please visit <https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/testing/locations.html> or call Health Links—Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

A	B
Fever/Chills	Runny nose
Cough	Muscle aches
Sore throat/hoarse voice	Fatigue
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
Loss of taste or smell	Headache
Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours	Skin rash of unknown cause
	Nausea or loss of appetite
	Poor feeding (if an infant)

Please note the following:

- Public health officials strongly encourage testing so it can be determined whether COVID-19 transmission has occurred within the school.
- The school is not permitted to release the name or any identifying information about the confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 to any member of the school, community, or media.

More information about self-isolation (quarantine) can be found at [http://www.manitoba.ca/asset\\_library/en/covid/factsheet-isolation-selfmonitoring-returningtravellers-contacts.pdf](http://www.manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/covid/factsheet-isolation-selfmonitoring-returningtravellers-contacts.pdf)

For more public health information about COVID-19, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.

Sincerely,

Office of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer  
Manitoba Health and Seniors Care

## School Community Notification Letter (Required)



**Health and Seniors Care**  
Population and Public Health  
300 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 3M9  
T 204-788-6701  
www.manitoba.ca

Insert Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: School Community Notification Letter—Insert Name of School/Child Care Centre**

Manitoba public health officials have advised of at least one confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school on **Insert Date** in **Insert Classroom/Cohort/Bus or other location (as applicable)** when the individual(s) may have been infectious. The school is working closely with public health officials and is following their recommendations. At this time, there is no evidence of further spread in the school, and students can continue to attend school as long as they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 as listed on the following page.

Close contacts have been identified and advised to self-isolate (quarantine). If your child has not been identified as a close contact, public health officials still recommend that you closely monitor your child for symptoms of COVID-19 for two weeks after the exposure date.

If your child develops a new onset or worsening of any one symptom listed in Column A or any two or more symptoms listed in Column B (see table below), even if they are mild, immediately isolate them from others.

**It is recommended your child get tested for COVID-19 as soon as symptoms appear.** You may go directly to the nearest COVID-19 testing location during their open hours. For the testing site nearest you, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/testing/index.html>, or call Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

Public health officials are also advising the following for anyone with a household member who is symptomatic, but not identified as a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case:

- household members who have no symptoms should wear a mask and physical distance where possible when outside the household, and avoid leaving the home for non-essential reasons until the symptomatic person's test result is available.

.../2

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Fever/Chills	Runny nose
Cough	Muscle aches
Sore throat/hoarse voice	Fatigue
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
Loss of taste or smell	Headache
Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours	Skin rash of unknown cause
	Nausea or loss of appetite
	Poor feeding (if an infant)

Individuals with symptoms outlined in Columns A and B, who choose not to be tested, must isolate for a minimum of 10 days following the start of symptoms. Isolation can be stopped at day 10 if the individual has been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Please note the following:

- Public health officials strongly encourage testing so it can be determined whether COVID-19 transmission has occurred within the school.
- The school is not permitted to release the name or any identifying information about the confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 to any member of the school, community, or media.
- The school will focus on preventive measures during this two-week monitoring period to reduce the risk of further transmission. This may include postponing group activities, and continuing to encourage preventive measures such as physical distancing, appropriate mask use, and hand hygiene among students. You may notice some adjustments to their learning plans as a result. If there are any updates on further cases or extensions to the monitoring period, you will be notified.

For more public health information about COVID-19, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.

Sincerely,

Office of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer  
Manitoba Health and Seniors Care

## Additional Case Update to School Community Notification Letter (Required)



**Health and Seniors Care**  
Population and Public Health  
300 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 3M9  
T 204-788-6701  
www.manitoba.ca

Insert Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: Additional Case Update to School Community Notification Letter—Insert Name of School/Child Care Centre**

Manitoba public health officials have advised of at least one additional confirmed case of COVID-19 in the school on [Insert Date](#) in [Insert Classroom/Cohort/Bus or other location \(as applicable\)](#) when the individual(s) may have been infectious. This is an update to the previous notification in the past 14 days.

The school is working closely with public health officials and is following their recommendations. At this time, there is no evidence of further spread in the school, and students can continue to attend school as long as they do not have symptoms of COVID-19 as listed on the following page.

Close contacts have been identified and are advised to self-isolate (quarantine). If your child has not been identified as a close contact, public health officials still recommend that you closely monitor your child for symptoms of COVID-19 for two weeks after the updated exposure date above.

If your child develops a new onset or worsening of any one symptom listed in Column A or any two or more symptoms listed in Column B (see table below), even if they are mild, immediately isolate them from others.

**It is recommended your child get tested for COVID-19 as soon as symptoms appear.** You may go directly to the nearest COVID-19 testing location during their open hours. For the testing site nearest you, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/testing/index.html>, or call Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

Public health officials are also advising the following for anyone with a household member who is symptomatic, but not identified as a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case:

- household members who have no symptoms should wear a mask and physical distance where possible when outside the household, and avoid leaving the home for non-essential reasons until the symptomatic person's test result is available.

... /2

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Fever/Chills	Runny nose
Cough	Muscle aches
Sore throat/hoarse voice	Fatigue
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
Loss of taste or smell	Headache
Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours	Skin rash of unknown cause
	Nausea or loss of appetite
	Poor feeding (if an infant)

Individuals with symptoms outlined in Columns A and B, who choose not to be tested, must isolate for a minimum of 10 days following the start of symptoms. Isolation can be stopped at day 10 if the individual has been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Please note the following:

- Public health officials strongly encourage testing so it can be determined whether COVID-19 transmission has occurred within the school.
- The school is not permitted to release the name or any identifying information about the confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 to any member of the school, community, or media.
- The school will focus on preventive measures during this monitoring period to reduce the risk of further transmission. This may include postponing group activities, and continuing to encourage preventive measures such as physical distancing, appropriate mask use, and hand hygiene among students. You may notice some adjustments to their learning plans as a result. If there are any updates on further cases or extensions to the monitoring period, you will be notified.

For more public health information about COVID-19, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.

Sincerely,

Office of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer  
Manitoba Health and Seniors Care

## School Community Notification Letter – Outbreak (Required)



**Manitoba**  
Health and Seniors Care  
Population and Public Health  
300 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 3M9  
T 204-788-6701  
www.manitoba.ca

Insert Date

Dear Parent/Guardian,

**Re: School Community Notification Letter (Outbreak)—Insert Name of School/Child Care Centre**

Manitoba public health officials have advised of at least three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in **Insert Classroom/Cohort/Bus or other location (as applicable)** within 14 days that may have been acquired at school. Additional measures are recommended to prevent further transmission and an outbreak is being declared. Investigation is ongoing by public health officials. Declaring an outbreak allows public health officials to more quickly assess ongoing COVID-19 transmission patterns within the affected group(s). In many situations, additional cases are expected to be identified, but may not always be due to transmission within the school setting. **All individuals in this/these group(s) are considered close contacts and must self-isolate (quarantine) to prevent further spread, unless they are exempt from self-isolation (quarantine) as directed by public health officials.**

Exemptions are in place for self-isolation (quarantine) for close contacts who are asymptomatic and are fully immunized at the time of the exposure or recently infected with COVID-19 in the past six months. Public health officials will advise if your child has been identified as a close contact and meets the exemption criteria. Of note, exemptions may not always be granted in a setting where an outbreak is being investigated.

The school is working closely with public health officials and is following their recommendations. Close contacts have been identified and notified in a separate letter. If your child has not been identified as a close contact, your child can continue to attend school and public health officials recommend that you closely monitor your child for symptoms of COVID-19.

If your child develops a new onset or worsening of any one symptom listed in Column A or any two or more symptoms listed in Column B (see table below), even if they are mild, immediately isolate them from others.

**It is recommended your child get tested for COVID-19 as soon as symptoms appear.** You may go directly to the nearest COVID-19 testing location during their open hours. For the testing site nearest you, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/testing/index.html>, or call Health Links-Info Santé at 204-788-8200 or toll-free at 1-888-315-9257.

... /2

Public health officials are also advising the following for anyone with a household member who is symptomatic, but not identified as a close contact to a confirmed COVID-19 case:

- Household members who have no symptoms should wear a mask and physical distance where possible when outside the household, and avoid leaving the home for non-essential reasons until the symptomatic person's test result is available.

<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Fever/Chills	Runny nose
Cough	Muscle aches
Sore throat/hoarse voice	Fatigue
Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing	Pink eye (conjunctivitis)
Loss of taste or smell	Headache
Vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours	Skin rash of unknown cause
	Nausea or loss of appetite
	Poor feeding (if an infant)

Individuals with symptoms outlined in Columns A and B, who choose not to be tested, must isolate for a minimum of 10 days following the start of symptoms. Isolation can be stopped at day 10 if the individual has been symptom-free for 24 hours.

Please note the following:

- Public health officials strongly encourage testing so it can be determined whether COVID-19 transmission has occurred within the school.
- The school is not permitted to release the name or any identifying information about the confirmed case(s) of COVID-19 to any member of the school, community, or media.
- The school will focus on additional preventive measures during the outbreak to reduce the risk of further transmission. This may include postponing group activities, and continuing to encourage preventive measures such as physical distancing, appropriate mask use, and hand hygiene among students. You may notice some adjustments to their learning plans as a result. If there are any updates on further cases, you will be notified.

For more public health information about COVID-19, please visit <https://manitoba.ca/covid19/updates/resources.html>.

Sincerely,

Office of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer  
Manitoba Health and Seniors Care



## Appendix 5: Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. How soon can I expect to be contacted by public health officials (if I hear about a case)? Do I need to contact public health officials myself? May I contact them myself? Who do I contact if I don't hear from public health officials in a timely manner?**

Public health officials typically contact the case within 24 to 48 hours of receiving the positive test result. Once public health officials determine that there may have been in-school exposure, they will contact school officials shortly thereafter. If a school official has not been contacted by a public health official within 48 hours, they may reach out to the Notification Support Team. Contact information is found in the *Quick Reference Guide (QRG)*.

- 2. Can I send potential close contacts home to self-isolate (quarantine) just to be on the safe side while waiting to hear from public health officials? At what point do I send an entire class home to self-isolate (quarantine)? At what point would my school move to remote learning?**

If potential close contacts are identified using the definition provided in this tool-kit, they can be sent home to self-isolate while they wait to hear from public health officials. If this has been done, please ensure you relay the information to the public health official. Students who are potential close contacts but who provide proof of vaccination for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic can continue to attend classes while waiting for the public health investigation to be completed.

For students and staff who are in the exposed groups, but not identified by the school as potential close contacts, wait for public health officials to confirm recommendations before sending these students or staff home to self-isolate (quarantine). Part of the public health officials' process includes reviewing the information provided by the school officials as well as determining whether the potential close contact meets criteria for exemptions from self-isolation (quarantine). This will reduce the amount of unnecessary disruption to in-person learning.

Shifts of classes to remote learning will be directed by public health officials based on a risk assessment of potential in-school transmission.

- 3. I need help understanding all these procedures, who do I contact for support?**

If school officials have questions regarding the Toolkit for Notification of Cases in Schools or the notification process, they can contact the Notification Support Team. More details regarding contact information can be found in the *Quick Reference Guide (QRG)*.

#### **4. Are non-medical masks considered protective and does wearing them prevent students from being identified as a close contact?**

Wearing of masks in the community has been associated with reduced spread of COVID-19. The benefit of masking occurs primarily from source control—protecting others from the mask wearer, as well as some protection for the mask wearer. Mask use has been found to be safe and is not associated with clinically significant impacts on respiration or gas exchange. The wearing of masks is an integral part of a layered approach of public health measures in schools.

In the school setting, consistent mask use by both the case and contact, in combination with other preventive measures in place, may be considered lower risk contact. Public health officials will assess the context of the interactions with the case and any other factors that may increase the risk of exposure when assessing close contacts in schools. If the exposure is assessed to be low-risk contact, students and staff will be advised to self-monitor for symptoms and not be required to self-isolate (quarantine) if asymptomatic.