

COVID-19 guidance for schools Kindergarten to Grade 12 ^[1]

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Source: Government of Canada

Format: government document

Publication Date: 9 Aug 2020

AVAILABILITY

Access online ^[2]

Excerpted from introduction

The following guidance is directed to administrators of schools from kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) and local public health authorities (PHAs) in jurisdictions where these schools exist. The guidance is not prescriptive in nature, rather, it supports administrators and PHA's to consider potential risks and mitigation strategies associated with the resumption of in-school classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance is based on the current Canadian context, the concepts outlined in the Community-based measures to mitigate the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Canada, the current scientific evidence, and expert opinion. It builds on and should be used in conjunction with the Risk mitigation tool for child and youth settings operating during the COVID-19 pandemic guidance document.

This guidance is subject to change as new information on transmission and epidemiology becomes available. It should be read alongside and in support of guidance from provincial/territorial (PT) health authorities, ministries of education and Indigenous community governance structures. Guidance from provincial/territorial health authorities will consider local epidemiology, which may vary across the country. Therefore, it is not expected that implementation of this guidance will be uniform throughout Canada, as outlined in the Guidance for a Strategic Approach to lifting Public Health Measures in Canada.

This guidance provides information for both public and private institutions providing K-12 education programs in the classroom setting. It takes into consideration the diverse needs of population groups based on vulnerability, ethnicity/culture, disability, developmental status, and other socioeconomic and demographic factors. This guidance uses the term children/youth interchangeably with the term student(s) to align with all associated guidance and web content. Other K-12 school-based activities that may be impacted by the advice in this guidance include sports, school based nutrition programs, music classes/programs and field trips, child care provided outside of regular school hours (for example, before and after child care), professional development/activity days and school break day camps.

Schools play many important roles in communities and the development of children/youth. They provide necessary education to prepare children for adulthood, and long term online education for K-12 is not a substitute for in-person learning and socialization in a school setting. Long-term shutdowns have the potential to lead to education gaps and other consequences for many children. Particular groups may be disproportionately affected^{Footnote1}, such as children living in poverty, those who receive school-based meals, those who rely on school-based services such as counselling, those who are in situations of domestic violence or abuse, children with disabilities, and those who rely on the certainty of education and social supports to maintain health and community inclusion. Despite the educational and psychosocial benefits of children/youth attending school in-person, administrators, staff, students, families, and community members may have concerns regarding a return to in-person school attendance during the COVID-19 pandemic. By encouraging a risk assessment and mitigation approach in schools, and providing specific considerations on the psychosocial wellbeing of children, youth, staff, and volunteers, this guidance aims to support schools to create an environment that is prepared, supportive, and safe.

Related link:

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: school system ^[4]

health and safety guidelines ^[5]

Source URL (modified on 13 Aug 2020): <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/08/covid-19-guidance-schools-kindergarten-grade-12>

Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/20/08/covid-19-guidance-schools-kindergarten-grade-12> [2]

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html> [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/school-system> [5]

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