

# School Reopening Update

**BOARD OF HEALTH MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 25 2020**



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**DR. IAN ARRA MD, MSC, FRCPC, ACPM, ABPM(D)  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH**

# Objectives

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- Update on safe school reopening in Grey and Bruce
- Example of surveillance systems – School absenteeism surveillance, ED Visits
- Challenges and solutions

# School Illness Surveillance- Grey Bruce Health Unit: Data Notes

Data are received from the Bluewater District School Board and Bruce Grey Catholic District School Board daily on school days around 5 p.m, and the dashboard is refreshed on the morning of the following working day.

Absences are included if the person notifying the school board of the absence specifies that it is due to illness. If the person provides details about symptoms that will be categorized as 'respiratory', 'gastrointestinal' or 'COVID-like' (currently only BGCDSB provides 'COVID-like' symptoms as a category).

Currently, absences due to any illness are totaled and converted to a percentage of the number of active students on a given day. If more than 10% of the active students were absent due to illness on a given day, an alert symbol will appear beside the illness rate for that school. This threshold may be adjusted as we continue to assess its usefulness.

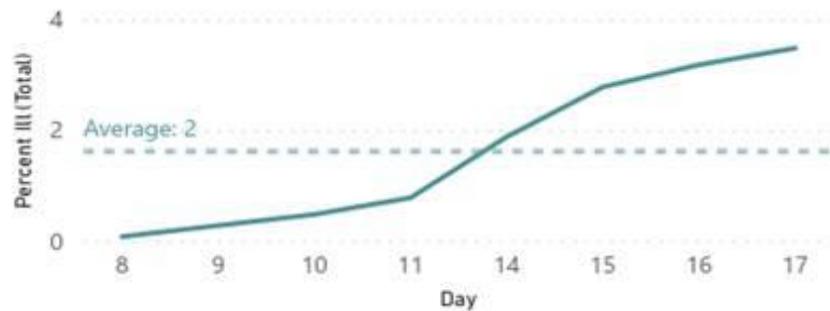
Note that there are currently no codes to indicate whether a child is staying home while they, or a family member self-isolates or awaits a test result. This may result in a large difference between a school's total absences for the day, and absences due to illness for that day.

# RESP ED visits Sept 9-15 by Chief Complaint (Only included if chief complaint appears more than once)

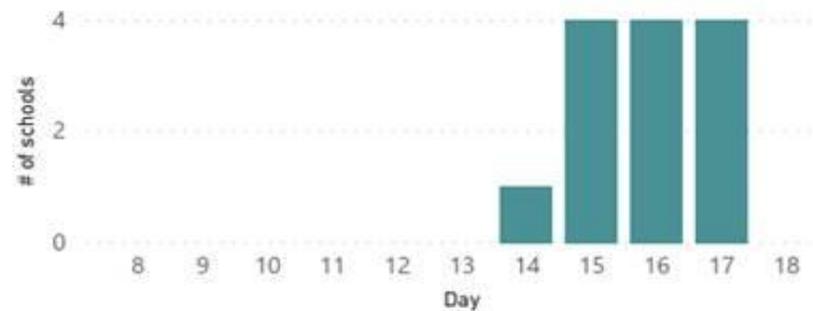
Row Labels	Count of Complaint
Sore Throat	31
EAR PAIN	15
COUGH	10
EAR ACHE	9
Cough or Cold or Flu	7
EARACHE	4
RT EAR PAIN	3
COLD	3
EAR INFECTION	3
CAUGH AND COLD	2
LEFT EARACHE	2
LEFT EAR PAIN	2
SINUS INFECTION	2

# School Illness Surveillance- Grey Bruce Health Unit

Overall Illness Rate: All Schools



# of Schools w Illness Rate > 10%



Total Absences due to Illness, Previous School Day

614

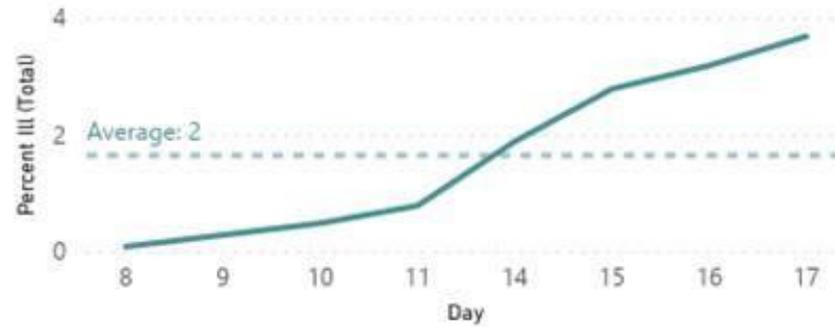
Total Absences due to Illness and Illness Rates, Previous School Day

Board	Name	# of Active Students	Illness Days - Total	Percent Ill (Total)
BWDSB	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	546	44	8
BWDSB	Arran-Tara Elementary School	379	39	10
BWDSB	East Ridge Community School	746	38	5
BWDSB	Hillcrest Central School	114	38	33
BWDSB	Beavercrest Community School	199	33	17
BWDSB	G.C. Huston Public School	278	29	10
BWDSB	Beaver Valley Community School	514	27	5
BWDSB	Walkerton District Community School	356	27	8
BWDSB	Osprey Central School	346	24	7
BWDSB	Hillcrest Elementary School	506	23	5
BWDSB	Elgin Market Public School	255	19	8
BWDSB	Ripley-Huron Community School	293	19	7
BWDSB	Kincardine Township-Tiverton Public School	233	17	7
BWDSB	Macphail Memorial Elementary School	503	17	3
BWDSB	Highpoint Community School	340	16	5
BWDSB	Spruce Ridge Community School	289	16	6
BWDSB	Alexandra Community School	255	15	6
BWDSB	Hanover Heights Community School	310	15	5
BWDSB	Normanby Community School	170	14	8
BWDSB	Holland-Chatsworth Central School	280	13	5
BWDSB	Mildmay-Carrick Public School	162	13	8
BWDSB	Chesley District Community School	276	11	4
BWDSB	Dundalk & Proton Community School	234	10	4
BWDSB	Keppel-Sarawak Elementary School	357	10	3
BWDSB	Over Sound District Secondary School	1078	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>17372</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>4</b>

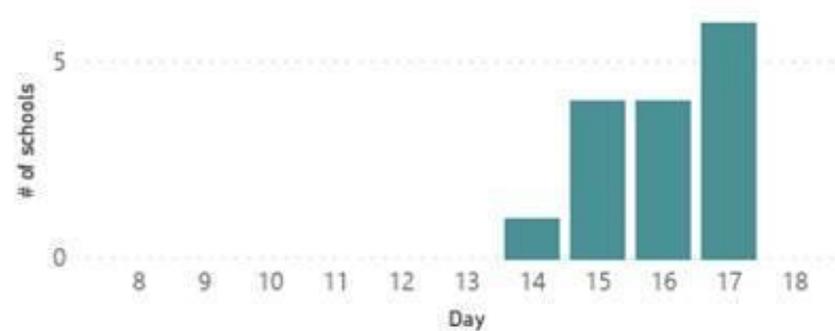
# School Illness Surveillance- Grey Bruce Health Unit

17-Sep-20

Overall Illness Rate: All Schools



# of Schools w Illness Rate > 10%



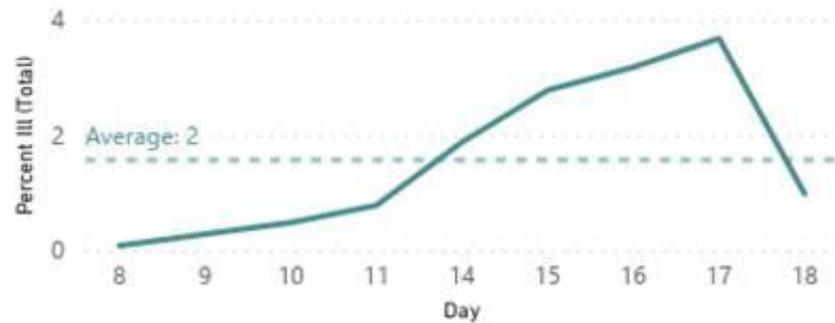
Total Absences due to Illness and Illness Rates, Previous School Day

Board	Name	# of Active Students	Illness Days - Total	Percent Ill (Total)
BGCDSB	Ecole Immaculee-Conception	332	60	18
BWDSB	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	546	44	8
BWDSB	Arran-Tara Elementary School	379	39	10
BWDSB	East Ridge Community School	746	38	5
BWDSB	Hillcrest Central School	114	38	33
BGCDSB	St. Basil's School	357	35	10
BWDSB	Beavercrest Community School	199	33	17
BWDSB	G.C. Huston Public School	278	29	10
BWDSB	Beaver Valley Community School	514	27	5
BWDSB	Walkerton District Community School	356	27	8
BWDSB	Osprey Central School	346	24	7
BWDSB	Hillcrest Elementary School	506	23	5
BWDSB	Elgin Market Public School	255	19	8
BGCDSB	Holy Family School	304	19	6
BWDSB	Ripley-Huron Community School	293	19	7
BWDSB	Kincardine Township-Tiverton Public School	233	17	7
BWDSB	Macphail Memorial Elementary School	503	17	3
BWDSB	Highpoint Community School	340	16	5
BWDSB	Spruce Ridge Community School	289	16	6
BWDSB	Alexandra Community School	255	15	6
BWDSB	Hanover Heights Community School	310	15	5
BWDSB	Normanby Community School	170	14	8
BGCDSB	St. Joseph's School	236	14	6
BWDSB	Holland-Chatsworth Central School	280	13	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>22069</b>	<b>807</b>	<b>4</b>

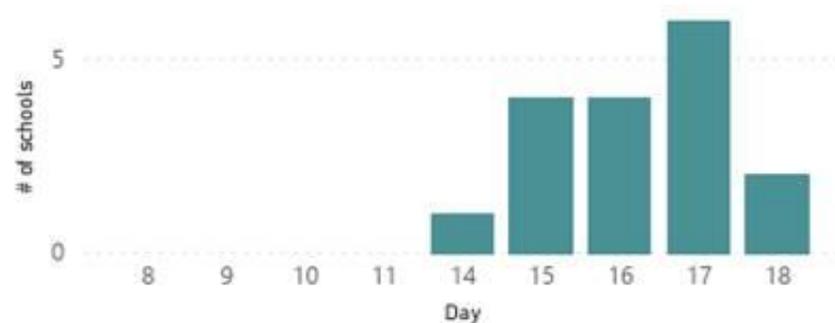
# School Illness Surveillance- Grey Bruce Health Unit

18-Sep-20

Overall Illness Rate: All Schools



# of Schools w Illness Rate > 10%



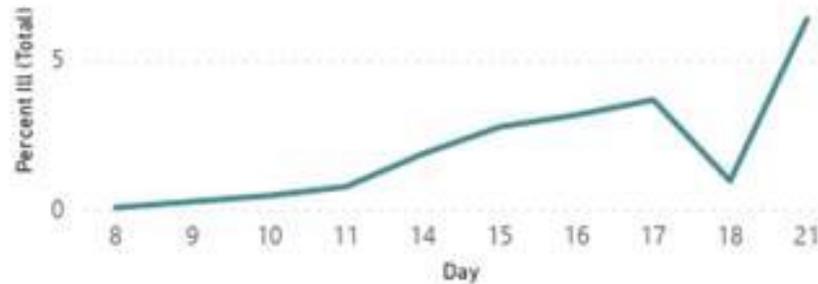
Total Absences due to Illness and Illness Rates, Previous School Day

Board	Name	# of Active Students	Illness Days - Total	Percent Ill (Total)
BWDSB	Beavercrest Community School	199	31	16
BWDSB	Hillcrest Central School	114	23	20
BGCDSB	Ecole Immaculee-Conception	332	12	4
BWDSB	East Ridge Community School	746	11	2
BWDSB	Hanover Heights Community School	310	11	4
BWDSB	Highpoint Community School	340	9	3
BWDSB	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	546	9	2
BGCDSB	St. Basil's School	357	9	3
BWDSB	G.C. Huston Public School	278	8	3
BGCDSB	Notre Dame School	587	7	1
BWDSB	Saugeen District Senior Secondary School	594	7	1
BWDSB	Beaver Valley Community School	514	6	1
BWDSB	Dundalk & Proton Community School	234	6	3
BWDSB	Kincardine Township-Tiverton Public School	233	6	3
BWDSB	Mildmay-Carrick Public School	162	6	4
BWDSB	Chesley District Community School	276	5	2
BWDSB	Huron Heights Public School	267	5	2
BWDSB	Kincardine District Senior School	167	5	3
BWDSB	Lucknow Central Public School	118	5	4
BWDSB	Owen Sound District Secondary School	1078	5	1
BWDSB	Spruce Ridge Community School	289	4	1
BWDSB	Elgin Market Public School	255	3	1
BWDSB	Holland-Chatsworth Central School	280	3	1
BWDSB	Macphail Memorial Elementary School	503	3	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>22069</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>1</b>

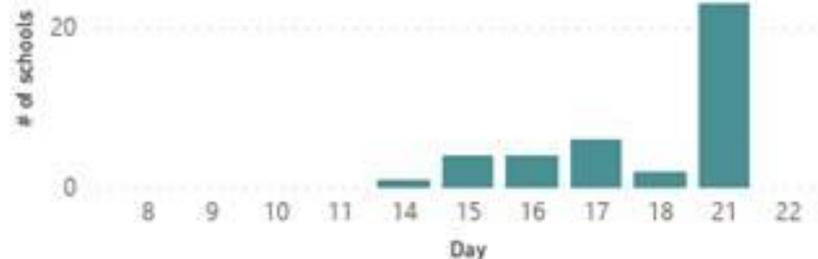
# School Illness Surveillance- Grey Bruce Health Unit

21-Sep-20

Overall Illness Rate: All Schools



# of Schools w Illness Rate > 10%



Total Absences due to Illness and Illness Rates, Previous School Day

Board	Name	# of Active Students	Illness Days - Total	Percent Ill (Total)
BWDSB	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	549	109	20
BGCDSB	St. Anthony's School	473	72	15
BWDSB	East Ridge Community School	739	68	9
BGCDSB	St. Basil's School	357	66	19
BWDSB	Hillcrest Elementary School	510	52	10
BWDSB	Keppel-Sarawak Elementary School	359	49	14
BWDSB	Beavercrest Community School	199	45	23
BWDSB	Hanover Heights Community School	308	44	14
BWDSB	Walkerton District Community School	357	44	12
BGCDSB	Ecole Immaculee-Conception	330	43	13
BWDSB	Arran-Tara Elementary School	377	40	11
BWDSB	Beaver Valley Community School	514	38	7
BWDSB	Holland-Chatsworth Central School	273	38	14
BWDSB	Ripley-Huron Community School	290	38	13
BWDSB	G.C. Huston Public School	280	35	13
BGCDSB	St. Joseph's School	236	34	14
BGCDSB	Notre Dame School	588	31	5
BGCDSB	St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	293	31	11
BWDSB	Hillcrest Central School	116	29	25
BWDSB	Spruce Ridge Community School	290	29	10
BWDSB	Huron Heights Public School	275	28	10
BWDSB	Alexandra Community School	258	25	10
BWDSB	Macphail Memorial Elementary School	511	24	5
BWDSB	Kincardine District Senior Secondary School	462	23	5
<b>Total</b>		<b>22004</b>	<b>1405</b>	<b>6</b>

# School Illness Surveillance, Grey Bruce Health Unit, Sep 22 2020

Total Absences due to Illness and Illness Rates, and Absences due to All Reasons, Previous School Day

Board	Name	# of Active Students	Illness Days - Total	% Absent (All Illness)	Absences (All)	% Absent (All Absences)
BWDSB	Port Elgin-Saugeen Central School	548	135	24.6	196	35.8
BWDSB	East Ridge Community School	739	99	13.4	170	23.0
BGCDSB	St. Basil's School	357	89	24.9	112	31.4
BGCDSB	St. Anthony's School	474	73	15.4	157	33.1
BWDSB	Keppel-Sarawak Elementary School	353	63	17.8	90	25.5
BWDSB	Hanover Heights Community School	307	57	18.6	89	29.0
BGCDSB	St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic School	291	56	19.2	71	24.4
BWDSB	Hillcrest Elementary School	507	55	10.8	102	20.1
BGCDSB	Ecole Immaculee-Conception	330	54	16.4	64	19.4
BWDSB	Beavercrest Community School	200	51	25.5	58	29.0
BWDSB	Arran-Tara Elementary School	376	49	13.0	84	22.3
BGCDSB	St. Joseph's School	232	47	20.3	58	25.0
BWDSB	Beaver Valley Community School	515	43	8.3	121	23.5
BGCDSB	Notre Dame School	588	41	7.0	85	14.5
BWDSB	Holland-Chatsworth Central School	270	39	14.4	76	28.1
BWDSB	Ripley-Huron Community School	289	39	13.5	63	21.8
<b>Total</b>		<b>21962</b>	<b>1717</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>3878</b>	<b>17.7</b>

% Absent due to Illness: All Schools



# of Schools w Illness Rate > 10%



# RESP ED visits Aug 26- Sept 14

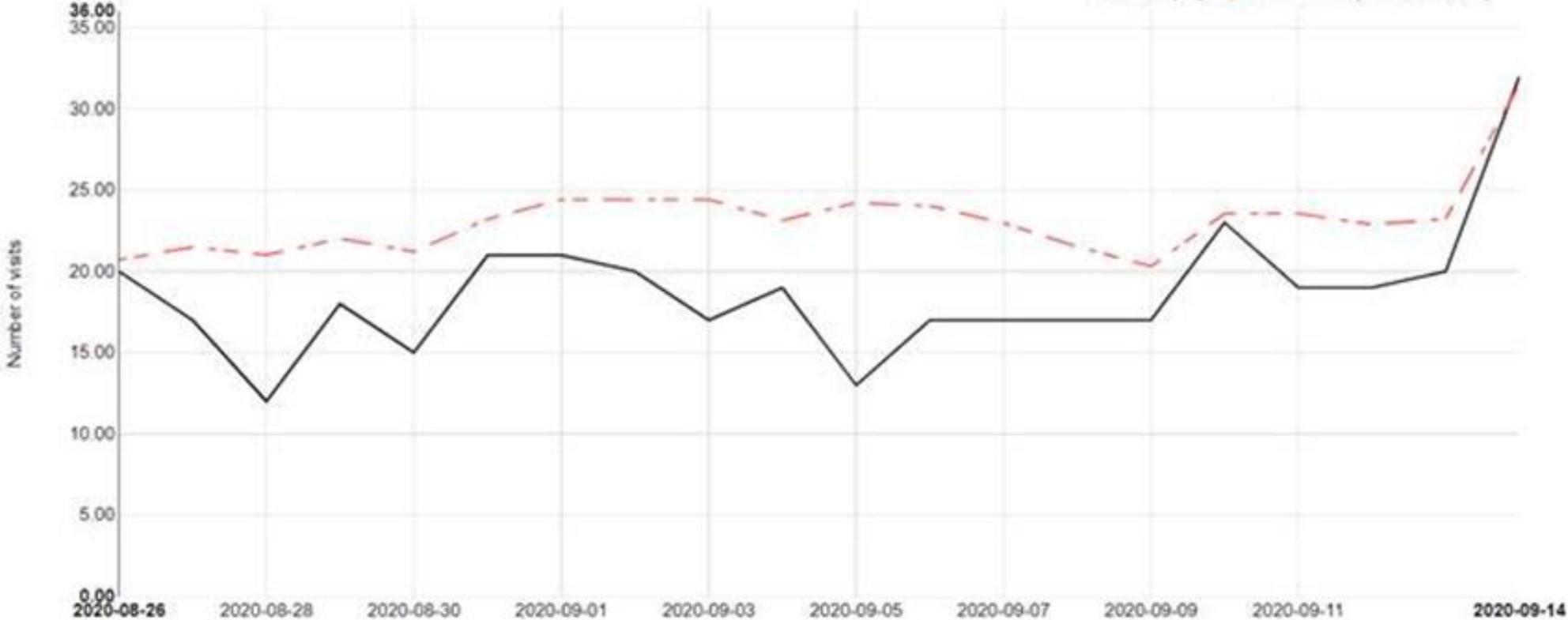
Grey Bruce Health Unit

Normalize:

Moving Average: **None**

Standard Deviation:

● RESP [All] ● RESP STD 2 [All STD DEV 2]



# PPEs and Hand Sanitizer in Schools in GB

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In most schools optimal supply

In some schools minor shortage, to be corrected through:

- The Ministry of Education
- Bruce Power donations
- Grey County EMS

# Examples of Factors Affecting Capacity of COVID-19 Testing (real-time PCR)

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Symptomatic, exposed, asymptomatic (anxiety-driven, mass testing e.g. LTC Staff, LTC visitors)

Assessment Centres, Primary care, EMS, Pharmacies (announced), Self-administered testing (not in Ontario)

Lab Capacity, pooling

Currently, COVID-19 swabs are the only test available for public use in Ontario. saliva test not currently available for public use in Ontario

# Testing of Asymptomatic Mass Screening

While there is no denying the critical importance of testing as part of these actions to quickly identify cases and trigger our contact management activities, we are extremely concerned about the increasing emphasis on asymptomatic mass screening (also known as “surveillance testing”). Based on the evidence and our experience so far, this practice is unlikely to be of any consequence as a pandemic control measure, has proven to be cost-ineffective and, given the resources and nature of the follow-up required, is almost certain to do more harm than good.

A sampling of three long term care homes in another southwestern health unit found that a single asymptomatic positive case in each resulted in a total of \$300,525 spent to respond to suspected outbreaks. In other words, each asymptomatic surveillance test result cost the long-term care system over \$100,000 to manage situations where there has been no real risk of transmission.

# COVID-19 Testing is NOT Panacea

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- testing should not be automatic based on anxiety
- Recommendation for testing should only be provided by Public Health
- Important Note: Individuals without symptoms or exposure (Close Contact) should NOT be tested
- The decision of whether a person is a Close Contact to a case is based on a thorough risk assessment and is only made by Public Health.

# Surge in Number of People Attending Assessment Centers

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Two main reasons:

- the heightened anxiety of worried parents seeking testing for the assurance their child was not infected. This was addressed by the September 15 [MOH Open Letter to Parents](#).
- a more significant issue for which we are still working on is related to the use of the provincial COVID-19 school screening tool.

This concern seems to be due to a stringent “application” of the provincial screening tool. Parents and school staff are not trained to make clinical decisions, and because of this the province developed the new electronic assessment tool.

# Safe Reopening – Protocol

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In response to the surge, adaptive approach in directing school partners in adopting the newly released provincial [COVID-19 school screening](#) tool

A symptomatic student and school staff will only be permitted to return to school if:

- They have received a negative COVID test result and has been symptom free for 24 hours AND are able to pass the [Provincial Screening Tool](#).

Or

- They have remained in home isolation for 14 days from the onset of symptoms AND are symptom-free for 24 hours before returning to school.

# Safe Reopening – Protocol

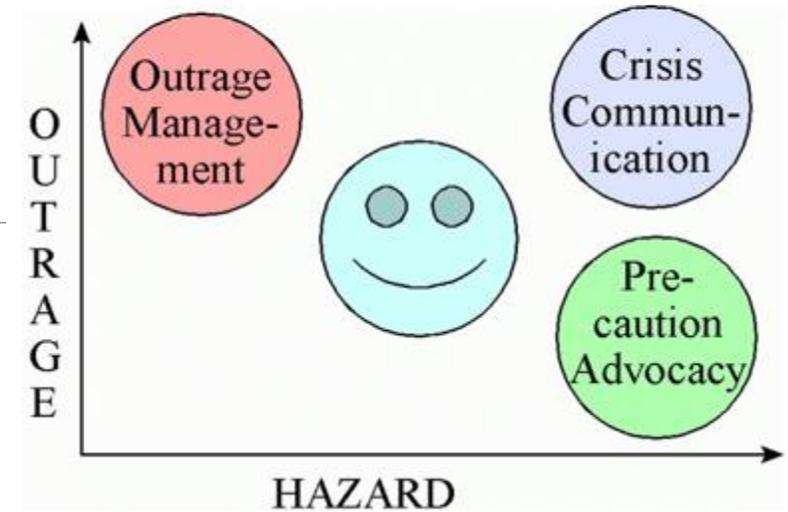
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All asymptomatic members of the same household are to self-monitor for 14 days  
Asymptomatic students in the same household may return to school and do not require a COVID-19 test

For a symptomatic individual without a negative test, the 14 days period is required. Provincial direction and evidence-based practice

We are-enforcing the 24-hour symptom free for return to school. Example, runny nose is an indication a child is probably shedding a virus. If the child is COVID negative and goes back to class →infect other children → will be considered as COVID until proven otherwise

# Communication Framework



**Outrage management:** hazard is low & outrage is high – reassuring excessively upset people about small risks, reduce outrage (e.g., fluoride)

**Precaution advocacy:** hazard is high & outrage is low – alerting insufficiently upset people to serious risks, nurture outrage (e.g., radon)

**Crisis communication:** hazard is high & outrage is high – helping appropriately upset people cope with serious risks (e.g., “We’ll get through this together”)

# Safe Reopening – Modified Normality

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Difficult time for everybody, but we all need to be patient and stick to a conservative approach with a measured reduction in restrictions to ensure safety

A safe reopening will not be the opening we had on normal years, rather a modified normality

School Board officials are reporting “happy kids”. With absenteeism rate of 10%, about 90 % of families are well served. We continue to work with schools and assessment centers to better serve the remaining 10%

# Questions?



Public Health - Together We Build Healthy Communities