

NOTICE TO FAMILIES OF KPDSB STUDENTS

KPDSB Schools Remain Open for In-Person Learning, New Health and Safety Protocols Announced

January 13, 2021

Yesterday (Tuesday, January 12, 2021), the Ontario Government declared a second provincial emergency due to the COVID-19 pandemic and increasing cases in the province. To view the full media release, please [click here](#). **All KPDSB schools will continue with in-person learning during the state of emergency** until otherwise notified by the Ministry of Education or the medical officer of health.

The announcement yesterday also included some new or enhanced health and safety protocols in schools that will come into effect tomorrow (Thursday, January 14, 2021). Please see the information below.

Masking Now Required for Students in Grades 1-3

Facemasks will now be mandatory for all students in grades 1-3 as of Thursday, January 14 (previously, it was strongly recommended that students wear facemasks in those grades but was not required until Grade 4). We understand that families may need some time to acquire masks for their children, some flexibility will be in place with full enforcement beginning on Monday, January 18, 2021. Masking will also be required for grades 1-3 on school buses.

The following information around face masks/coverings is from Health Canada ([click here to visit the page](#)):

Well-designed and well-fitting masks or face coverings can prevent the spread of your infectious respiratory droplets. They may also help protect you from the infectious respiratory droplets of others.

How well a mask or face covering works depends on the materials used, how the mask is made, and most importantly, how well it fits.

*A mask or face covering can be [homemade](#) or purchased, and **should**:*

- *be made of at least 3 layers*
 - *2 layers should be tightly woven material fabric, such as cotton or linen*
 - *the third (middle) layer should be a filter-type fabric, such as non-woven polypropylene fabric*
- *be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose, mouth and chin without gaping*
- *allow for easy breathing*

- *fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops*
- *be comfortable and not require frequent adjustments*
- *be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty*
- *maintain its shape after washing and drying*

Please note that Health Canada does not recommend the use of neck gaiters or buffs. You can find more information on this at the link above.

The Northwestern Health Unit also has resources on their website around how to wear a face mask properly, please [click here](#) to access the resource.

Students in grades 4-12 are already required to wear masks while in schools and on the school bus. Masking remains strongly recommended but not mandatory for Kindergarten students.

Masking Outdoors Now Required for Students in Grades 1-12

Masking will now be required for students in grades 1-12 for outdoor activities where physical distancing is not possible.

Enhanced Screening Protocols

The announcement yesterday included that enhanced screening protocols will be implemented in schools and childcares. We are awaiting further details on this. Families should continue to use the [school screening tool](#) every day before sending their child(ren) to school.

Targeted Testing

The announcement also made mention of targeted testing. The ministry will be expanding targeted testing for students, staff and their respective households. Testing will be voluntary and will also include child care settings. Schools and childcare settings will be identified by local public health, with a focus on those experiencing outbreaks, with high case counts, or in high priority communities. At this time, no targeted testing is planned for our schools.

Secondary In-Person Cooperative Education Placements Paused

In-person Cooperative Education (Coop) placements for secondary students will be paused for the duration of the emergency order. Families who have questions about their child's coop placement should contact their child's school directly.

School Bus Transportation

School bus transportation operated by the Northwestern Ontario Student Services Consortium will continue to be provided and will follow regular arrangements and schedules. Starting Thursday, January 14, masks must be worn on the bus as well as outdoors at bus stops by students in grades 1-12. Masks are strongly recommended for bus riders in Kindergarten. Families are reminded that [screening](#) must be completed prior to boarding the bus each day.



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For information about your child(ren)'s bussing arrangements and details about measures in place on school buses to reduce the spread of COVID-19, please visit www.nwobus.ca.

Thank you to all of our families for your support as we implement these new requirements. Should you have any questions, please contact your child's school (contact information for our schools can be found at [this link](#)).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sherri-Lynne Pharand".

Sherri-Lynne Pharand, Director of Education