



Wednesday, February 24, 2021

To all BHNCD SB Families and Staff,

Thank you for your ongoing patience and understanding as we continue to navigate the everchanging COVID-19 landscape together. Recently, the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health have made changes to items and processes connected to the COVID-19 pandemic. Those changes impact our families and our schools. For everyone to be fully informed of new information, screening, choices, and the results of having symptoms, I am summarizing the new direction for you. Please understand that these procedures, including the self-isolation and siblings also dismissed instructions, have come directly from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education not the Board or school staff, and we are obligated to follow their direction including the new symptom guidelines detailed below.

If a student or staff member presents any ONE (or more) of the following at school, the individual and all siblings (at the same or other school) and parents (at the same or other school if applicable) will be instructed to go home, self-isolate and comply with the ‘Next Steps for Families’ as presented by public health.

Symptoms

Fever and/or Chills

Temperature of 37.8 degrees Celsius/
100 degrees Fahrenheit or higher.

Cough

More than usual (if chronic cough), including croup (barking cough, making a whistling noise when breathing).
Not related to other known causes or conditions.

Sore Throat

Painful swallowing or difficulty swallowing.
Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., postnasal drip, gastroesophageal reflux).

Stuffy Nose and/or Runny Nose

Nasal congestion and/or rhinorrhea.
Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., seasonal allergies).

Headache

That is new and persistent, unusual, unexplained or long-lasting
Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., tension-type headaches, chronic migraines).

Fatigue, Lethargy, Muscle Aches or Malaise

General feeling of being unwell, lack of energy, extreme tiredness, poor feeding in infants.

Decrease or Loss of Smell or Taste

New olfactory or taste disorder.
Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., nasal polyps, allergies, neurological disorders).

Nausea, Vomiting and/or Diarrhea

Not related to other known causes or conditions (e.g., transient vomiting due to anxiety in children, menstrual cramps, irritable bowel syndrome, inflammatory bowel disease, side effect of medication).

Shortness of Breath

Dyspnea, out of breath, unable to breathe deeply, wheeze, that is worse than usual if chronically short of breath.
Not related to other known causes or conditions.

NEXT STEPS FOR FAMILIES/STAFF and Direction from the Ministry of Health

When an individual is sent home from school, all members living in the same household (siblings, parents, etc.) are also required to self-isolate.

The symptomatic individual and all members living in the same household (siblings, parents, etc.) cannot return to school until **ONE** of the following options has occurred:

Symptomatic student has received a negative COVID-19 test result AND

- Has not had a fever (without using medications) **AND**
- It has been at least 24 hours since symptoms improved **AND**
- Has not been in close physical contact with someone who currently has COVID-19.

OR

Symptomatic student has received an alternative diagnosis from a health care provider.

OR

It has been 10 days since symptoms started for the symptomatic individual and they are feeling better AND

- During the 10 days, all members living in the same household must also self-isolate **AND**
- Additionally, all household members must self-isolate and stay isolated for a total of **14 days from their last contact with the symptomatic individual**. (What this means is if the symptomatic individual is able to self-isolate within the household – from the other household members for the full 10 days, then the others in the household can return after **day 14 OR** if the other household members have had any contact with the symptomatic individual within their 10-day self-isolation period, then the other household member(s) must self-isolate for an additional **14 days** after the last day they were with the symptomatic individual. This means that household members in contact with a symptomatic individual could have to self-isolate for 24 days.)

Recommendation for Families and Staff

It is very important that all individuals screen properly each day before heading to school. If screening takes place, it reduces the chance that an individual ends up at school and reports symptoms.

Daily COVID-19 Screening

All staff and students are required to conduct **daily self-assessments before arriving at school**. Use the Ontario COVID-19 School Screening Tool found at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> For more information visit the Brant County Health Unit website: www.bchu.org or the Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit website: www.hnhu.org.

We remind families to follow the guidance of our health experts and know that we will continue to walk together, in faith, supporting one another and our children.

Please stay well.

Mike McDonald, Director of Education