

Guidelines for School Absenteeism

The Health Protection and Promotion Act R.S.O., 1990 (HPPA) and Infectious Diseases Protocol requires that the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit conduct surveillance of infectious diseases of public health importance.

Windsor-Essex County schools are required to report illness related school absenteeism to the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit of **greater than >10%**.

Schools that have a concern about a specific class or cohort that does not meet the threshold for 10% need not fill out the reporting form online and should contact their school nurse to discuss.

The following is a checklist to guide schools in the management of increased absenteeism rates:

CHECKLIST	
√	NOTIFICATION
	Report increased absenteeism rates (>10%) daily through the online reporting form (Click here for link to School Absenteeism Reporting). Be prepared to report the following information : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of ill students and ill staff • Total # of students and staff in school • Ages/grades affected by illness • Symptoms (e.g. diarrhea, vomiting, cough, nasal congestion, sore throat) • Location of illness in building (e.g. cafeteria, classroom, entire building) • Any school activities or events prior to illness (e.g. pizza lunch day, school fair, field trip)
	The school, in collaboration with the Health Unit will determine if communication to parents is required
√	INFECTIOUS DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL (IPAC) MEASURES
	Encourage staff and students to stay home when sick.
	Review Protocol for Students with Symptoms of COVID-19 flow chart which includes exclusion criteria for sick staff and students and reasons for self- isolation
	Consult with environmental cleaning staff to implement enhanced environmental cleaning measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use broad-spectrum disinfectants, particularly after contamination by feces or vomit. • Increase cleaning and disinfection frequency in the school, with attention to “high-touch” common areas (e.g., door handles, water fountains, hand rails, elevator buttons, computer keyboards and mouse, table tops and counters, toys, sleep equipment, and washrooms). Observe contact time required (i.e., time required for disinfection to occur) of the disinfectants used. (refer to labels for direction)
	Review General COVID-19 recommendations with staff and students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily symptom monitoring before coming to school • Stay home if ill and seek medical assessment • Physical distancing (6ft/2m) • Mask use • Hand hygiene and cough etiquette
	Recommend frequent hand washing throughout the day for all staff and students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If using soap and water, wash hands for at least 20 seconds (time it takes to sing happy birthday) • If using alcohol based hand sanitizer use one that is 60-90% alcohol. Check expiry date.
	Reinforce no sharing of items unless necessary. If sharing is necessary, follow disinfection recommendations between students.

Post the following poster to reinforcing infection prevention measures.

- Hand Washing (JK to Gr2/Kids) poster
- Wear it Right mask poster
- Physical Distance in Place poster
- Cough and Sneeze poster

Posters are available for order on WECHU website: <https://www.wechu.org/cv/school-resource-order-form>

For more information:

COVID-19 Preparedness and Prevention in Elementary and Secondary (K-12) Schools:

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/documents/ncov/sch/09/covid-19-checklist-preparedness-schools.pdf?la=en>