School COVID Questions

Q: What is the process if someone in the school tests positive for COVID-19?

A: The NWHU will contact the positive case and gather details about their contacts. For cases in schools, NWHU may contact the school to get phone numbers for contacts of the case.

The positive case will self-isolate and will not return to the school until they are no longer able to spread the virus.

Contacts of the case will be notified and will be asked to self-isolation for 14 days.

As with other infectious diseases in schools, NWHU will advise school officials on enhanced cleaning.

School closure would only be implemented if in collaboration with the school it was felt that closure was necessary to controlling the disease. This might include: too many staff absences to safely maintain control measures in the school; evidence that inability to maintain control measures or failure to maintain control measures caused spread of the virus in the school.

Q: How will I know if my student has been in contact with a positive COVID-19 case?

A: NWHU will contact anyone who is a contact of a positive case.

Q: What happens if a parent or sibling of a student has been identified as a contact of a positive case?

A: A risk assessment will help with this decision.

Depending on risk factors, parents and siblings may be asked to self-monitor for symptoms or may be asked to self-isolate for a specified period of time.

Q: How can my student prevent getting COVID-19?

A: Your school has put in measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. As with all infectious diseases, students should:

- wash hands regularly
- stay 2 metres from others (when possible)
- stay home when feeling unwell
- practise cough/sneeze etiquette
- follow any other instructions required by the school such as use of masks

Q: When must I not send my student to school?

A: If NWHU has told your student to self-isolate, they cannot go to school.

If your student has any symptoms of illness, they cannot go to school.

Northwestern
Health Unit

www.nwhu.on.ca

Q: What is a "contact"?

A: A contact is someone who has spent at least 15 minutes within 2 metres of a confirmed case.

Passing someone in a hall or yard or simply being in the same school does not make someone a contact.

Q: What is contact tracing?

A: Contact tracing is the process of identifying, assessing, and managing people who have been exposed to a disease to prevent further transmission. Contact tracing breaks the chains of transmission of COVID-19 and is an essential public health tool for controlling the virus.

NWHU connects with everyone that a positive case identifies as a contact. Cases and contacts are required to follow the control measures public health directs.

Q: What is the role of public health when there is a positive case?

A: The first role of public health when there is a positive case is to prevent further spread. This is done by: requiring the infected person to follow self-isolation for a specific period of time, and working with the person to determine who they have had close contact with, between 48 hours before symptoms started or test was taken (if the person has no symptoms), and the date and time the person started self-isolation. Public health then requires contacts to follow specific, similar control measures. Public health officials monitor all of these individuals throughout their required period of control measures.

Q: What is self-isolation?
A: https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-stop-spread#section-3

Q: When must students be excluded from school?

A: • when a student is directed by the NWHU to not attend school until a specified date
- if student has symptoms and is awaiting a COVID-19 test result
- if student is feeling unwell