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January 17, 2022

RE: RAPID ANTIGEN TESTING

Dear Parents/Guardians:

In an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, reduce absences, and support our school communities, the Ministry of Education has provided rapid antigen tests for use by students and staff when they are experiencing symptoms compatible with COVID-19.

School boards were required to de-kit boxes in order to distribute two tests per individual. All instructions were followed to ensure the safe re-packaging.

This testing option, which aligns with the updated testing guidance from Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, is voluntary for students, children and staff.

If a symptomatic individual chooses not to participate, they are presumed positive and should isolate immediately and follow the updated testing guidance in the [COVID-19: Interim Guidance for Schools and Child Care: Omicron Surge](#) document.

Please read the information below carefully, if choosing to participate.

When to Use a Take-home Rapid Antigen Screening Kit:

For individuals choosing to participate in this testing option, they must display symptoms commonly associated with COVID-19.

As outlined in the updated [guidance](#) and the [school screening tool](#), this includes:

Fever and/or chills; OR
Cough; OR
Shortness of breath; OR
Decrease or loss of taste or smell; OR

Two or more of:

runny nose/nasal congestion
headache
extreme fatigue
sore throat
muscle aches/joint pain
gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. vomiting or diarrhea)

Symptomatic individuals must complete the rapid antigen tests at home.

If the first RAT test is positive, there is no need to use the second test. A positive RAT is highly indicative that the individual has COVID-19. A positive RAT does NOT need to be confirmed with a PCR test. Positive RAT tests do NOT need to be reported to the public health unit, school or child care.

If the first RAT test is negative, complete the second test separated by 24-48 hours.

Using the Take-home Rapid Antigen Screening Kit:

There are three different varieties of rapid antigen tests that are being distributed by the province. Please see the links below for instructions on how to use each variety:

1. [BTXN Rapid Response™](#)
2. [SD Biosensor](#)
3. [Trimedica FaStep®](#)

You may also reference this how-to video: <https://youtu.be/EWSFJ1JoUd0>

Please disregard the asymptomatic reference at the beginning of the video. Only use the test if **symptomatic**. The video provides helpful instructions.

Important note:

Parents/guardians may choose to administer this screening on children who may need help (i.e. younger children).

What to do after your test:

You will know the outcome of the test within 15 minutes.

If the first rapid antigen test is positive, there is no need to use the second test. A positive rapid antigen test is highly indicative that the individual has COVID-19. Positive rapid antigen tests do NOT need to be reported to the public health unit, school or child care.

If the first rapid antigen test is negative, complete the second test within 24-48 hours of the first test. If two consecutive rapid antigen tests, separated by 24-48 hours, are both negative, the symptomatic individual is less likely to have COVID-19 infection, and the individual should isolate until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms are present).

If the individual who tests positive is fully vaccinated or 11 years of age or younger, they must self-isolate for at least 5 days from symptom onset and until their symptoms have been improving for 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms), whichever is longer in duration.

If the individual who tests positive is 12 years of age or older and is either partially vaccinated or unvaccinated, they must self-isolate for 10 days from symptom onset or from the date of their test (whichever was earlier).

If the individual who tests positive is immune compromised (regardless of age and vaccination status) they must self-isolate for 10 days from the onset of symptoms, or from the date of their test (whichever came sooner).

If symptoms persist / worsen, individuals are encouraged to seek advice from Telehealth or their health care provider.

Please note:

In alignment with updated testing guidance, there is no confirmatory PCR test required if an individual tests positive.

For more information about what to do if you receive a positive test result, please follow the [guidance](#).

Thank you for working together to keep everyone safe.

Sincerely,



Bruce Bourget
Director of Education