



# ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE SCHOOL

Under the direction of the Basilian Fathers

January 13, 2022

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Here we go.

We look forward to having the boys back at school Monday. We know students should be engaged and learning at school.

As a community, we are aware of the risks involved in learning and living together during these pandemic days.

Understanding that the Omicron variant spreads easier than previous variants, we continue to respond by implementing the required and recommended strategies to keep our students and staff safe.

Only with communal vigilance to health protocols can we maximize our mitigation strategies. We continue to need everyone to be in this together to move forward and reduce the impact on the community and safely keep learning in-person.

Thank you for your attention to the note on January 11. These updated and subsequent messages help maneuver us through what seems like an endless journey of changing expectations. We need to ride out this wave and hope we are moving out of pandemic living.

Please:

- Read the updated daily screener ([smcsscreener.com](http://smcsscreener.com)) carefully as the questions have changed. **Stay home if you have symptoms.** Online access to classrooms is provided upon calling in your absence.
- Currently, there are no additional rapid antigen tests available for vaccinated students. If you have a test remaining from those provided on December 17, please utilize it on January 16 before returning to school. Although a useful tool in the strategy bank, rapid antigen tests are not a fail-safe solution. As well, there are logistical issues in accessing these tests, volume and timing of use, accuracy, and tracking parameters.
- As PCR testing and confirming cases become a less prominent strategy in case management, we rely heavily on the community to work together to treat each illness with caution and respect. In short, we need families to be supportive of cautiously keeping students at home and accessing class online if you 'fail' the daily screener.
- In the opening days of our return, we will closely monitor student and staff illnesses that are reported to us. As PCR tests are no longer required, it is presumed that any individual who is exhibiting one or more symptoms of illness is likely to have a COVID-19 infection. This makes confirmed contact tracing difficult as some illness will be presumed COVID-19 and some may be out of an abundance of caution. We will work with this information as we receive it to keep the community informed.

As was shared on January 11, our layered approach to safety protocols reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19. The current Omicron variant will certainly test our resolve and we will not likely avoid its impact. We have proven to thrive under the precautions and protocols of the past and we will strive to do the same this time. Expect the best and prepare for the worst.

We are ready and need everyone's help to make it work. As always, thank you for your support.

The FAQ below may help with the expected response to symptoms or exposure:

**1. A family member has symptoms of/or tested positive for COVID-19, can my son(s) come to school?**

NO. Under the new Ministry of Health guidelines, ALL household members of the symptomatic/positive individual, regardless of vaccination status, must also isolate due to the high rate of transmission that may occur within the household.

**2. My son only has one symptom of illness (ie: runny nose; pink eye; diarrhea) is he allowed to come to school?**

NO. Even if a student has only one symptom of illness, they must stay at home and isolate until the symptom has been improving for at least 24 hours OR if a gastrointestinal symptom is present, the isolation period is 48 hours from the onset of the symptom. The other household members are not required to isolate in this circumstance.

**3. What are the symptoms of COVID-19 that would require me to keep my son(s) at home?**

If your son or a household member has 1 of the following symptoms:

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

OR 2 or more of:

- Runny nose/nasal congestion
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches/joint pain
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (nausea, vomiting, diarrhea)

They are presumed to have a COVID-19 infection based on their symptoms and must isolate along with ALL household members.

**4. How long is the isolation period?**

If the student is 12 years of age or older **AND** fully **vaccinated** (has received 2 doses of an approved Health Canada vaccine, with 14 days elapsed since the second dose was administered) they must isolate for at least 5 days from either:

- the date of a confirmatory Rapid Antigen Test (RAT)/PCR test

**OR**

- the date of onset of symptoms **AND** their symptoms must be significantly improved or resolved for 24 hours (or 48 hours if GI symptoms), whichever is longer in duration.

If the student is 12 years of age or older AND **unvaccinated**/has only received 1 dose of an approved Health Canada vaccine, they must isolate for 10 days from the date of onset of symptoms, OR the date of either a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) or lab-based PCR test.

**ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS**, regardless of vaccination status, must also isolate while a student is in isolation.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The isolation period ends at midnight on the last day. For example, if your son's isolation ends on January 17, he cannot return to school until January 18.

#### **5. Do I need to have a confirmatory Rapid Antigen (RAT) or PCR test?**

NO. As the Omicron variant is highly transmissible and prevalent in Ontario, it is presumed that any individual who is exhibiting one or more symptoms of illness is likely to have a COVID-19 infection.

If your family has access to either a RAT or PCR test, you are still required to isolate while waiting for results. Please be aware that a RAT is less sensitive than a PCR test and may not register a positive result if asymptomatic or in the early stages of illness. Please closely monitor symptoms and keep the student home if there are any symptoms of illness despite a negative RAT result. If the student tests negative on two RATs, 24-48 hours apart, it is likely they do not have a COVID-19 infection. Please contact the school nurse to discuss a safe return-to-school plan.

The following Toronto Public Health links are for your review.

- [994c-Screening-Questionnaire-Child-Care-Day-Camp-School.pdf \(toronto.ca\)](#)
- [COVID-19: What to Do if You Are a Close Contact – City of Toronto](#)

Sincerely,

Mr. James McKinnon  
Principal

