

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Cold Weather Tips for Schools

This fact sheet provides infection prevention and control (IPAC) information for school administrators, staff, students, parents, guardians and caregivers to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools during cold weather.

Please visit the [School and COVID-19](#) webpage for more resources.

Mask use outdoor

- Replace masks that become wet or frozen in cold weather.
- Ensure access to multiple masks throughout the day for students, teachers and school-based staff to replace masks that become wet.
- Where possible, maintain a physical distance of 2 metres, if someone must remove their mask while outdoors.
- Do not use neck warmers or scarves in place of masks because they do not form a seal around the nose and mouth and may not be made of the recommended material.



Cleaning your hands

- Ensure hands are dry before putting on gloves or mittens.
- Do not apply alcohol-based hand rub to gloves or mittens.
- Clean your hands after winter clothes are removed.
- Clean hands using either soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub. Do not use both at the same time.
- Look at hands regularly at home for dry cracked skin and apply creams or moisturizers to keep skin healthy.
- Remind students not to cough, sneeze or wipe noses into their gloves or mittens. They should use a tissue and clean hands afterwards.



Winter clothes

- Identify areas where students can put on and take off their winter clothes while maintaining physical distancing. Consider alternate spaces such as hallways and within classrooms or staggering schedules to avoid crowding.
- If hooks, cubbies or lockers are used to store winter clothes, assign alternating or non-consecutive spots to help maintain physical distancing.
- When putting on or taking off winter clothes indoors, ensure physical distancing and consistent mask use in accordance with your school board's policies and that of the Ministry of Health.
- Ensure winter clothes are stored and allowed to dry when not in use.
- Wash winter clothes regularly and dry thoroughly at home.



Playground equipment

- Playground equipment that continues to be used during the winter does not require routine cleaning or disinfection unless visibly soiled.
- Use of playground equipment should be limited to one cohort at a time and physical distancing should be encouraged.
- Clean and disinfect sports equipment regularly and between cohorts.

COVID-19 symptoms during the winter

- Students may develop temporary runny noses after returning inside during cold weather and this should not be considered a symptom of COVID-19 on its own.
- Follow your local public health unit's screening advice.

Learn about the virus

To learn more and access up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the Ontario Ministry of Health's website at ontario.ca/coronavirus.

For more information please contact: _____

The information in this document is current as of December 31, 2020