

UPDATE: Many daycare programs in Peterborough, Millbrook and Lindsay cancelled

Taylor Clysdale

Daycares operated inside local schools, along with daycares run by Compass Early Learning and Care in Peterborough, Lindsay and Millbrook, are canceling programs until April 6, in response to the growing outbreak of COVID-19.

On Friday, March 13, the local public and Catholic boards confirmed the closures. That same day Compass sent a letter to parents informing them of the decision to shut down its daycare programs for three weeks beginning Saturday, March 14, 2020.

“We understand that this creates significant hardship for our families, and we do not take this decision lightly,” reads the letter signed by Compass CEO Sheila Olan-MacLean.

Meanwhile, the City of Peterborough is also shuttering its daycare centres located at Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board sites. Those facilities will also be closed for a three-week period.

The closure affects the before-and-after-school programs at Edmison Heights Public School and Westmount Public School as well as the full-day program at Pearson/PCVS.

However, the Peterborough Day Care Centre remains open at this time based on the advice of health officials.

“The health and safety of residents is the top priority,” Mayor Diane Therrien said. “While we haven’t had a local case of COVID-19 yet, this action is necessary as a preventative measure to protect the health and safety of our community. I know it is an inconvenience but it’s the smart thing to do.”

The Boys and Girls Clubs of Kawartha Lakes, which runs before and after care in Trillium Lakelands District School Board, is shutting down programs from March 15 until April 5.

Executive director Amy Terrill states the organization recognizes the impact this will have on families and challenges that this will place on the community.

“We are moving forward with an abundance of caution, recognizing that this is a fluid situation.”

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Those who had already paid for licensed childcare, March Break, full-day, before and

after school programs will receive a credit. Sports programs and leagues that run at Kawartha Lakes schools have also been suspended and will be extended once the club confirms with the Trillium Lakelands District School Board.

In addition, all child care centres operating out of Catholic schools in the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board will also be closed from March 14 to April 5, 2020. According to a press release, this includes regular child care, before and after school care programs and March Break programs.

Those programs aren't run by the Catholic board, so director of education Michael Nasello says it's up to the daycares to communicate with families regarding fees.

For Compass day cares, families will “be charged no more than one day’s regular fees.”

Parents are being kept informed via updates online.

Compass has locations in Millbrook as well as Peterborough on Braidwood Avenue and Medical Drive and in Lindsay.

“Thank you for your patience and understanding during these unprecedented, challenging times,” it states in a letter to parents.

[Meanwhile, classes at schools are cancelled across Ontario](#) and both [Trent University and Fleming College](#) have suspended programs as well.

Brenda Stewart considers herself fortunate to have a network of family and friends who can step in to look after her children.

Stewart and her husband had already booked the March Break off with plans for several day trips with their three young children.

She already knew that increasing concerns over COVID-19 would likely change those plans but Thursday’s (March 12) announcement by the province to close all publicly-funded schools for an additional two weeks left her scrambling for alternative care.

“I’m one of the lucky ones,” said Stewart. “My mom works part-time so she’s able to look after them for a couple of days each week.”

Stewart is ‘child care pooling’ with two of her friends who will each look after her boys for two days. She has booked time off work to look after theirs but it’s vacation time she had plans for in the summer.

“I’m fortunate to be in a position where I can do that. I know parents who have to take time off work without pay.”



by **[Taylor Clysdale](#)**

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