



NEWS

School boards take caution seriously in order to keep classrooms open all year

Province has mandated that staff complete attestation forms regarding vaccination status and boards create policies to address instances where staff have opted to not receive any COVID-19 shot

By [Catherine Whitnall](#) Kawartha Lakes This Week
Tuesday, August 31, 2021

“One case is too many,” says Trillium Lakelands District School Board director of education, echoing the opinion of peers across the province regarding the need to remain extra vigilant for the new school year.

“We have been working closely with our community and government partners for the month in order to stay in front of things,” said Wesley Hahn, noting, while everyone is “very excited” about returning to in-person learning, there are “still concerns over the number of provincial cases and the impact of the Delta variant.”

The local school board is preparing to meet these concerns head on with such protocols as in-class and busing mask mandates for all students and cohorting in elementary classrooms. Like coterminous district school boards, Kawartha Pine Ridge and Peterborough, Victoria, Northumberland and Clarington Catholic, the board looks forward to restarting clubs, sports and extracurricular activities and broader use of cafeterias, computer labs and cafeterias, with a continued emphasis on cleaning high touch areas.

Although not currently mandatory, school boards are encouraging students aged 12 and older and all staff to get vaccinated. Staff are required to complete attestation forms that will be submitted to the Ministry of Education in mid-September, indicating vaccination status; details of which will remain confidential.

Those who choose not to vaccinate without a documented medical reason are mandated by the province to take part in an educational session. This program, said Peterborough Public Health medical officer of health Dr. Rosanna Salvaterra, will be up to the school boards to administer and determine.

Headlines newsletter

Top stories delivered to your inbox.

[Sign Up](#)

“Achieving high immunization rates in Ontario’s schools through vaccination is part of a range of measures and actions that can help prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 in schools and supports our goal of keeping schools open and safe for in-person learning,” stated Dr. Salvaterra.

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit medical officer of health Dr. Natalie Bocking adds school boards must have a policy in place to address the

“impact and ramifications” regarding unvaccinated educators.

Health units are awaiting changes to the current online COVID-19 school and childcare screening tool but a student/staff COVID-19 case be reported, Dr. Bocking said high risk contacts, even though they’re fully vaccinated, still need to be listed; although they may not need to be quarantined if they’re asymptomatic.

The province recently launched a pilot project giving staff and students who are vaccinated, but linked to high-risk contacts due to an outbreak, take home COVID-19 tests. The tests - currently only being distributed to 13 of the 34 provincial health units, the most local being Durham Region - are voluntary. The project will run for eight weeks starting Sept. 7.

Catherine Whitnall is a reporter with MyKawartha. She can be reached at cwhitnall@mykawartha.com. Follow her on [Twitter](#) and MyKawartha on [Facebook](#)

Tags: [Hyper Local](#), [Human Interest](#), [News](#)

**REPORT AN
ERROR**

**JOURNALISTI
C STANDARDS**

ABOUT US

More from MyKawartha.com & partners

You might be interested in
