



COVID-19 Protocols

Child Care/Before and After School Programs

Effective starting March 21st, 2022

This document is subject to change in accordance with direction from the Ministry and local health officials.

The most recent updates are highlighted in yellow throughout the document.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

These protocols are intended to support and provide clarity to Growing Together families, staff and essential visitors as we navigate through the Covid-19 pandemic. These protocols will be communicated via email to all GTFRC families and staff. They will also be available to view on the www.gtfr.org website and a printed copy will be available at all Growing Together main sites. We will monitor the COVID-19 pandemic closely and revise this document as required, in consultation with the:

- [Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014 \(CCEYA\)](#)
- Federal and Provincial Government
- Ministry of Education
- Municipality
- Public Health Unit

Mandatory Training

Growing Together will ensure staff are aware of, and adhere to, the GTFRC Covid-19 Protocols put in place in response to the Pandemic. All staff will:

- Receive Mandatory Health and Safety training before commencing employment.
- All staff will receive additional training as needed/recommended by Health Unit and sign off once training is complete.
- As updates are made to the protocols, all GTFRC staff will read and sign off on the changes.

The following are the 3 areas of training put in place by Growing Together:

1. All Growing Together employees will watch the training videos below before commencing employment and will sign off after receiving the training.
 - o 7 Steps of Hand Hygiene - <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/7-steps-handhygiene>
 - o Putting on Gloves - <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-gloves-on>
 - o Putting on Mask and Eye Protection - <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-maskeyes-on>
 - o Taking off Mask and Eye Protection - <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/videos/ipac-maskeyes-off>
2. All Growing Together employees will complete HR downloads Personal Protective Equipment Training online and sign off before commencing employment.
3. All Growing Together employees will read the Growing Together Covid-19 Protocols Document before commencing employment and will sign off.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Intent

Growing Together Family Resource Centre is committed to the health and safety of its employees and as such has created this policy regarding personal protective equipment (PPE). PPE is legislatively required and can prevent many workplace injuries. This policy must be observed at all times when working in areas requiring PPE.

Guidelines

All employees and essential visitors of Growing Together Family Resource Centre must wear appropriate CSA-approved PPE as follows:

- When handling blood, staff must wear disposable gloves and protective eye wear.
- When handling feces, eye discharge, saliva, urine and vomit, disposable gloves must be worn.
- When mixing or using chemicals in a high concentrated level, disposable gloves and protective eye wear must be worn. (Use of diluted bleach and water and diluted disinfectant for regular routine cleaning does not require the use of PPE.)
- When working in the kitchen, close toed shoes must be worn.
- When cleaning pet cages disposable gloves must be worn.

All of the PPE used and provided by Growing Together will comply with the requirements under the Ontario occupational health and safety legislation.

PPE used by Growing Together Family Resource Centre employees will be stored and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and requirements. Any PPE that is damaged, broken, or in need of service or repair must be removed from service immediately and provided to the centre supervisor. All PPE that has been removed from use will be tagged "out of service" and should not be used again unless repaired and inspected by a qualified person.

No PPE should be modified or changed contrary to its manufacturer's instructions, specifications, or occupational health and safety legislation.

Employer Responsibilities

- GTFRC will ensure that employees use the appropriate PPE for their job duties.
- GTFRC will train and inform all employees on the use and inspection of PPE they may be required to use to perform their job duties safely.
- GTFRC will not allow any employee to perform their duties without appropriate PPE or with damaged PPE.
- GTFRC will remove any damaged or broken PPE from the workplace and submit it for repair or replacement.

Employee Responsibilities

- Employees must follow all guidelines as outlined above and wear all required PPE as required.
- PPE must be inspected at the time of issue and before each use by the employee.
- Any PPE that does not pass inspection must be reported to the centre supervisor.
- Employees must report any unsafe behaviors or potential hazards they see in the workplace to a supervisor.
- Employees may never under any circumstances modify or change an article of PPE. Uncomfortable PPE may be due to lack of fit and additional fit testing may be required.
- Employees must clean and disinfect Protective Eye wear after each use.

Who should not wear a mask?

Face Masks should not be placed on or used by:

- children under the age of two
- anyone who has trouble breathing

- anyone who has a medical condition that makes wearing a mask unsafe for their health
- anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

***In the event of an outbreak or Pandemic, enhanced measures around the use of Personal Protective Equipment may be required. Growing Together Family Resource Centre will follow the recommendations put in place by the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit. These enhanced measures will be provided to staff with additional training if applicable.

Recommendations for PPE due to Covid-19

Masking & Staff Personal Protective Equipment

In alignment with community masking requirements, masks will no longer be required for staff, essential visitors, children or any other individuals at Growing Together. Eye protection for staff will also no longer be required. Individuals will have the option to continue to wear face masks and/or protective eye wear. Growing Together will continue to provide masks and protective eye wear to individuals as needed. Growing Together will respect and support an individual's choice to wear PPE. We will encourage inclusive practices within our programs.

Under [current federal travel requirements](#), upon return from international travel, individuals must, wear a mask at all times when in public spaces (including schools and child care), maintain a list of all close contacts for 14 days in Canada, and monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

Screening

Growing Together will no longer require confirmation of screening for children, staff or essential visitors. Parents/guardians, staff and essential visitors are still required to complete online screening for themselves and their children attending Growing Together every day prior to entering the building. The COVID-19 school and child care screening tool can be accessed at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>. The screening tool has been revised to align with the updated COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge 3.

If a child, parent, staff or essential visitor does not receive a "PASS" on the on-line screening tool, they will not be permitted to enter a Growing Together location and will be required to:

- Contact Growing Together to let them know the child, staff or essential visitor will be absent.
- Follow the direction given by the on-line screening assessment tool.
- Follow the household isolation requirements as listed below.
- If your symptoms are severe and/or you are having chest pain or difficulty breathing, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department

- Retake the on-line screening before reattending Growing Together. A “PASS” must be received.

The following Health Screening Protocols will be in place:

- Upon arrival, parents/guardians will be asked to buzz in at the main child care entrance. The child care doors will be opened and parents will be able to drop off and pick up their child/children directly from their classroom. (No sign in or screening confirmation will be required.)
- Anyone entering the facility will be asked to perform hand hygiene and classroom staff will assist children with hand hygiene upon entering their program.
- Alcohol based hand rub containing at least 70% alcohol content will be available at all main entrances.
- Any individual who fails the online screening, will be asked to not attend child care and contact the office for next steps. We will continue to use the recommendations in the online screening tool for isolation requirements.
- Children, staff and essential visitors should stay home from child care if they are unwell.
- We encourage individuals to distance themselves from other families as much as possible when dropping off and picking up children.

Exclusion of Symptomatic Children/Adults Protocols

When Children, staff or essential visitors are ill and or exhibit COVID-19 related symptoms, Growing Together will ensure the following:

- Ill children will be separated from the other children to be monitored by staff until parent/guardian picks up.
- Symptoms of illness will be recorded in the child’s daily record and in a daily log as per the CCEYA
- The parent/ guardian of the ill child will be immediately notified to pick them up and take them home. Emergency pick up contacts should be readily available to pick up an ill child if required
- Staff and Essential visitors will be sent home as soon as possible when becoming ill.
- If a child, staff or essential visitor is unresponsive, having trouble breathing, having a convulsion, or whose condition is deteriorating rapidly and must receive immediate medical attention, 911 will be called.
- In the event that a child, staff or essential visitor becomes ill throughout the day, we will access the online screening tool at <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/> and follow the direction provided. If we are not able to properly answer the questions for an individual child we will contact the child’s parent and complete the screening tool together over the phone.

Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms

Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms (as listed below) who are ineligible for PCR/rapid molecular testing are presumed to have COVID-19 infection and are advised to self-isolate as soon as possible after symptom onset. See table 1 and flow chart 1 for isolation requirements for individuals with COVID 19 symptoms.

COVID-19 symptoms include:

- **One of the following symptoms:**

- fever and/or chills OR
- cough OR
- shortness of breath OR
- decrease or loss of taste or smell; OR

- **Two or more of the following symptoms:**

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

Table 1: Isolation Period for Test-Positive Cases and Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms

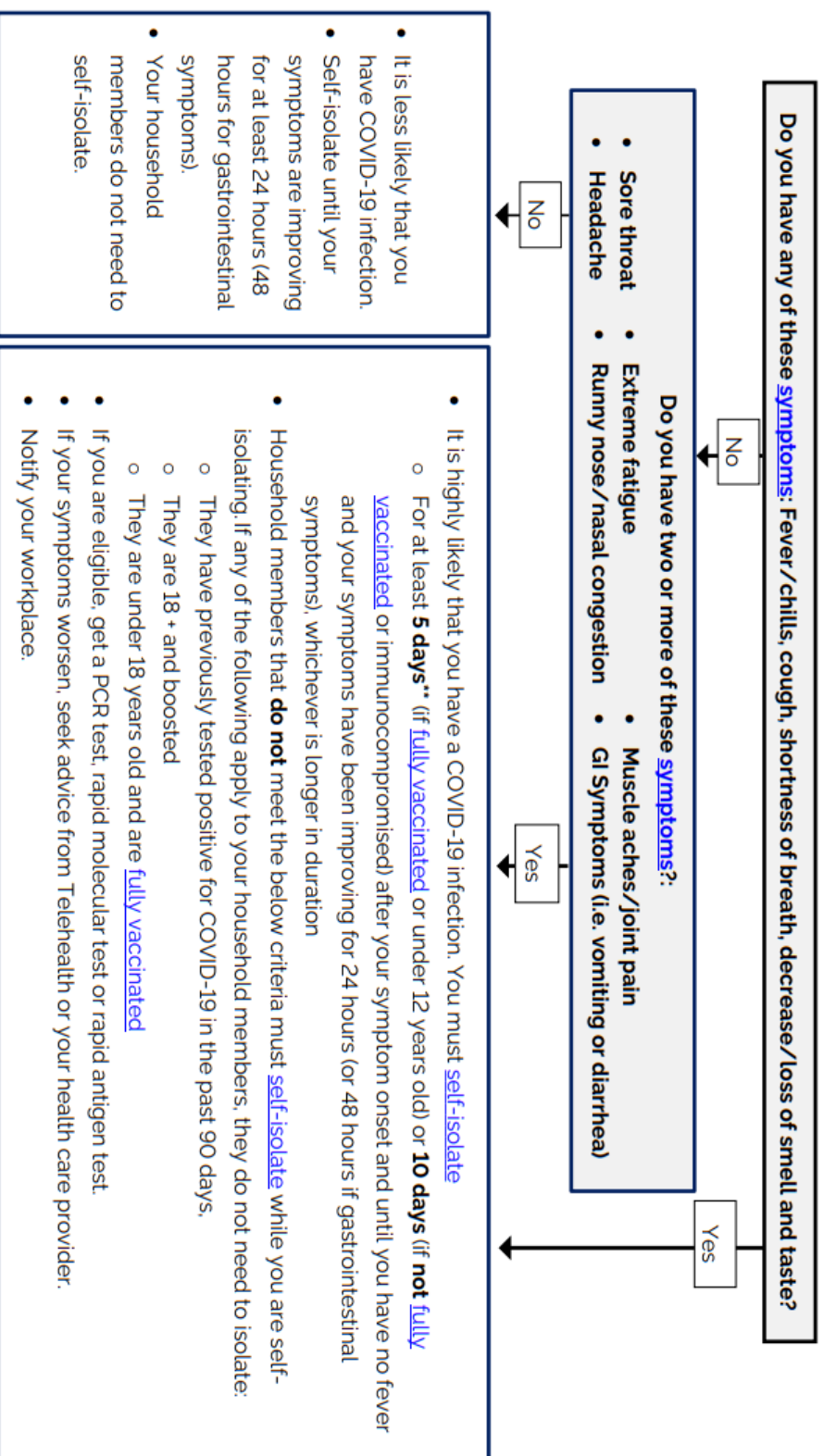
Isolation Period	Population
5 days after the date of specimen collection or symptom onset (whichever is earlier/applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fully vaccinated individuals⁵• Children under the age of 12
10 days after the date of specimen collection or symptom onset (whichever is earlier/applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individuals 12+ who are not fully vaccinated• Immunocompromised⁶• Hospitalized for COVID-19 related illness (or at discretion of hospital IPAC)• Residing in a highest-risk setting

Individuals are considered fully vaccinated if they have received a full series of a Health Canada authorized vaccine (e.g. two doses of AstraZeneca/Moderna/Pfizer or 1 dose of Janssen) at least 14 days ago.

For a total of 10 days after symptom onset (or date of specimen collection, whichever is earlier/applicable), individuals must:

- Wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings. Reasonable exceptions would include temporary removal for essential activities like eating. Individuals will be required to distance as much as possible when temporarily removing their mask.
- Individuals who are exempt from masking (e.g., children under two years of age, etc.) may return to public settings without masking.
- Not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (i.e. seniors)
- Not visit or attend work in any highest-risk settings (unless they have previously tested positive for COVID)

You have symptoms and are concerned you may have COVID-19. Now what?



Note: Symptoms should not be related to any other known causes or conditions. See the [COVID-19 Reference Document for Symptoms](#) for more information.

**For 10 days after symptom onset (or 20 days for immunocompromised individuals): maintain masking in public setting, do not visit or work in any highest risk setting; do not visit vulnerable individuals (e.g. immunocompromised individuals or seniors).

Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms with access to rapid antigen tests

- Molecular testing is no longer being recommended for all individuals in the community with symptoms compatible with COVID-19. If individuals with COVID-19 symptoms have access to rapid antigen tests, rapid antigen tests may be used to assess the likelihood that symptoms are related to COVID-19, otherwise individuals should isolate following the time-based clearance guidance above.
 - A single negative rapid antigen test in an individual with COVID-19 symptoms does not mean that they do not have COVID-19 infection.
 - 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 they are advised to self-isolate until they have no fever and symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms).
 - The household members of the symptomatic individual with two negative tests may also discontinue self-isolation, as long as they are asymptomatic and have not had a positive test result themselves.
- Growing Together will be receiving Rapid Antigen Testing kits from the Ministry. We will provide **two rapid antigen tests for each child enrolled in our infant, toddler and preschool programs**. These tests are optional for parents to use on their children when they are symptomatic.
- If more rapid antigen tests become available, we will send them home with infant, toddler and preschool parents.
- Children in before and after school programs are expected to access rapid antigen tests through their school.
- Parents can also request additional rapid antigen tests from their GTFRC site supervisor.

*****Note: There is no requirement for parent(s)/guardian(s) to report their child's Rapid Antigen Test results to the school or child care as part of absence reporting.**

Management of Household Members

- COVID-19 positive cases/individuals with COVID-19 symptoms should isolate away from household members where possible to avoid ongoing exposure.
- Household members of the COVID-19 positive case/individual with COVID-19 symptoms, should self-isolate while the individual with COVID-19 symptoms is isolating, with the following exceptions:
 - Household members who are 18 years of age and older and have already received their booster dose are not required to self-isolate

- Household members who are under 18 years of age and are considered fully vaccinated are not required to self-isolate
 - Household members who have previously tested positive for COVID 19 in the last 90 days (based on positive rapid antigen test or molecular test results), are not required to self-isolate and can attend high-risk settings, as long as they are currently asymptomatic.
- If self-isolation is complete after 5 days, or if self-isolation is not required, for a total of 10 days after the last exposure to the COVID-19 case, ALL household members must:
 - Self-monitor for symptoms and self-isolate if they develop any symptom of COVID-19.
 - Wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings. Reasonable exceptions would include temporary removal for essential activities like eating. Individuals will be required to distance as much as possible when temporarily removing their mask.
 - Individuals who are exempt from masking (e.g., children under two years of age, etc.) may return to public settings without masking.
 - Not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (i.e. seniors)
 - Not visit or attend work in any highest-risk settings (unless they have previously tested positive for COVID
- For self-isolating household members that have not developed symptoms, if any other household member develops COVID-19 symptoms, they should extend their self-isolation until the last symptomatic (or COVID-19 positive) person has finished their self-isolation period.
 - The initial COVID-19 positive case/individual with symptoms of COVID 19 does not have to extend their self-isolation period based on other household members becoming ill.

Individuals with Symptoms not Associated with Covid-19

If the individual's symptoms are not included within the COVID-19 symptom list above, they should stay home until symptoms are improving for at least 24 hours (or 48 hours if gastrointestinal symptoms), to limit the spread of other illnesses that the individual may have (e.g., common cold virus, Influenza, other viral respiratory or gastrointestinal illness) and to monitor for the development of additional symptoms.

- Household members and other contacts of these individuals (With symptoms not included within the Covid-19 symptom list) do not need to self-isolate, as long as they have no symptoms. *Symptoms should not be related to any other known causes or conditions. See the COVID 19 Reference Document for Symptoms for more information.
- If the individual develops additional symptoms such that they now meet the COVID-19 symptom list above, they and their household should follow the guidance above.

COVID-19 Management

Reporting Cases/Contacts, etc.

- Growing Together will notify parents if an individual has tested positive for Covid-19 in their child's classroom. Parents will be given the choice to isolate their child.
- Growing Together will monitor absenteeism rates in all programs.
- If absenteeism rises to a defined level in a child care **program (approximately 30% above baseline)**, Growing Together will contact the Public Health Unit and follow recommendations for next steps which may include classrooms and/or centres going into isolation. In this scenario, Growing Together will send a notification to families, staff and essential visitors in the affected child care setting, signed by the local medical officer of health, with information on public health measures.
- In the event that a single classroom has 50% or more children out due to covid symptoms and/or have tested positive for covid, the classroom will be closed for 5 days. All parents/guardians with children in the classroom will be made aware of the closure. Parents/guardians will not be charged child care fees for the duration of the closure.

If a child, staff or essential visitor received a COVID-19 vaccination in the last 48 hours and is experiencing mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and/or joint pain that only began after vaccination, and no other symptoms as indicated in the updated COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool, they may continue to attend the child care program if they are feeling well enough to do so. If the mild headache, fatigue, muscle aches, and/or joint pain symptoms worsen, continue past 48 hours, or if the individual develops other symptoms, they should leave the child care setting to self-isolate and contact their health care provider.

Management of Non-Household Close Contacts

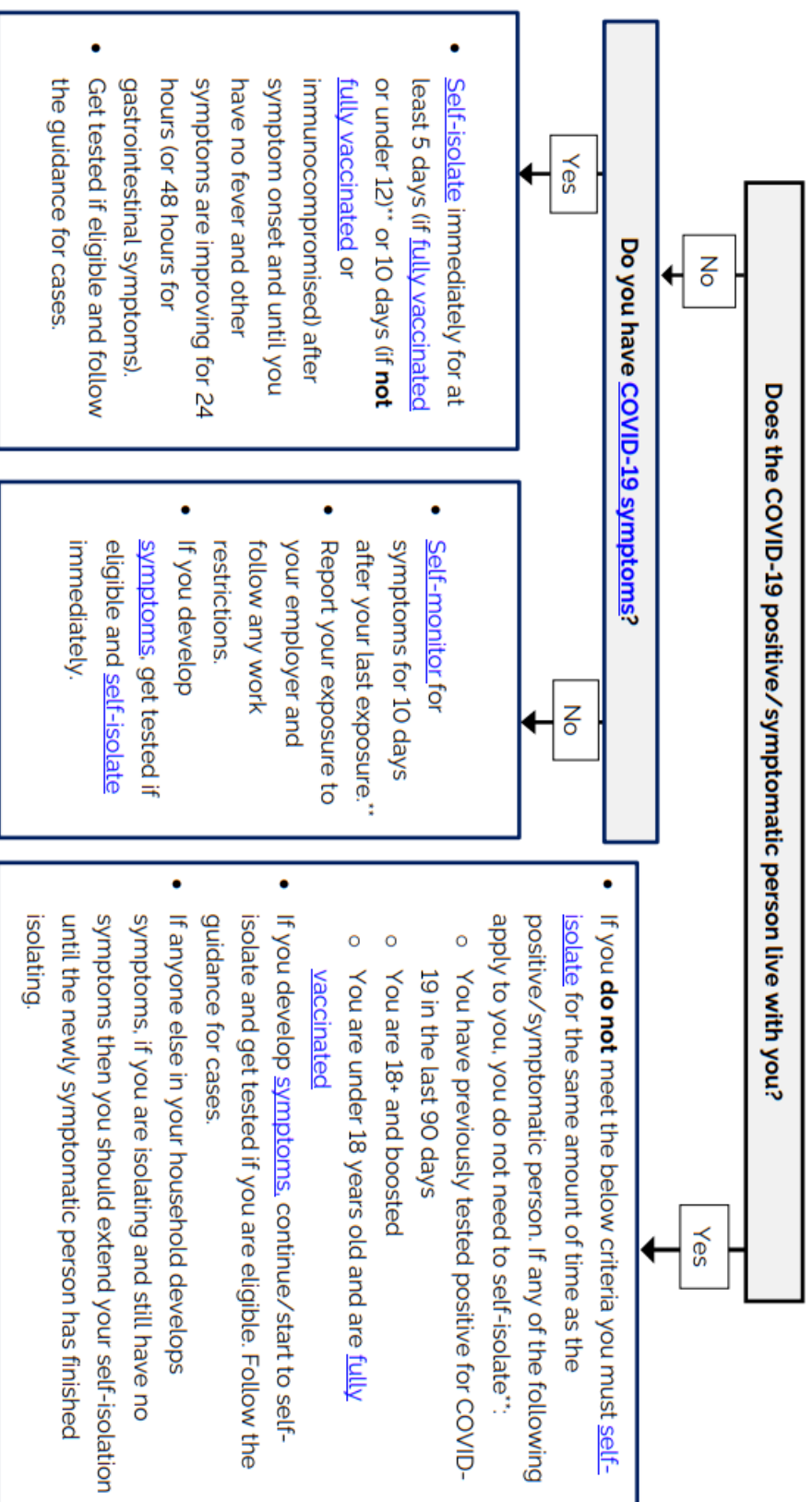
Definition of Close Contacts:

- Close contacts include those who had contact with the ill/COVID-19 positive individual within the 48 hours prior to their symptom onset if symptomatic or 48 hours prior to the specimen collection date (if asymptomatic/applicable) and until they started self-isolating; AND
 - When in close proximity (less than 2 meters) for at least 15 minutes or for multiple short periods of time without appropriate measures as masking, distancing and/or use of personal protective equipment (as per Management of Cases and Contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario).
- If the symptomatic/COVID-19 positive individual attends group settings (e.g., childcare, school, in-person work), generally, contacts in those settings (e.g., the classroom cohort) would not be considered close contacts due to the layering of health and safety measures in place in these settings. However, specific individuals in those settings may be identified by the case as close contacts based on the nature of their interactions with the case (e.g. breach in measures, interactions outside of the setting).

Advice to Non-Household Close Contacts

- Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 (on a rapid antigen test, PCR test or rapid molecular test) and individuals with COVID-19 symptoms are advised to inform their close contacts of their potential exposure to COVID-19. For a total of 10 days after the last exposure to the COVID-19 case, close contacts must:
 - Self-monitor for symptoms and self-isolate if they develop any symptom of COVID-19
 - Wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings. Reasonable exceptions would include temporary removal for essential activities like eating. Individuals will be required to distance as much as possible when temporarily removing their mask.
 - Individuals who are exempt from masking (e.g., children under two years of age, etc.) may return to public settings without masking.
 - Not visit anyone who is immunocompromised or at higher risk of illness (i.e. seniors);
 - Not visit or attend work in any highest-risk settings (unless they have previously tested positive for COVID-19 on a RAT or molecular test in the past 90 days).
- Close contacts are advised to follow directions as per flow chart 2.

You've been identified as a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 or someone with COVID-19 symptoms. Now what?



Wear a well-fitted mask in public, physical distance and maintain other public health measures for 10 days following your last exposure if leaving home. You should **NOT visit or attend work in any highest risk settings and not visit individuals who may be at higher risk of illness (i.e. seniors or immunocompromised) for 10 days after your last exposure.

Serious Occurrence Reporting

- Growing Together will continue to follow the required process for submitting serious occurrences, per the Ministry of Education (including posting requirements).
- Growing Together will report closures related to COVID-19 where they result in an “Unplanned Disruption of Service” to the normal operation of a child care centre as a serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education through CCLS. For licensed child care centres, this represents any closure impacting the entire centre. Please note that serious occurrence reporting is required when a licensee closes voluntary or when a local Public Health Unit has ordered the closure.
- Effective February 14, 2022, Licensees are no longer required to report confirmed cases of COVID-19 as a serious occurrence to the Ministry of Education.

Travel Outside of Canada

- Children under 12 years old, travelling with fully vaccinated adults, will continue to be exempt from quarantine, without any prescribed conditions limiting their activities. This means, for example, they no longer need to wait 14 days before attending school, camp or child care.
- Unvaccinated travelers will continue to be required to test on arrival, on Day 8 and quarantine for 14 days. Unvaccinated foreign nationals will not be permitted to enter Canada unless they meet one of the few exemptions.
- Travelers arriving to Canada from any country, who qualify as fully vaccinated, will be randomly selected for arrival testing. Travelers selected will also no longer be required to quarantine while awaiting their test result.

Under current federal travel requirements, upon return from international travel, individuals must wear a mask at all times when in public spaces (including schools and child care), maintain a list of all close contacts for 14 days in Canada, and monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.

The following link has additional information regarding travel requirements as set out by the Federal Government.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/fully-vaccinated-travellers-without-covid-19-symptoms-returning-canada.html>

Cohorts

- Cohorting and physical distancing will no longer be required for indoor or outdoor activities. Growing Together will ensure ratios, group sizes, reduced ratios and mixed age groupings meet

the requirements under the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)*, as well as any conditions set out on our licence.

Enhanced Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

From what is currently understood about COVID-19, commonly used cleaners and disinfectants are effective against the virus. In order to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses including COVID-19, Growing Together will maintain routine cleaning and disinfection schedules as recommended by the Local Public Health Unit.

Growing Together will consult with the Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit to determine the preferred type and grade of disinfectant to use. All products including cleaners and disinfectants will be stored out of the reach of children, labelled and will have up to date Safety Data Sheets (SDS) on site. Each classroom and washroom will have its own designated disinfectant. Growing Together will ensure cleaning and disinfectant products are not expired, and will follow all manufacturer's instructions.

Cleaning: will be done primarily with soap and water which will remove dirt and grease that can hide and protect germs from disinfectants. Cleaning with soap and water will also substantially reduce the number of germs that may be on surfaces.

Disinfecting: after cleaning with soap and water, disinfectant will be sprayed on surfaces and staff will ensure the recommended contact time (time the surface stays wet) is achieved.

Enhanced Cleaning Frequencies

Growing Together will focus on regular hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette to reduce the risk of infection in the programs. All individuals are required to sanitize their hands upon entering a Growing Together location and regularly throughout the day.

All items used by a symptomatic individual will be cleaned and disinfected as soon as possible. The tables, chairs and any surfaces the symptomatic child touched will also be cleaned and disinfected. If the items cannot be cleaned (e.g. books) they will be removed and stored in a sealed container for a minimum of Seven days.

Hand Hygiene

Hand Hygiene is a general term referring to any action of hand cleaning. Hand hygiene relates to the removal of visible soil and removal or killing of transient microorganisms from the hands. Hand hygiene may be accomplished using soap and running water or a hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol based). Hand washing with soap and running water must be performed when hands are visibly soiled. **Hand washing using soap and water, wherever possible, is recommended over alcohol-based hand rub.**

Perform and promote frequent, proper hand hygiene (including supervising or assisting participants with hand hygiene). Hand washing using soap and water is recommended over alcohol-based hand rub for children.

Hand Hygiene Procedure

Hands carry and spread germs. Touching your eyes, nose, mouth, sneezing, or coughing into your hands may provide an opportunity for germs to get into your body or spread to others. Keeping your hands clean through good hygiene practice is one of the most important steps to avoid getting sick and spreading germs.

Ensure that employees and children are always practicing proper hand hygiene (including assisting children with hand hygiene) when hands are visibly dirty and/or after;

- Sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose
- Using the washroom
- Handling garbage
- Handling raw foods
- Outdoor play
- Toileting/diapering routine
- Handling soiled laundry or dishes
- Handling soiled toys or other items
- Coming into contact with bodily fluids
- Coming into contact with any soiled/mouthed items
- Gardening

*Also incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedules

Hands should be cleaned using soap and water or hand sanitizer before and after:

- Preparing, handling, serving and eating food
- Handling animals
- Touching a cut or open sore
- Changing diapers
- Glove use
- Dispensing/handling expressed breast milk
- Before and after giving medication
- Communal sensory play activity

When hands are visibly soiled, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Wet hands and Apply soap
- Lather for at least 15 seconds. Rub between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, under nails
- Rinse well under running water
- Dry hands well with paper towel or hot air blower
- Turn taps off with paper towel, if available

When hands are not visibly soiled and a hand-washing station is not accessible, follow these steps for cleaning hands:

- Apply hand sanitizer (at least 70% alcohol-based)
- Rub hands together for at least 15 seconds
- Work sanitizer between fingers, back of hands, fingertips, and under nails

- Rub hands until dry

Hand Sanitizing Information

When your hands are not visible dirty, hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol base, can be used. Hand sanitizers can only be used on children who are over the age of two and must always be used under adult supervision. Adults must ensure that the product has completely evaporated from the child's hands before allowing the child to continue their activity. Growing Together requires Parent consent forms to be signed before staff are able to use hand sanitizer on children in our programs. Growing Together will distribute consent forms to parent for FDK and school age children only. If a consent form is not completed, the child will only sanitize their hands using soap and water. Growing Together will not administer hand sanitizer on children in preschool and younger programs. Children under the age of 2 are not permitted to ever have hand sanitizer applied in our programs.

Glove Use

Gloves shall be worn when it is anticipated that hands will come into contact with mucous membranes, broken skin, tissue, blood, bodily fluids, secretions, excretions, contaminated equipment or environmental surfaces. Nitrile gloves are single use only.

Hand hygiene shall be practiced before applying and after removing gloves. Gloves shall be removed and discarded after use.

To reduce hand irritation related to gloves:

- Wear gloves for as short as time as possible
- Ensure that hands are clean and dry before wearing gloves
- Ensure gloves are intact, clean and dry inside
- Gloves are single use only, and must be task specific such as nitrile gloves for diaper changes

Covering Your Cough Procedure

Germs, such as influenza and cold viruses, are spread by coughing and/or sneezing. When you cough or sneeze on your hands, your hands carry and spread these germs.

Keep your distance (preferably more than 2 metres/6 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing.

Follow these steps to stop the spread of germs:

- If you have a tissue, cover your mouth and nose when you cough, sneeze or blow your nose
- Put used tissues in the garbage
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not in your hands
- Clean your hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer

Ventilation

Growing Together will optimize ventilation by:

- opening windows

- moving activities outdoors when possible
- mechanical ventilation including HVAC systems

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVACs) and their filters are designed to reduce airborne pollutants, including virus particles, when they circulate through the system.

- Ensure HVAC systems are in good working condition.
- Keep areas near HVAC inlets and outlets clear.
- Arrange furniture away from air vents and high airflow areas.
- Avoid re-circulating air.

HEPA filter units will be installed in all classrooms.

While ventilation is important, it must be used along with other public health measures. There is not one public health measure that can guarantee protection from COVID-19; multiple strategies are needed. Other measures include symptom screening and self-isolation for people with symptoms, practicing physical distancing, wearing a mask, and practicing good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Mental Health

The ministry recognizes the detrimental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's mental health and well-being. The ministry's [Building on How Does Learning Happen?](#) supports the operation of early years and child care programs in Ontario during the COVID-19 outbreak. It provides information on how early years settings can support the social and emotional health and wellbeing of children and families, in addition to safe and healthy environments.

Early years and child care program providers are also encouraged to collaborate with child and youth mental health agencies to support strong connections and make the best use of mental health resources and supports across the integrated system of care.