



Members Update for January 2nd, 2022

Hey, what do you know - I remembered to change the year!

Just wanted to pass along info on work this week to everyone - most of the info came between Friday morning and yesterday and I didn't feel like intruding on New Years and I know many of you aren't connected to your work emails over holidays so you might not have seen these.

Work shifts are normal this week. If your normal shift or what you've been covering is on days - you'll be working days starting tomorrow. If your normal shift or what you've been covering is on afternoons - you'll be working afternoons. Daycares will be open as usual and staff will be in the buildings.

Everyone should expect to see their supervisors in their buildings, so conduct yourself accordingly. There is work to be done - even though the other staff and students have been off on the holiday break. With how short our staffing has been the last 4 months, there's things to do to keep busy for two days until the students return Wednesday.

HR Update - there's a new HR Update that you need to see and probably should be posted somewhere in the caretaking office since things changed drastically on Friday with the government announcements. I will include that update for you as an attachment to this email. It covers new isolation periods, how to report absences, etc.

This next period of time is going to be pretty ridiculous for all of us. The expected staff shortages due to Covid symptoms or positive tests could quite easily close schools and possibly the entire education system. I want to encourage you all to follow the guidelines, don't come to work when you're not feeling well and when you're at work and working shorthanded - do your best while still taking your breaks and lunch.

I'll be away from work on Tuesday and Wednesday to do some work with OSBCU so Dave Winger and Mark Lachowicz will be looking after things for the Local.

For everyone on days tomorrow - be careful cleaning up the snow and freezing rain that's fallen overnight and into this morning - it's still trying to fall here downtown. It's likely to be a bit messy and the last thing we need is people getting injured with a slip and fall accident or lifting too much and straining a back.

I want to wish all of you and your families a Happy New Year! Let's hope this year brings about good things for all of us professionally and personally and let's work towards making some positive changes for ourselves!

Cheers,

Blake



Human Resource Services Re-opening Frequently Asked Questions (*January 3, 2022*)

Background

This document serves as a follow-up to the Ministry of Education [Ontario Updating Public Health Measures and Guidance in Response to Omicron: Students returning to In Person Learning on January 5, 2022](#) for Ontario School Boards. As of Friday, December 31, 2021, the province announced it is updating testing and isolation guidelines to protect our most vulnerable and maintain the stability of critical workforces. These updates follow recent changes in other jurisdictions in Canada and the United Kingdom. The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is to assist you and your return to HWDSB schools effective Monday, January 3, 2022.

General Questions	Answer
Are all school based staff expected to return to work on January 3, 2022?	<p>Schools are considered open.</p> <p>CUPE, HWPC and OCTU: are expected to attend work in-person.</p> <p>All other staff (HWETL, HWOTL, COPE, ETFO-DECE, PSSP, OSSTF): You are expected to attend work. You are provided the flexibility to work from home. Please inform your immediate supervisor if you will be working from home. It is an expectation that you will be available via MS Teams during your scheduled workday.</p>
Are all Education Centre staff expected to return to work on January 3, 2022?	<p>Education Centre is open.</p> <p>PASS and OCTU: You are expected to attend work, if scheduled. You are provided the flexibility to work remote as per the <i>Working from Home Program</i>. Please follow up with your immediate supervisor.</p> <p>CUPE: are expected to attend work in-person.</p>

curiosity

creativity

possibility

	<p>All other staff (HWETL, HWOTL, COPE, ETFO-DECE, PSSP, OSSTF): You are expected to attend work. You are provided the flexibility to work from home. Please inform your immediate supervisor if you will be working from home. It is an expectation that you will be available via MS Teams during your scheduled workday.</p>
<p>I have a casual/supply day booked in EasyConnect for January 3 & 4, 2022. Do I still attend?</p>	<p>Yes, you would continue to attend your assignment.</p> <p>Staff in Long Term Occasional (LTO) assignments are expected to report to their assignment as scheduled.</p>
<p>What if I am not able to return to work on January 3 and/or 4, 2022 (in-person or working from home), because of a family status situation?</p> <p>Example: unable to make alternative childcare arrangements.</p>	<p>If you are unable to attend work (in-person or working from home), please enter absence code 60 into EasyConnect.</p> <p>Alternative Leave Options Available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can explore Leave options available through your Collective Agreement/Terms of Employment or Leaves available through the Employment Standards Act (ESA) Leaves and Family Status Accommodation Information Flyer. If you have a health condition that may impact your ability to return to work, please contact Employee Support and Wellness. <p>For all staff who enter an absence code 60, please monitor your Board email for information from your Human Resources Staffing and Operations team member to review leave options available.</p>

Updated Testing and Isolation Guidelines in Response to Omicron

Update to Testing:

HWDSB staff **do not** qualify as a high-risk individual and are no longer required to seek a PCR testing, unless directed by Public Health. Publicly-funded PCR testing will be available only for high-risk individuals who are symptomatic and/or are at risk of severe illness from COVID-19. A full list of eligible individuals can be found [here](#).

Update to Isolation Guidelines (*December 31, 2021*):

Ontario has changed the required isolation period based on growing evidence that generally healthy people with COVID-19 are most infectious in the two days before and three days after symptoms develop.

HWDSB staff with COVID-19 who are vaccinated (2 doses), as well as children under 12, will be required to isolate for five days following the onset of symptoms. Their household contacts are also required to isolate with them. These individuals can end isolation after five days if their symptoms are improved for at least 24 hours and all public health and safety measures, such as masking and physical distancing, are followed. Non-household contacts are required to self-monitor for ten days.

HWDSB staff who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated (1 dose) or immunocompromised will be required to isolate for 10 days.

Public Health Self Isolation Fact Sheet [here](#).

If you have any questions, you can contact Telehealth Ontario at: [Toll-free: 1-866-797-0000](tel:1-866-797-0000) or [Toll-free TTY: 1-866-797-0007](tel:1-866-797-0007)

All Staff: How to Report an Absence from Work Related to COVID-19

I have not passed the COVID-19 screening tool or have tested positive using a rapid antigen test. I am unable to attend work, what is the absence reporting process?

For Reference:

School and Child Care Screening tool [COVID-19 school screening \(ontario.ca\)](#)

For staff who are not attending at an HWDSB school site - [COVID-19 worker and employee screening \(ontario.ca\)](#)

If you have COVID-19 symptoms:

- ***If you are fully vaccinated:*** stay home for 5 days and until your symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours. The 5 days start from the date symptoms began.
- ***If you are partially vaccinated, unvaccinated, or immunocompromised:*** stay home for 10 days. The 10 days start from the date symptoms began.

If you tested positive for COVID-19:

- ***If you are fully vaccinated or aged 11 or younger:*** stay home for 5 days. The 5 days start from the date you tested positive if you have no symptoms, or from when your symptoms began (whichever is sooner).
- ***If you are partially vaccinated, unvaccinated, or immunocompromised:*** stay home for 10 days. The 10 days start from the date you tested positive if you have no symptoms, or from when your symptoms began (whichever is sooner).

In both cases, all of your household members (regardless of vaccination status) will need to stay home for the duration of your isolation period.

Permanent and Long-Term Occasional Staff Process:



Human Resource Services
Re-opening Frequently Asked Questions *(January 3, 2022)*

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You are not to attend an HWDSB work location.2. Report absence using EasyConnect (formerly known as SFX) absence code “80”, <i>My COVID-19 sick</i>. If you are physically in a worksite, leave your work environment and notify your supervisor.3. The ESW COVID Specialist will contact you if you have entered code 80.4. Follow the applicable public health self-isolation guidelines noted above. <p>Casual and Occasional Staff Process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You are not to attend an HWDSB work location.2. You will need to cancel assignments and make yourself unavailable in EasyConnect.3. Contact the school and notify the school Principal/Vice Principal or Manager that you will not be attending work.4. Contact Employee Support & Wellness 905.527.5092, extension 2040 to notify your absence is COVID-19 related.5. Follow the applicable public health self-isolation guidelines noted above.
<p>I have a household family member that lives in my residence (spouse, partner, child, parent, grand parent, sibling etc.) that has not passed the COVID-19 screening tool, experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive using a rapid antigen test or PRC test. I am unable to attend work, what is the absence reporting process?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You are not to attend an HWDSB work location.2. Report absence using EasyConnect (formerly known as SFX) absence code “80”, <i>My COVID-19 sick</i>. If you are physically in a worksite, leave your work environment and notify your supervisor.3. The ESW COVID Specialist would contact you if you have entered code 80.4. Household members (regardless of vaccination status) will need to stay home for the duration of the symptomatic person's isolation period.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the symptomatic person is fully vaccinated or aged 11 or younger: stay home for 5 days and until their symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours. The 5 days start from the date symptoms began. • If the symptomatic person is partially vaccinated, unvaccinated, or immunocompromised: stay home for 10 days. The 10 days start from the date symptoms began.
<p>All Staff: Health and Safety Questions:</p>	
<p>How do I find the COVID-19 protocols for the 2021-2022 school year?</p>	<p>School re-opening COVID-19 protocols can be reviewed on MyHome – COVID-19. Any updates to protocols will be communicated to you through your Principal or Manager, or via email through the Director’s office.</p>
<p>If I have questions about the Board’s return to work, who should I speak with?</p>	<p>Please direct any questions to your Principal or Manager.</p>
<p>Can I refuse to return to work?</p>	<p>Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work where the worker believes that there is a dangerous condition in the workplace. The Ministry of Labour considers whether the hazard (COVID-19) is present in the workplace during the time of refusal, the potential for exposure to the refusing worker, and the precautionary measures being taken (e.g., PPE, screening, physical distancing, etc.). The Board, as an employer, has the obligation to investigate and provide a safe work environment based on the current scientific understanding of COVID-19 and the circumstances of the refusal. To ensure these obligations have been met prior to your return, the Board has proactively consulted our local health unit on our protocols and followed the direction from the Ministry of Education for school re-</p>

	<p>opening. We continue to work closely with Hamilton Public Health Services to monitor precautionary measures in place, respond appropriately to positive cases identified within the school/workplace, and implement additional measures where necessary for the safety of both students and staff. If you have a concern, please discuss with your Principal or Manager who can support you by addressing your concerns.</p>
<p>Am I required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE)?</p>	<p>Yes. Personal protective equipment (PPE) is one of the many strategies implemented to protect staff from potential exposure to COVID-19 and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 within the schools. The Board has worked closely with Hamilton Public Health Services throughout the pandemic to ensure we are following best practices for mitigating risks associated with COVID-19 for the safety of staff and students. Staff will be provided with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) while in the workplace, including medical masks and face shields. Circumstances for PPE use are outlined within protocol 1.05 Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), found on MyHome – COVID-19.</p> <p>Effective December 23, 2021, staff are permitted to bring in and wear their own authorized non-fitted N95 mask (or equivalent) as an alternative to the Board-provided medical mask. To ensure the selected mask is authorized, please verify it is certified by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), or approved by Health Canada as a “PPE-Respirator”. Masks with exhalation valves are not permitted as they may allow respiratory particles to escape. Fit testing must be completed for staff required to wear respirators for specific tasks such as working in rooms with aerosol generating medical procedures (AGMP), confined spaces or other processes where respirators are required.</p>

	Occasional staff who do not yet have PPE are to proceed to the main office immediately upon arrival to a school and retrieve the PPE for the day during sign-in. All staff are required to comply with all Board safety protocols, including wearing of PPE.
What if I have a medical condition that will impact me wearing the Board supplied personal protective equipment (PPE), what steps do I need to follow?	You will need to request a medical workplace accommodation. Contact your dedicated Employee Support and Wellness Specialist Employee Support and Wellness Who to Contact .
Do I continue with completing the daily screening for COVID-19?	Yes. All staff are required to submit confirmation each workday that they have completed the COVID-19 Screening. Please use the provincial screening tool https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/ and confirm that you've passed your screening each morning before arriving at your work location on the Employee Web Portal, using the form titled "Daily Employee COVID-19 Screening". Occasional staff to schools must continue to verify screening during the sign-in process.