

Discovery Child Care COVID-19 Response Plan

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Revision Date: June 1/22

Ministry of Education Update: Lifting of Safety Measures in Child Care (March 9/22)

Based on advice from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH), and in alignment with community measures, the province is returning child care programs to a more normal learning environment, while maintaining protective measures — like rapid tests, ventilation improvements, screening and continued access to free PPE for children and staff/providers.

Effective March 14, 2022, the instructions issued by the OCMOH related to vaccination disclosure policies will be revoked across all sectors. As of this date, licensees are no longer required to have a COVID-19 vaccine disclosure policy in place and provincial requirements below will be lifted:

- Collecting proof of COVID-19 vaccinations, medical exemptions, or completion of an education program.
- Asymptomatic screening requirements for individuals who do not provide proof of full vaccination.
- Reporting vaccination coverage to the Ministry of Education

Therefore, effective March 14th, unvaccinated individuals covered under licensee's vaccination policies will no longer be required to undertake rapid antigen screening three times per week.

In addition, the Ministry of Health is removing reporting requirements for organizations including licensees that receive free rapid antigen tests from the government through the Provincial Antigen Screening Program for the purpose of vaccination disclosure policies. Licensees will no longer be required to report weekly rapid antigen test (RAT) usage to the Ministry of Health.

EFFECTIVE MARCH 21, 2022

Lifting of Cohorting and Distancing

Cohorting and distancing will no longer be required for indoor or outdoor activities. Licensees are required to 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 their license.

Masking & Staff Personal Protective Equipment

Masking mandate is being lifted at Discovery as of June 2: Staff and families will no longer be required to wear a mask in the centre except for a few circumstances. Masks will continue to be optional. Please respect users' rights to wear a mask.

If you have been sick, you will be required to wear a mask in the centre for 5 days following illness or positive covid result (days 6-10) or if symptomatic (staff, families, visitors). Please continue to complete the daily screening INCLUDING taking your child's temperature every morning. Thank you.

Visitors/parents/guardians in the building.

Parent/s Guardians will be allowed in the centre to drop off and pick up their child(ren) as of Feb 28 1/22. Any adult entering the building MUST wear a mask as per instructions above, complete a daily screening. Please see “drop off and pick up procedures” below.

Active Screening Procedures: As of March 21/22

Daily confirmation of screening for children and staff will no longer be required by licensees. Individuals should continue to self-screen every day before attending child care using either the COVID-19 school and child care screening tool, or a screening tool designated by the local public health unit. The screening tool has been updated to align with the updated COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge

All individuals including children attending the centre, staff, parents/guardians and essential visitors (i.e. Ministry staff) must complete a daily screening **before** entering the child care setting, including daily temperature checks.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>

Drop off and Pick up:

PLEASE REMOVE OUTDOOR FOOTWEAR BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOMS

Drop off

- The teacher accepting your child into care will ask if you have sanitized your hands and your child’s hands and if all of you have passed the daily screening.
- Children/staff/visitors must clean their hands upon entry into the centre and/or room
- Please ensure that you are supervising your child at all times.
- **All children need to be dropped off by 11am each day. Children will not be accepted into care after 11am.**
- PLEASE REMOVE OUTDOOR FOOTWEAR BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOMS

Pick up:

- Please complete the online screening tool if you have not completed it in the morning..
- **Please be prepared to show photo I.D.**
- You are responsible to supervise your child, in the centre, playground and parking lot. If you are bringing a sibling, they must pass the screening and stay with you. They are not allowed to play in the classroom or playground.
- Please remember to turn your car off while you are waiting. We do not allow idling in the parking lot. We are also a smoke free environment and no smoking is allowed even while in your car. Thank you.
- Children in the toddler and preschool rooms cannot be picked up between 12pm-2:30pm as it is very disruptive to their sleep time.
- PLEASE REMOVE OUTDOOR FOOTWEAR BEFORE ENTERING THE CLASSROOMS

For your safety, please ensure that you have weather appropriate footwear when dropping off and picking up your child. We may be outside during this time and you may need to be walking in the snow, puddles or icy conditions etc.

Remaining Health and Safety Measures in Child Care

Hand Hygiene, Respiratory Etiquette, Cleaning and Disinfecting

In accordance with local public health direction, appropriate hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, cleaning and disinfecting should continue.

The following measures will continue to be in place until the end of June:

Ventilation Measures

Licensees and home child care providers are encouraged to implement best practices and measures to optimize ventilation (see Public Health Ontario's guidance: Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Systems in Buildings and COVID-19). Adequate ventilation should be provided by opening windows, moving activities outdoors when possible and through 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.

Absence Reporting

To continue ongoing monitoring of COVID-19 impacts, licensees will continue to be expected to report absenteeism rates to public health units should they rise to a defined level (approximately 30% above their baseline).

Under the CCEYA, licensees must ensure that a daily observation is made of each child receiving child care in each child care centre it operates before the child begins to associate with other children in order to detect possible symptoms of ill health.

Licensees are also required to ensure that where a child receiving child care at a child care centre it operates appears to be ill, the child is separated from other children and the symptoms of the illness noted in the child's records.

COVID-19 Testing Strategy for Ontario Schools and Child Care

Rapid Antigen Tests

Bi-weekly shipments of RATs will continue to support symptomatic testing for staff, providers and children. Licensees are expected to continue distributing RATs to staff/providers and children who return from an unplanned absence.

As a reminder, staff/providers and families can also access RATs via participating community locations. Please see <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/rapid-test-locator-for-specific-locations>.

Updated Case and Contact Management Guidance

Further to the updates mentioned above, the Ministry of Health has revised the COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance: Omicron Surge, with updated guidance for close contacts in the community and in households:

- Asymptomatic individuals who are close contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual in the community are no longer required to isolate but must self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure. During the self-monitoring period, close contacts must wear a well-fitted mask in all public settings and avoid activities where they need to take off their mask.
 - For children under 2 a well-fitted mask is not required. However, parents must monitor for symptoms for 10 days following last exposure.
- Asymptomatic household contacts of a case or a symptomatic individual are also not required to isolate if they are 17 or younger and fully vaccinated; 18 and older and have already received their COVID-19 booster; or tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 90 days and have completed their isolation period. Asymptomatic household contacts who are not required to isolate are also required to self-monitor for 10 days following last exposure, as outlined above.
 - **Children under 5 who are asymptomatic household contacts are required to stay home for 5 days.**

From Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Email (March 10/22)

Following the memo sent yesterday from the Ministry of Education re: Lifting of Health & Safety measures in Child Care, the SMDHU has reviewed the direction and will not be requiring any additional control measures to remain in place unless your facility is in outbreak. Please follow the direction outlined in the Ministry of Education's memo for routine day-to-day operations.

SMDHU continues to encourage the following as part of your regular infection prevention and control programs:

- Passive screening by staff and families utilizing the provincial COVID-19 screening tools
- Ensure individuals who develop symptoms while at the centre are immediately isolated, sent home and recommended for rapid antigen testing
- Increases in illnesses above baseline levels for the centre are reported to SMDHU
- Close contacts are managed as per the updated [COVID-19 Integrated Testing & Case, Contact and Outbreak Management Interim Guidance](#) (March 9th)
 - The [COVID-19 child care resources](#) available on the SMDHU website will be updated accordingly

Isolation of Ill Children

Children and staff who start to show symptoms of COVID-19 will be promptly separated from others, into a designated room if possible, while waiting to be picked up by a parent or guardian. All siblings of an ill child or children of an ill staff member will also be sent home immediately.

- ❑ Provide the sick child with a surgical/procedural mask if tolerable and above the age of 2.
- ❑ Once the child and siblings (if applicable) has been picked up, clean and disinfect the isolation room/area.

Testing Recommendations for Parents/Guardians

- ❑ Parents/Guardians should follow the testing recommendations as per the Ontario school self-assessment tool or SMDHU resource.
- ❑ Parents/guardians can use a rapid antigen test if their child has symptoms. The first test can be done on the first day of symptoms. If the first test is negative, a second test must be done 48 hours after the first. **Write your child's name and date on each test and then email a photo of the test to karen@discoverychild.on.ca**
- ❑ If parents/guardians choose not to test their child, there is a 5 day exclusion requirement starting the day following the onset of symptoms.

Individuals with COVID-19 Symptoms

- **Individuals** with COVID-19 symptoms (as 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 COVID19 symptoms
https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/coronavirus/docs/contact_mngmt/management_cases_contacts_omicron.pdf
- **COVID-19 symptoms include:**
 - fever and/or chills; OR
 - cough; OR
 - shortness of breath; OR
 - decrease or loss of taste or smell; OR
 - **Two or more of:**
 - runny nose/nasal congestion
 - headache
 - extreme fatigue
 - sore throat
 - muscle aches/joint pain
 - gastrointestinal symptoms (i.e. vomiting or diarrhea)
- If a child's symptoms are not included within the COVID-19 symptom list above, they must be away for one full day following the onset of illness (2 days for nausea/vomiting/diarrhea) and should stay home until symptoms are improving (for runny nose), or resolved (for nausea/vomiting/diarrhea), 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 do not need to self-isolate, as long as they have no symptoms.
 - 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.

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 individuals● 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● Immunocompromised● Hospitalized for COVID-19 related illness (or at discretion of hospital IPAC)● Residing in a highest-risk setting

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 48 hours, are both negative, the symptomatic individual is less likely to have COVID19 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.

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 generally 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 17 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 RAT or Molecular test) are not required to self isolate and can attend high risk settings as long as they are currently asymptomatic