



January 20, 2022

Open letter to all parents and caregivers in the TBDHU region

Thunder Bay District Health Unit (TBDHU) is sharing some important reminders and updates as children return to in-person learning. It is understandable that the transition back to the classroom may bring up some questions and mixed feelings. TBDHU has been working with school boards across the region to plan for this return.

To support a return to in-person learning that is as safe as possible, please remember to do the following:

1. Complete the screening tool every day.

- All students must self-screen daily using the [COVID-19 School and Child Care Screening Tool](#) before attending school. Note that this screening tool was recently updated. If you use a printed copy, please make sure it is the current version.
- Regardless of vaccination status, DO NOT send your child to school or to any activities if they (or anyone in the household) have symptoms of illness. If your child has completed a self-isolation period, they may return to school if symptoms have been improving for at least 24 hours (or have resolved for at least 48 hours if symptoms affected the digestive system).

3. Get vaccinated against COVID-19. COVID-19 vaccines are safe, effective and offer the best protection from serious illness from COVID-19.

- All individuals aged five years and older are strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 with at least two doses of vaccine, and a third dose, if eligible (18+ years).
- It is recommended that children aged 5-11 wait 8 weeks between first and second doses of vaccine.
- Visit [TBDHU.com/youthvaccine](https://www.tbdhu.com/youthvaccine) to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine for kids
- Visit [TBDHU.com/covidclinics](https://www.tbdhu.com/covidclinics) for information on where to access vaccines.

Update: Case and Contact Management for Schools and Child care Settings

The provincial government has updated COVID-19 case, contact and outbreak management guidelines and health units are responsible for following up with people who are connected to cases in high risk-settings. Schools are not considered high-risk settings.

- If there is a case in a school, classmates who were following all protocols such as keeping a physical distance and wearing a mask are generally not considered close contacts. Children may have friends that they spend time with outside of school who may be close contacts.
- If you are notified by someone who has symptoms or who has tested positive for COVID-19 that your child is a close contact, follow the instructions found at [TBDHU.com/covidexposure](https://www.tbdhu.com/covidexposure). TBDHU will no longer notify parents about cases in schools and you are not required to report a positive test to TBDHU.
- TBDHU continues to work with schools to monitor for higher levels of absenteeism related to illness and will notify parents if this occurs. Generally, schools will remain open to staff and students who pass the daily screen.

Further information about COVID-19 and schools, vaccination, infection prevention, and more, is available at [TBDHU.com/coronavirus](https://www.tbdhu.com/coronavirus) or check out our social media channels. If you have specific questions, please send us a message through [Contact Us](#).

Thank you for your ongoing cooperation to support the health of our communities throughout this pandemic.

Sincerely,

Dr. Janet DeMille, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Thunder Bay District Health Unit