

Friday, October 15, 2020

Re: Confirmed Case of COVID-19 at Northern Dancer PS



Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to inform you that the Durham Region Health Department has confirmed that an individual at Northern Dancer PS, last in the building on October 7, has tested positive for COVID-19. The individual maintained physical distancing and wore a mask in the building. The identity of the individual is protected by privacy legislation and will not be shared. A positive case at a school does not necessarily mean the individual was exposed to COVID-19 at the school. They may have been exposed somewhere else in the community.

We know that news of COVID-19 can create feelings of anxiousness, and we wanted to make sure that you had this information as soon as possible to help alleviate concerns. Upon notification of this case today, we immediately reached out to the Durham Region Health Department to inform them of the situation and determine next steps.

As directed by Durham Region Health Department, we have dismissed the individuals who were known to have been in close-contact with the person who is ill during their infectious period.

We have sent a letter to parents/guardians with children in the classroom(s) and/or bus of the confirmed case to notify them. **If you did not receive a separate communication, there was no confirmed case in your child(ren)'s class and/or bus.**

Those identified as close contacts will be contacted by the Durham Region Health Department and be provided further guidance. The individual who tested positive is at home isolating, must follow instructions from public health and will return to school when they have recovered.

Staff and students who do not receive a call from the Durham Region Health Department are deemed low risk and are being asked to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at the current time.

Signs and symptoms include: fever, new onset of cough, worsening chronic cough, difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, sore throat, difficulty swallowing, decrease or loss of sense of taste or smell, chills, headaches, unexplained fatigue/muscle aches, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, pink eye (conjunctivitis), runny nose/nasal congestion without other known cause. For more information about COVID-19, please visit www.durham.ca/novelcoronavirus

If staff or students develop one or more symptoms, immediately self-isolate, follow up with your health care provider and/or call Durham Health Connection Line (DHCL) at 1-800-841-2729 and seek testing.

Northern Dancer PS has continued to undertake and complete enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices approved by the health department and the school will remain open. A deep clean of the impacted classroom is underway by our custodial team.

We will continue to take direction from the Durham Region Health Department and will provide further updates to the school community, if they deem it necessary.

The DDSB is committed to respectful, welcoming, inclusive and safe learning and working environments for all DDSB community members. We encourage community members to continue to treat each other with dignity and respect and to not treat individuals or groups differently because of biases, assumptions or stereotypes against anyone who has (or who is believed to have), tested positive, or who is awaiting test results.

Now more than ever, we must take care of ourselves and each other. We can do this by following the advice of public health agencies and government officials. To minimize the risk of COVID-19 in the school:

- Physically distance from others by keeping 2 metres away as much as possible.

- Stay home when you are sick.

- Students should wear non-medical masks or face coverings as appropriate.

- Staff should wear personal protective equipment (e.g. medical masks) as directed by the school.

- Clean your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

- After handling nose and throat secretions (e.g. after throwing out used facial tissues) wash your hands.

- Cough and sneeze into a tissue or your sleeve.

- Avoid touching your face.

- Do not share water bottles, eating utensils, toothbrushes, toys or anything else that has been in contact with saliva, nose or throat secretions.

- Schools are keeping common surfaces clean.

- Schools are disinfecting surfaces that are high-touch areas.

- Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

- Within the school community, self screen daily before entering the school.

More information on COVID-19 and schools is available from the Durham Region Health Department online at www.durham.ca/schoolsreopening.

Yours sincerely,

Barbara Speed
Principal; Northern Dancer PS