

October 13, 2020

Subject Line: Three Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 at Julie Payette PS

Dear Parents/Guardians,

I am writing to inform you that earlier today, the Durham Region Health Department has confirmed that three individuals at Julie Payette PS, last in the building on Thursday October 8 and Friday October 9, have tested positive for COVID-19. Two of the individuals are members of the same household. The identity of the individuals are protected by privacy legislation and will not be shared. A positive case at a school does not necessarily mean the individuals were 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, 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. The two classrooms impacted and those who were on the bus with the confirmed case have been notified. **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 will be provided further direction including whether their children can attend school based on the exposure risk within the classroom and school bus. The individuals who tested positive are 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.

Julie Payette PS has continued to undertake and complete enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices approved by the health department and will remain open. No further action has been recommended at this time.

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.

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,

Andrea Williams
Proud Principal of Julie Payette P.S.