

Principal Email Home January 21, 2022

Dear Knoxdale families,

It's been one of the most unusual weeks of school this week, with a super storm, closed schools, bus cancellations, indoor recesses due to the frostbite advisory and now a PA day. Thank you for your patience and flexibility with all these interruptions to our school week.

Here is our important information for the week:

- Please send the Chromebooks loaned from the school back to school at your earliest convenience. You may send it via your child's backpack. We currently have received 38 of the 180 Chromebooks loaned out.
- We received the RAT kits today and hope to send them via the backpack express at the end of the school day Monday. Absent students' RAT test kits will be put aside for them or families can arrange for pick up starting Tuesday January 25.
- Every day, student must complete the self-assessment questionnaire at home and report back to their teacher, when prompted during morning attendance. We currently have a 90% response rate amongst students, with approximately 60 students reporting that they do not know or haven't done the self-assessment. Please help us keep our school safe and help your child complete this questionnaire daily: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/school-screening/>
- At this time, all school photos are on hold until further notice as a result of the surge in the Omicron variant. Our current date of March 2 is on hold and we will reschedule as needed.
- Please note that the parking lot continues to be closed for drop off and pick ups at arrival and dismissal bell times. It is unsafe to wait or delay traffic on Greenbank road in anticipation of the 8am bell. Please refrain from using the parking lot at that time and plan on using the alternatives available, such as side street parking and the Woodvale church parking lot. Families who need an accommodation to use the parking lot may contact the main office at knoxstudentabsence@ocdsb.ca
- Does your child have a serious medical condition or allergy that the school should be aware of? If you haven't done so already, please fill out the Plan of Care for any student with life threatening medical conditions. [Plan of Care Form](#)

From the OCDSB email to families sent earlier today:

COVID-19 Updates and Public Health Information

School Absence Reporting

Next week we will begin school absence reporting, which will provide data on how many students and staff were physically present in a school on a given day. This will be reported on the Ontario website, starting Monday, January 24th. Please note, this information will not collect details on why these individuals were not present (i.e. whether they were sick, self-isolating due to a household contact experiencing symptoms, or any other reason that someone may not come to school). If absences exceed 30% of the school population, we are required by the Ministry of Health to inform Ottawa Public Health who may provide additional direction to the school community.

Voluntary COVID-19 Disclosure

In response to requests for continued reporting of information on suspected COVID-19 cases at school, the OCDSB is creating a voluntary COVID-19 reporting process. Parents, students and staff will be able to share information about cases through a new Voluntary COVID-19 reporting form. That information will be used to populate a new **COVID-19 Disclosure Dashboard**. Interested persons will be able to access the dashboard and see information on the number of cases by school (no personal information will be shared). We hope to have this structure built and ready later next week. More information about this new system will be shared as soon as it's available.

Our goal is to be as transparent as possible with the community. This data is self-reported by parents/guardians and/or staff through voluntary reporting and/or normal absence reporting processes and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of it. It is meant to be a snapshot of the current COVID-19 situation and absences due to illness in schools and workplaces for the previous school day.

Rapid Antigen Tests

The OCDSB has received a shipment of rapid antigen tests from the province and has been distributing them to schools this week. Two tests will be provided to each elementary student, and are to be used if students are showing symptoms of COVID-19. If a student receives two negative tests and no longer has any symptoms of COVID-19, they can return to school. Schools will send test kits and instructions to parents and guardians once they are ready for distribution. We expect to receive additional tests for secondary students at a later date. More information on the tests can be [found on our website](#). Frequently asked questions are also answered on [Ottawa Public Health's website](#).

Masks

Students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 should wear a high quality mask that is well-fitted. According to Ottawa Public Health, no matter which type of mask you are using, proper fit is a key factor in its effectiveness. [Here are some tips](#) to help your child check if their mask is fitting properly. In cold weather, masks worn outdoors can become damp or wet; families may wish to send an extra mask for outdoor play. For more information about mask wearing, guidelines, and recommendations, please visit [Ottawa Public Health's website](#).

School Vaccine Clinics Resume January 21

To increase vaccine accessibility in the community, Ottawa Public Health will be resuming school vaccine clinics beginning today. These clinics are open to anyone ages 5 or older who needs a first, second, or booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine: you do not need to be a student at the school offering the clinic to drop-in and get a vaccine. During the week of January 21st to 26th there will be clinics at Sawmill Creek, York Street and Hawthorne Public Schools. Learn more and view clinic dates and locations on OPH's [website](#).

On behalf of the school team, have a wonderful weekend,

Julie Chouinard
Principal
Knoxdale Public School
613.828.0010