
Media Release



School Outbreak Declared

December 20, 2020 - For immediate release

The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) is declaring a school outbreak of COVID-19. An outbreak in a school is defined as two or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in students and/or staff (or other visitors) in a school with an epidemiological link, within a 14-day period, where at least one case could have reasonably acquired their infection in the school (including transportation and before/after school care).

The outbreak is situated at Ecole Secondaire Catholique Sainte-Marie (ESCSM). Extensive work continues between THU and ESCSM. Contact tracing efforts have been amplified and if you are identified as a close contact you already have, or are in the process of being contacted.

“Having a school outbreak has added to the increasing concern of our recent number of cases and shows just how fast COVID can move, and again, is why we must continue to practice all public health measures,” said Dr Glenn Corneil, Acting Medical Officer of Health and CEO for the Timiskaming Health Unit. Dr. Corneil added, “When an outbreak like this occurs it is imperative that public health gets the information they need to begin investigations and contact tracing as soon as possible, the support and cooperation we have had from ESCSM has helped us to act quickly as we move through the outbreak management process.”

ESCSM Principal Annik Boucher stated, “Although this matter is being managed by the Timiskaming Health Unit, we are working closely with them on this situation and are grateful for their expertise. We would like to thank our staff, students and families for their collaboration in helping to limit the spread in our community.”

The Health Unit urges everyone to continue to follow public health measures as our district prepares to enter the “yellow/protect” category of the [province’s framework](#) on Monday.

District residents are reminded to:

- Continue practicing physical distancing
- Wear a mask or face covering in public indoor spaces
- Wash hands with warm water or use alcohol based sanitizers and do not touch your face
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow
- Do not gather in large groups, no more than 10 indoors and 25 outdoors
- Do not gather with people outside of your household
- Avoid non-essential travel outside of our district, especially to high transmission areas
- Stay home if unwell and contact your local Assessment Centre (AC) to schedule an appointment for testing
- Respect public health and any additional safety measures businesses have put in place
- Reach out to vulnerable people in your community who may need support

For more information on COVID-19, please go to our website [page](#) or visit the Ontario's [website](#).

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