



November 16, 2022

To the attention of the following operating within the Public Health Sudbury & Districts catchment area: Directors of Education, Post-Secondary Institution Heads, Licensed and Private Child Care Centre Operators, Municipal CAOs, Chambers of Commerce, Businesses Owner/Operators

**Re: Strong recommendation to mask in all indoor public settings, including schools and childcare settings, and to get back to basics during fall respiratory illness season**

In alignment with Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Kieran Moore, I am writing to reinforce the **strong recommendation to mask in all indoor public settings, including in schools and in childcare settings**. This recommendation issued November 14, 2022, is to help us get through the current respiratory virus season.

As the Medical Officer of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts, I am requesting that you support this strong recommendation in your respective settings. Your combined efforts are being called upon to safeguard health and the health system, particularly for children and for older adults and those who are medically vulnerable, in Sudbury and the districts of Sudbury and Manitoulin.

On November 3, 2022, in the wake of worsening health trends, I issued a [statement](#) asking everyone to strengthen personal protective measures such as masking, getting COVID-19 booster and flu vaccines, and staying away from others if unwell. **I am asking you to further reinforce and support these important measures in the settings for which you have responsibility.**

[Respiratory syncytial virus \(RSV\), influenza, and COVID-19 are currently circulating across the province](#). The combined presence of these respiratory viruses is impacting children in particular and placing additional pressures on our already stressed health care system and health professionals. Locally, we are observing an increase in hospital emergency department visits among children with respiratory symptoms and influenza-like-illness. This is not an insignificant rise, with current levels of respiratory-related local emergency department visits among those under 18 years being **two to three times higher** than typically seen at this time of the year prior to the pandemic. It is important to act now to prevent a worsening situation.

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**phsd.ca**

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Public Health Sudbury & Districts strongly supports Dr. Moore's call to get back to the basics that we know work:

- Mask in indoor public settings, including schools and childcare settings due to the additional risk of RSV and influenza
- Mask in indoor social settings, particularly if there are children or other vulnerable individuals present
- Stay up to date with vaccines, including [COVID-19](#) and [influenza](#)
- [Screen](#) for respiratory symptoms daily
- [Stay home](#) and stay away from others in your household if you are sick
- Always practice good [hand hygiene](#) and regularly [clean surfaces](#), which is especially important for RSV and flu viruses

Please consider how you can immediately support masking and the above practices in your respective settings.

For additional information on the recommended protective measures or if you need support to implement these measures, please visit [phsd.ca](#) or call 705.522.9200 (toll-free 1.866.522.9200).

Sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Dr. Penny Sutcliffe  
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer  
Public Health Sudbury & Districts

PS:ja