

COVID-19: Enhanced Health and Safety Measures

February 8, 2021



Orangeville Christian School

We are more than a school; we are a community.

ENHANCED HEALTH AND SAFETY MEASURES

On February 3, 2021, the province made an announcement indicating that schools in the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) region have been approved to reopen for in-person learning on Monday, February 8, 2021.

On January 12, 2021, the province also announced the provision of additional health and safety measures to support the return to in-person learning. These measures have been added to the information provided below.

SELF-SCREENING

- All staff and students must continue to self-screen every day before attending school.
- If a student or staff member is experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19, they must stay home from school and follow the guidance in the COVID-19 school and child care screening tool regarding when they can return to school.
- Daily confirmation or proof of self-screening for all staff members will be required prior to or upon their arrival at school.

MASKING

Effective Monday, February 8, Orangeville Christian School will implement the following enhanced provincial masking requirements.

STUDENTS

- Students in Grades 1 to 8 will be required to wear non-medical or cloth masks indoors when inside the school (including in the hallways), during classes and outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Masking requirements apply to our before- and after-school program (SHARE), as well as on school buses.
- Students in Kindergarten are not required to wear masks, but they are encouraged to wear them.
- Masks are required outdoors where physical distancing cannot be maintained.



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Students are encouraged to practice wearing masks and learn what type of mask is most comfortable for them. Students may wear their own non-medical masks, and non-medical masks will also be made available for students when necessary. Reasonable exemptions with respect to the requirement to wear masks will apply (*see below*).

TEACHERS AND STAFF

Medical masks and eye protection (i.e. face shield) will be provided for all teachers and staff members. All school-based staff will be required to wear masks, with reasonable exemptions for medical conditions (*see below*).

EXEMPTIONS TO THE MASK MANDATE

PROVINCIAL EXEMPTIONS

Subsection 2(4) of Ontario Regulation 364/20 under *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*, provides a handful of exceptions to the province-wide mask mandate. The most relevant of these exemptions are provided below:

The person responsible for a business or organization that is open shall ensure that any person in the indoor area of the premises of the business or organization, or in a vehicle that is operating as part of the business or organization, wears a mask of face covering in a manner that covers their mouth, nose and chin during any period when they are in the indoor area unless the person in the indoor area, [...]

- (g) has a medical condition that inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face covering;
- (h) is unable to put on or remove their mask or face covering without the assistance of another person;
- (i) needs to temporarily remove their mask or face covering while in the indoor area,
 - (i) to receive services that require the removal of their mask or face covering,
 - (ii) to engage in an athletic or fitness activity,
 - (iii) to consume food or drink, or
 - (iv) as may be necessary for the purposes of health and safety;
- (j) is being accommodated in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*;
- (k) is being reasonably accommodated in accordance with the *Human Rights Code*.



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SECTION 22 ORDER EXEMPTIONS

As the Medical Officer of Health for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph, Dr. Nicola Mercer has the authority and responsibility to stop the spread of infectious diseases in our community. Each Medical Officer of Health in Ontario has authority under Section 22 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act to implement an order to protect our local community. These local measures are meant to complement the recommendations and orders from the province.

The Class Order issued and effective September 18, 2020 at 12:01 am includes the following exemptions:

A Person is exempt from wearing a Face Covering on the premises if:

- a. The Person is a child under the age of two (2) years; or a child under the age of five (5) years either chronologically or developmentally and he or she refuses to wear a face covering and cannot be persuaded to do so by their caregiver;
- b. Wearing a Face Covering would inhibit the person's ability to breathe in any way;
- c. For any other medical reason, the Person cannot safely wear a Face Covering such as, but not limited to, respiratory disease, cognitive difficulties or difficulties in hearing or processing information; or
- d. The obligation to provide reasonable accommodation under Ontario Human Rights Code requires exemption from this requirement.

PROOF OF AN EXEMPTION

The Section 22 order states "In complying with the best efforts requirements, owners and operators shall not require employees or members of the public to provide proof that they qualify for any of the exemptions set out in Section 1." In light of this provision, a medical note or proof of exemption will not be required for exempt students at OCS. All exemptions to the Section 22 order will be enacted and enforced in "good faith".

CONCLUSION

As you prayerfully consider the contents of this letter, please understand that we will continue to maintain open lines of communication for any questions or concerns. We firmly believe that parents are vital partners in the education of their children, and we know that we all share in the common goal of keeping everyone at OCS safe.



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