

# MANAGING SYMPTOMATIC INDIVIDUALS AND INCREASED ABSENTEEISM IN CHILD CARE SETTINGS

Updated on April 6, 2022

*Note: The recommendations provided are subject to change based on updates provided by the Ministry or local guidance documents. Please keep yourself updated on all changes by reviewing [york.ca/infectionprevention](http://york.ca/infectionprevention).*

## Management of Attendees/Staff who are Symptomatic

- All settings should maintain personal protective equipment (PPE) kit(s) specifically for managing students/attendees or others who become ill
- If a separate room is not available, the symptomatic individual should be physically distanced from others including staff
- The symptomatic individual should be provided with disposable tissues and reminded of hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and proper disposal of tissues
- If the symptomatic individual is a child, a staff member should remain with the child until a parent/guardian arrives
- If tolerated and the individual is older than two years of age, they can be encouraged to wear a medical mask
- Any staff who are caring for a symptomatic individual and/or an unmasked individual should wear appropriate PPE at all times and be trained on proper use of PPE. After providing direct care to a symptomatic individual, all PPE should be doffed properly, and any disposable PPE should be discarded safely
- Staff must clean and disinfect their own reusable eye protection, where applicable, as it is required to be labelled and dedicated to each staff member (i.e., no sharing permitted)
- Once the individual leaves the setting, all areas accessed by the individual must be properly cleaned and disinfected as soon as reasonably possible. The isolation room/area should not be used again until it has been cleaned in accordance with cleaning and disinfecting practices
- All rooms used by a symptomatic individual should be cleaned and disinfected with a high-level disinfectant\*
- All surfaces in isolation room/areas must be cleaned and disinfected between use

\*A disinfectant with a kill claim against mycobacteria, enveloped and non-enveloped viruses and fungi. The disinfectant must also have a valid Drug Identification Number (DIN).

# Proper and Routine Hand Hygiene is Another Important Strategy to Help Prevent the Spread of Infectious Diseases

All staff, students, attendees and visitors should be reminded about the proper handwashing method and the need for increased hand hygiene. The following are additional important reminders:

- Handwashing sinks should be equipped with liquid soap, paper towels and hot and cold running water under pressure
- When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, containing 60 to 90% ethanol or isopropyl alcohol can be used, but younger children must be supervised when using
- Ensure staff and attendees practice proper respiratory etiquette such as coughing and sneezing with their mask on or into a tissue/sleeve (not their hands) if they are not masked
- Ensure proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette are practiced before and after handling shared items

## Managing Increased Absenteeism in Child Care Settings

Respiratory and enteric (food and waterborne) illnesses may result in periods of increased absenteeism. Child care settings should remain diligent to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and implement enhanced infection prevention and control (IPAC) measures.

- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection of common areas and frequently touched surfaces
- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfection/laundrying of toys and equipment
- Stop communal sensory play

## Relevant Resources and Guidance Documents

### York Region Guidance/Resources:

- [A Public Health Guide for Child Care Providers](#)
- [PPE Donning and Doffing \(Putting on and taking off\)](#)
- [York Region's Cleaning and Disinfecting Chart](#)
- Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and PPE posters are available on [york.ca/infectionprevention](http://york.ca/infectionprevention)