

February 3, 2021

Dear parent/guardian/member of our school community:

Re: School as an essential priority

As the Medical Officer of Health for Public Health Sudbury & Districts and the Directors of Education for the four area Boards of Education, we are writing to express our support for the essential priority of safe in-person learning as stated in the attached letter from the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health.

We agree with the province's Medical Officers of Health that the return to school and in-person learning is an essential priority – one we are fortunate to be able to protect throughout the City of Sudbury and districts of Manitoulin and Sudbury District. During the COVID-19 pandemic we have all worked together to protect in-person learning. We are proud of the educators, custodial staff, administrators, and area residents for working hard to protect this fundamental right.

We know that mandatory school closures, although at times necessary to protect against COVID-19 spread, are not without negative impacts. Schools give children stable daily routines, nutrition programs, physical activity opportunities, and social connections that are essential for emotional well-being. School settings also help to build children's skills and shape mental and physical health. Open schools and in-person learning provide safe and healthy environments for our children to grow.

Locally, Public Health and Boards of Education are working together to ensure infection prevention protocols such as symptom screening, increased hand hygiene practices, cohorting, mask wearing, and ongoing case and contact management, in addition to targeted surveillance when indicated. These measures keep our schools safe. Everyone's top priority is the health and safety of students and school staff.

Our collective efforts to stay home unless essential, and to practise public health measures, can help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our communities

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and ensure that schools continue to remain open for our children. As a community, we owe this to our kids. They are counting on us.

Thank you,



Dr. Penny Sutcliffe

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer, Public Health Sudbury & Districts



Joanne B nard

Director of Education, Sudbury Catholic District School Board



Norm Blaseg

Director of Education, Rainbow District School Board



Marc Gauthier

Director of Education, Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l'Ontario



Paul Henry

Director of Education, Conseil scolaire catholique Nouvelon

Enclosure