

Respiratory and Direct Contact

Section 2

Attachment – Template Letter to School Division – reporting school cases of disease or illness to public health

Page 1 of 1

2023-10-12

Please see the following page for the template letter to school division outlining process and expectations for notifying public health of cases or increase in disease activity in the school.

<DATE>

<NAME SCHOOL DIVISION>

<ADDRESS>

<CITY SK POSTAL CODE>

Re: Reporting school cases of disease or illness to public health

Dear <SCHOOL DIVISION>

Thank you for sharing this information with schools in your Division.

Teachers and school administrators are important partners in monitoring for the potential spread of communicable disease within school settings. Individual schools ensure the safety of students and staff by assisting to control the spread of illness.

In 2022, a school absenteeism metric was included in the Ministry of Health community respiratory illness surveillance program (CRISP) approach in which the Ministry of Education shares absenteeism reports with the Ministry of Health . This provides a general indication of absenteeism due to illness and informs the provincial CRISP report.

Pursuant to *The Public Health Act, 1994*, schools are required to report to a Medical Health Officer (MHO):

- Any illness that is serious and is occurring at a high rate (Section 31.1); and
- When a teacher or principal of a school becomes aware that a pupil is infected with or is a carrier of a category I communicable disease (Section 32).

When and how to report? In general, schools do not report all instances of illness in the school setting as these are frequent occurrences, typically students have non-specific symptoms, and schools do not know whether illness is caused by a specific communicable disease.

We are asking *all* schools to continue to notify their local MHO directly when:

- there are an unusual number of individuals with similar symptoms OR
- there are concerns about a specific communicable disease.

How is this information used? Schools and school divisions work with MHOs in responding to any public health risks in school settings. MHOs will determine any additional steps required, including but not limited to the declaration of an outbreak and communicating with the school community.

General precautions to decrease the transmission of communicable diseases in schools:

Routine measures include encouraging students, staff and visitors to stay home when sick and to stay up to date with immunizations. We also recommend schools promote hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and ensure routine environmental cleaning protocols are consistently used.

Your cooperation with reporting requirements and support for communicable disease prevention is important and appreciated. School divisions and schools are encouraged to contact <NAME> with questions about the particulars for reporting.

Sincerely,

< NAME OF MEDICAL HEALTH OFFICER>