

April 6, 2021

Dear Mr. Cleland,

Thank you for your letter and sharing your concerns as public health continues to work with partners to keep schools as safe as possible for staff and students.

As you know, stricter measures have been put in place to reduce the spread of Variants of Concern (VOCs). These include:

- A return to single symptom screening for staff and students
- Stricter isolation requirements so that all members of a household must stay home if any member has COVID-19 symptoms or is waiting for test results.

We continue to investigate all cases of COVID-19 and to ensure follow-up with close contacts, as well as working with the school to prevent further spread of the virus.

In terms of vaccinations, Huron Perth Public Health follows the province of Ontario's three-phase vaccination plan and the province's ethical framework. Vaccination eligibility is also reviewed weekly by the Vaccine Prioritization Advisory Committee (Huron Perth Public Health, Middlesex London Health Unit and Southwestern Public Health), based on the regional vaccine supply and Provincial direction.

The provincial plan prioritizes vaccines for those at greatest risk of severe illness and those who care for them.

The strategy to vaccinate the population is based on the following:

- age
- risk due to:
 - health conditions
 - congregate settings
 - hot spots (areas with higher rates of death, hospitalization and transmission)
 - not being able to work from home

In keeping with this sequence, Phase 2 of the province's plan lists elementary and secondary school staff in the category of "Essential frontline workers who cannot work from home". We expect to be given direction to accelerate our Phase 2 vaccinations in the weeks ahead as supply of vaccine increases and becomes more stable. Currently the majority of COVID-19 vaccinations are administered through HPPH mass vaccination clinics in Huron and Perth.

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When a group becomes eligible we communicate directly with employers as well as share most current eligibility information online at www.hpph.ca/vaccine.

Thank you again for your letter. We continue to work with school boards to ensure staff and students are as safe as possible at school, and to vaccinate the populations of Huron-Perth as quickly and safely as possible.

Sincerely,



Miriam Klassen
Medical Officer of Health & CEO