

CASE MANAGEMENT AND SCHOOL NOTIFICATIONS

Given the higher number of cases due to the Omicron variant circulating, how will case management and contact tracing change?

The emergence of the more transmissible Omicron variant of COVID-19 has necessitated changes in public health management. With higher levels of community transmission, a shorter virus incubation period, and the increased use of rapid antigen testing, contact tracing and close contact notification by public health is no longer effective to minimize spread of COVID-19.

Public health has transitioned to individual self-management (i.e., individuals care for themselves, engaging with health care providers when needed), with public health focused on identifying and responding to larger clusters and outbreaks in high risk settings.

[Individuals who test positive](#) are to notify those they live with or have had intimate contact with.

Will schools (including staff and students) be notified if there is an exposure at school?

Recent public health guidance recommends those who test positive for COVID-19 notify those whom they live with or who they've had intimate contact with. Acknowledging lower risk of transmission in the school setting following exposures, lower risk of severe disease among children and youth, and high immunization coverage in B.C., students and staff who experience COVID-19 exposures in the school setting are no longer routinely notified, and they are not required to self-isolate unless otherwise directed by Public Health. All students and staff should continue to monitor themselves for symptoms on a daily basis using the Daily Health Check.

Unfortunately, it is likely that COVID-19 will continue to circulate in our communities. Going forward, schools will be monitoring their attendance to determine if a public health-determined threshold for a grade or school has been met. If the threshold is met and there may be increased circulation of COVID-19 in the school/community, schools will send out a notification letter reminding students and staff to continue self-monitoring and to stay up to date with recommended immunizations.

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