

**Health  
Services**

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Dear Conseil scolaire Viamonde Board Members:

**Re: Mandatory masking recommendation for Grades 1 to 3**

I am writing today to advise that Peel Public Health recommends, as possible, that you consider making mandatory the wearing of masks for students in Grades 1-3 while in school and on school buses during the 2020-21 school year. I also strongly recommend the wearing of masks by kindergarten students while in these settings. I make these recommendations in aiming to align with our broader community guidance around the [Core Four](#) behaviours to stop COVID-19 and also public statements issued by the Medical Officer of Health for the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Unit.

This recommendation has also been provided to both the Peel District and Dufferin-Peel Catholic School Boards; the former has implemented this and the other is strongly considering implementing this protective measure which would bring them in line with other school boards within the Greater Toronto Area.

While this recommendation may appear to go above and beyond the provincial guidance that you have received from the Ministry of Education, it aligns with local by-laws in Peel concerning the wearing of masks in indoor public spaces. The Core Four behaviours of distancing, masking where distancing is difficult, frequent handwashing and getting tested and staying home when sick continue to be crucial to stopping the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

In making this recommendation, I fully recognize that all decisions around school reopening ultimately lie within your mandate. I know that you are also considering alignment across many health units in your catchment area. I want to be clear that my recommendations pertain solely to the Region of Peel and I know that you are balancing many competing demands and considerations in navigating a safe school reopening within what is feasible with current resourcing and guidance. I also know that this recommendation may come as a surprise and thank you for your patience as we continue to navigate this unprecedented situation. We continue to regularly communicate with your board director and school board staff while also coordinating approaches across public health units.

Certainly, school reopening will have a significant impact on the nature of interactions and movements about Peel. Successfully opening with adequate precautions is a shared goal and I will commit to continuing to keep all of you informed as we move towards September.

I'm happy to answer any questions you might have and thank you for your continued commitment to taking precautions that help us address COVID-19 in our community.

With my best wishes,



Lawrence C. Loh, MD, MPH, FCFP, FRCPC, FACPM  
Medical Officer of Health