

Suzanne Ruttan  
Chair, Board Trustees  
Limestone District School Board  
Kingston, ON K7M 1V5

*Sent via email*

March 17, 2022

Dear Suzanne Ruttan:

**Re: Request for two-week extension of the masking requirements for Grades 1 to 12 in schools.**

Thank you for your letter and the continued attention of the Limestone District School Board in supporting the health of students in the KFL&A region.

While the overall policy direction for schools is provided by the provincial government, KFL&A Public Health has worked closely throughout the pandemic with the Limestone District School Board to provide recommendations and guidance that are evidence-informed and timely, to keep schools as safe as possible.

Additionally, KFL&A Public Health and numerous health care partners have successfully collaborated with Limestone District School Board to offer COVID-19 vaccination clinics at school sites for staff, students, and their families. The remarkable work of school administration and staff to support these clinics during school hours and after hours has contributed to the high rates of COVID-19 vaccine coverage in our community, with first dose vaccination rates approaching 70% for 5 to 11 years of age and 93% for 12 to 17 years of age. This is a testament to the incredible partnership with schools to ensure that vaccination, the most effective measure to combat COVID-19, is available to those in school settings.

As you are aware, all policies related to mask mandates in schools are within the provincial government's purview. Further, with the most recent update to the Reopening Ontario Act, local medical officers of health are precluded from issuing Letters of Instruction to implement local measures, including the requirement that masks be worn in schools or other locations.

Even in the absence of regulations requiring their use, masks continue to be an important part of our community's COVID-19 response. The use of well-fitting, high-quality masks is an important measure we can still use to protect our health alongside vaccination, staying home when sick, screening, and other protective measures. We encourage the Limestone District School Board to ensure that their schools are mask-friendly places, which enable those who choose to wear a mask to do so, including continuing to provide mask breaks for those staff and students, during the school day. As has been the case throughout the pandemic, KFL&A Public Health will continue to support the Limestone District School Board and all its schools in this regard.

We also recognize that based on the potential for the emergence of new variants and the spread of COVID-19, and as stated by the Chief Medical Officer of Health, there may be a time in the future when the province reinstates mask mandates. As such, KFL&A Public Health will continue to work with the province and the Chief Medical Officer of Health to closely monitor the key public health and health care system indicators and

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**Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Public Health**

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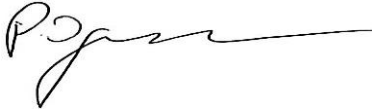
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work closely with you and your team at the Limestone District School Board.

If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by telephone (613) 549-1232 extension 1121 or by email to [Piotr.oglaza@kflaph.ca](mailto:Piotr.oglaza@kflaph.ca).

Sincerely,



Dr. P. Oglaza, MD, CPHI(C), MPH, CCFP, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health / Chief Executive Officer  
KFL&A Public Health

Copy to: Krishna Burra, Director of Education Limestone District School Board  
Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health