



## Statement – Masking in Schools

March 9, 2022

The Ontario Principals' Council (OPC), representing 5,400 principals and vice-principals in Ontario's public elementary and secondary schools, opposes the government's plan to lift the mask mandate in schools as of March 21, 2022 and urges it to immediately pause the lifting of this restriction. Throughout the pandemic, the OPC has always supported and relied upon the advice and science of the medical community. However, this announcement does not appear to be grounded in the science. Dr. Moore, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, has indicated that case loads are likely 10 times as high as limited PCR testing indicates. According to [government data](#), the vaccination rate for children ages 5-11 is under 30 per cent, well below that of the 18+ population. The Hospital for Sick Children advises against removing masks in schools for at least another month. And with the families of over two million students preparing to start March Break, when many will be travelling and meeting socially with others, we believe that lifting the mask mandate on March 21, 2022 will jeopardize the safety of students, staff and our school communities.

Following March Break and the days of religious observance in April, Ontario will be in a better position to monitor actual case counts, assess the aftermath of the other pandemic-related restrictions that are set to be eased, gauge ongoing absence rates in schools and further consult with the scientific and medical communities about potentially removing masks. The education sector also needs to be part of this consultation, as we are the professionals who are in schools everyday with students.