



Media Release

For Immediate Release
February 17, 2021

COVID-19 Outbreak Declared at Ryerson Heights

Brantford, Ont. – Today, the Brant County Health Unit declared a COVID-19 outbreak at Ryerson Heights Elementary School in Brantford.

As outlined in the Ministry of Education’s [Operational Guidance](#), an outbreak is defined as two or more lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases in students and/or staff in a school with an epidemiological link, within a 14-day period, where at least one case could have reasonably acquired their infection in the school.

News of the second COVID-19 case at Ryerson Heights came today (February 17). The first case was identified yesterday (February 16). Ryerson Heights has more than 600 students in Kindergarten through Grade 8.

Understandably, for privacy reasons, the identity of these COVID-19 cases will not be disclosed. These individuals have been directed by the health unit to [self-isolate](#), along with any family members who reside in the same household.

Upon receiving this news, Grand Erie immediately shared the contact information of the students and staff initially identified by the health unit as close contacts to these COVID-19 cases. All students and staff identified as close contacts were dismissed by the school and instructed to self-isolate. Within the next 24-48 hours, the Brant County Health Unit will provide further direction and next steps via email to these individuals, including confirmation of their isolation period. If additional Ryerson Heights students or staff are impacted, the Brant County Health Unit will advise as soon as possible.

A close contact includes any students or staff in the impacted cohort(s), but may also include others. Grand Erie provided the health unit with class lists, transportation records and childcare information.

Ryerson Heights remains open for those students and staff not required to self-isolate. Grand Erie custodians continue to complete their disinfecting of the school each night.

“Our priority is always the health and well-being of our students and staff,” said JoAnna Roberto, Director of Education. “As we move forward together, we’ll continue to work in partnership with public health. We’re confident in the preventative measures we’ve taken to deal with COVID-19 as well as the protocols we have in place to quickly identify and respond to cases.”

Ryerson Heights staff will work with students and families to ensure learning continues for those required to self-isolate. The school’s outbreak will be closely monitored and reported on by the Brant County Health Unit.

Grand Erie District School Board represents nearly 18,000 students in 58 elementary schools and more than 7,500 students in 14 secondary schools within the city of Brantford and the counties of Brant, Haldimand, and Norfolk as well as students from Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

- 30 -

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