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# COVID-19 School Support Playbook

for Health Care Organizations

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# Table of Contents

## Part One: Introduction

Acknowledgments.....	4
Why Support Schools During the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	5
About MGH’s School Outreach Team.....	6

## Part Two: Demonstrated Strategies

### COVID-19 Testing in School Communities

- Opening temporary testing sites in surrounding communities.....10
- Conducting broad-based asymptomatic testing at priority schools.....12
- Conducting pop-up “pre-testing” on-site at schools.....14
- Distributing take-home oral-nasal testing kits.....15
- Conducting integrated asymptomatic testing at priority schools.....16

### Supporting Educators

- Toronto East School Support (TESS): Hosting virtual Q&A sessions with school staff.....20
- Conducting infection prevention and control space assessments at schools.....21
- School-based IPAC Champion program.....22

### Outbreak Management and Response

- Following up with confirmed cases of COVID-19 in students and staff.....26

## Part Three: Conclusion

Conclusion.....	29
Learn More.....	30

# Part One: Introduction

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## Acknowledgments

This playbook was made possible by Michael Garron Hospital's (MGH) School Outreach Team: Dr. Janine McCready, infectious diseases physician; Tavia Caplan and Jonah Chevrier, infection control practitioners; Brad Lucifora, clinical nurse; and Jasmin Soobrian, project manager.

We'd also like to thank the following teams and organizations for their assistance in helping to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 at schools in East Toronto: MGH's COVID-19 Assessment Centre, MGH's Emergency Department, East Toronto Family Practice Network (EasT-FPN) and other member organizations within East Toronto Health Partners (ETHP).

In addition, we thank the school boards and government bodies we collaborated with on our initiatives: Toronto District School Board (TDSB), Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB), Association franco-ontarienne des conseils scolaires catholiques (AFOCSC), Conseil scolaire Viamonde (CSV), Toronto Public Health (TPH) and Ontario Health (OH).

We thank Dr. Chris Kandel, infectious diseases physician at MGH, who led the development and validation of the oral-nasal swab test, which has been critical in our efforts to proactively identify positive COVID-19 cases at schools and prevent and limit transmission. We also thank the MGH and ETHP Corporate Communications teams, who have aided significantly in the creation of this playbook.

Last but certainly not least, we extend our gratitude to the students, educators, administrative staff and families who embraced our outreach and innovative approaches to ensuring safe in-person learning in their communities. The success of our efforts would not have been possible without you.

## Why support schools during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant public health challenges in the safe operation of congregate settings around the world, including schools. These challenges have resulted in the repeated closure of schools across Ontario, which research has shown negatively impacts children's and youth's physical health, developmental health, mental health and learning. Therefore, it is critical that school boards, health care providers and government bodies, including public health units and the Ministry of Health, work together to ensure schools can safely remain open for in-person learning during the pandemic.

Health care organizations, including hospitals, may assist in this goal by leveraging their infection prevention and control knowledge to support local schools in the area they serve. Physicians, nurses and other medical professionals have the expertise and experience required to help principals, teachers and administrative staff apply public health guidelines and create safe learning environments. They may also have resources to help schools prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 in classrooms by identifying positive cases linked to local schools, increasing access to testing for affected students and staff, and sharing important information about testing.

These are just some of the strategies that MGH's School Outreach Team, led by Dr. Janine McCready, infectious diseases physician, have developed and implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic to support East Toronto schools. These proactive, community-based strategies leverage MGH's existing relationships with schools in East Toronto and aid schools' ability to operate safely and respond quickly to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19. They also demonstrate the fundamental role health care organizations can play in safeguarding schools during the pandemic, helping to ensure children and youth may continue to receive the in-person learning that is so vital to their health, happiness and development.

## About MGH's School Outreach Team

MGH's School Outreach Team aims to support East Toronto schools in their ability to operate safely and quickly respond to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19. Together, the team has leveraged MGH's existing relationships and built new connections with schools in East Toronto to ensure they have the support and resources they need for safe in-person learning during the pandemic. To date, the team has supported more than 100 schools across four school boards in East Toronto.

They've worked with primary care providers and community partners, as well as school boards and public health bodies, to conduct initiatives like virtual town halls with teachers and principals, asymptomatic testing pilots and confirmed case follow-up with students and staff. These strategies are detailed in the following pages.



*“Schools aren’t typically under the realm of hospitals, but because our community is so integrated, this was a priority. We felt compelled to reach out to these schools and ‘wrap our arms around them,’ so to speak, so we can support them in any way we can.”*

**Dr. Janine McCready, infectious diseases physician at MGH**



# Part Two: Demonstrated Strategies

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# COVID-19 Testing in School Communities

Increasing timely access to COVID-19 testing for students, staff and their families is critical for identifying positive cases of COVID-19 at schools and preventing and limiting the spread of COVID-19. To this end, the MGH School Outreach Team has developed a number of strategies to help ensure testing is as safe, simple and low-barrier as possible for students, staff and their families.

Access to Testing in  
Local Communities



Broad-Based  
Asymptomatic  
Testing in Schools



“Pre-Testing” Upon  
Resumption



Take-Home Oral-  
Nasal Testing Kits



Integrated  
Asymptomatic  
Testing in Schools





## Access to Testing in Local Communities

In September 2020, MGH worked with its community partners to open seven temporary COVID-19 testing sites in priority neighbourhoods in East Toronto. By December 2020, there were nine temporary testing sites in East Toronto operated by East Toronto Health Partners (ETHP), the Ontario Health Team (OHT) serving East Toronto that MGH is part of. As of April 2021, there are eight temporary testing sites in East Toronto.

These sites offer drop-in testing for local residents of all ages who are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or who think they may have been infected (even without symptoms). They also offer low-barrier testing for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and do not have easy access to Internet. They were launched in neighbourhoods in East Toronto experiencing high COVID-19 positivity rates and/or low COVID-19 testing rates according to data analyzed from MGH's COVID-19 Assessment Centre and Emergency Department (ED).





## Access to Testing in Local Communities

These testing sites complement the MGH COVID-19 Assessment Centre by making COVID-19 testing available in neighbourhoods where students, staff and their families may live. Information about the sites, including locations and operating hours, were shared regularly with principals and teachers through the Toronto East School Support (TESS) forum (see page 20).

School staff shared information about the temporary testing sites with parents through newsletter distribution lists, social media and other channels. This makes testing more accessible for students, staff and their families, increasing the likelihood that they will seek a COVID-19 test if they are experiencing symptoms or think they may have been exposed to the virus.





## Broad-Based Asymptomatic Testing in Schools

In December 2020, the MGH School Outreach Team led a broad-based asymptomatic testing initiative at select East Toronto schools as part of a pilot program with the Ontario Ministry of Education in partnership with Toronto Public Health (TPH) and the Toronto District School Board (TDSB). The initiative involved MGH administering COVID-19 oral-nasal tests on-site at schools to asymptomatic students and staff who volunteered to participate.

The oral-nasal test involves rubbing the inside of the mouth and the front of the nose with a swab for less than five seconds. It was devised and validated by MGH's infection prevention and control team, led by Dr. Chris Kandel, as an effective, evidence-based alternative to the traditional nasopharyngeal (NP) swab, which some children may find painful or uncomfortable. The oral-nasal test is also well tolerated by children with complex medical issues and/or development delays.

During this initiative, trained nurses helped children collect the oral-nasal swab on-site at schools. Older students who felt comfortable self-swabbing were able to do so. NP swabs were available by request. Asymptomatic students and staff were pre-registered in advance of testing and on-site registration was also available to maximize uptake.





## Broad-Based Asymptomatic Testing in Schools

Leading up to the asymptomatic testing, the MGH School Outreach Team developed consent letters and documents outlining important testing information, which were distributed to students, staff and their families in affected classes. These documents were translated into additional languages that are spoken in the school's surrounding communities.

The MGH School Outreach Team also called students, staff and their families to explain the testing process, answer questions and obtain consent for testing. This empowered individuals with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions about testing, helping to increase uptake.

The initiative helped identify positive COVID-19 cases in a number of asymptomatic students and staff at these schools, helping to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19. The initiative also helped increase access to testing in East Toronto neighbourhoods presenting high COVID-19 positivity rates and enabled MGH and Toronto Public Health (TPH) to gather data to better understand how COVID-19 is spreading and how effective current prevention strategies are. This allowed MGH to help schools improve their infection prevention and control strategies and encourage contacts of positive cases to seek testing and self-isolate.

In addition, the use of the oral-nasal swab, rather than the NP swab, helped increase the likelihood that students would have pleasant testing experiences. This helped students see testing as an easy, effective way to protect themselves, their family and their community from COVID-19, increasing the likelihood that they and their family members will seek COVID-19 testing in the future if needed.



## “Pre-Testing” Upon Resumption

Days before students and staff were expected to return to in-person learning in February 2021, the MGH School Outreach Team conducted pop-up COVID-19 “pre-testing” at two schools in East Toronto.

This pop-up pre-testing took place in the schools’ gymnasiums and offered drop-in symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for all students and staff in East Toronto. (In other words, individuals did not need to be students or staff at the indicated schools to receive testing.)

The MGH School Outreach Team conducted the pop-up pre-testing in an effort to increase access to COVID-19 testing for students and staff before they returned to in-classroom learning. This helped identify positive cases of COVID-19, preventing and limiting the spread of COVID-19 at schools and in the wider community.

This pop-up pre-testing complements MGH’s other school testing efforts, including the broad-based asymptomatic testing (see page 12) and on-site testing conducted as part of the MGH School Outreach Team’s follow-up with confirmed cases (see page 26).





## Take-Home Oral-Nasal Testing Kits

In February 2021, the MGH School Outreach Team distributed take-home oral-nasal testing kits to 110 schools in East Toronto. These testing kits include the tools needed to conduct an oral-nasal swab at home, making it easier for students to get tested for COVID-19. Schools are able to distribute the take-home testing kits to students who have symptoms or students who may have been exposed to COVID-19 because another student or staff member in their class tested positive.

Once at home, a family member is able to help the student collect the swab or the student may self-administer the swab with supervision. The swab is then stored in a provided container that a family member may drop off at one of nine nearby designated testing sites for analysis. Results are typically available online within 24 hours.

This strategy helps make COVID-19 testing as safe, simple and convenient as possible for students and families. It removes barriers that may prevent some families from seeking a COVID-19 test, including having to take time off work to accompany a child to a testing site. The oral-nasal swab in the testing kit, which is less invasive than the nasopharyngeal (NP) swab, also helps increase the likelihood that students will have pleasant testing experiences.

This strategy launched as a pilot program at select schools in communities presenting high positivity rates of COVID-19. MGH hopes to expand the program to other East Toronto schools.





## Integrated Asymptomatic Testing at Schools

Toronto schools reopened for in-person learning in February 2021. During this time, the increasing circulation of COVID-19 variants of concern were driving a third wave of the pandemic in Ontario. Recognizing this and the fact that as many as 50 per cent of COVID-19 infections in children may be asymptomatic, MGH's School Outreach Team identified an additional need to test broadly in schools. It began a proactive asymptomatic surveillance testing pilot in an effort to identify positive cases of COVID-19 and prevent school and community transmission in an integrated, low-barrier and equitable way.

The pilot involved the team offering asymptomatic testing to 13 schools in East Toronto communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. These communities are known to have high rates of COVID-19 and are at high risk for spread of COVID-19 based on indicators known to elevate risk, including low-income, high-density neighbourhoods with multigenerational homes and a larger percentage of visible minorities. Many of the participating schools had multiple cases detected and outbreaks declared in fall 2020. Five of the schools proposed were closed prior to the scheduled holidays in December 2020 due to outbreaks of COVID-19.

Class lists were obtained from each school and a random sample (20 percent of students from each class) was generated for weekly testing. The testing was conducted through take-home oral-nasal testing kits supplied by MGH (see page 15). These tests could also be performed at school, if consents from parents had been obtained or the students were able to consent themselves. Other tests were administered at





## Integrated Asymptomatic Testing at Schools

home and returned to school the following day where they were picked up by the MGH School Outreach Team for processing. This means families did not need to go out of their way to visit a testing site and therefore no extra time or transportation was required.

If a student tested positive through this testing, their family was contacted and encouraged to get tested. Case management support was also offered to individuals who tested positive and their families. In addition, Toronto Public Health (TPH) was notified and the remainder of the student's class was tested. If no cases were detected from the initial testing, then the next 20 percent of students was tested weekly until a case was detected or the school was closed.

Like with the broad-based asymptomatic testing pilot that MGH's School Outreach Team led in December 2020 (see page 12), letters translated in different languages describing the testing opportunities were sent out to the schools' surrounding communities in advance of this testing strategy. The team also joined parents' forums to offer parents and teachers the opportunity to ask questions. In addition, the testing kits contained instructions with easy-to-follow pictures of how to perform the tests and a link to an instructional video. These instructions were translated into multiple languages and available at all participating schools. This means completing the testing required very minimal effort from the students and their families.



## Integrated Asymptomatic Testing at Schools

This strategy helped identify positive COVID-19 cases at schools, providing constant and stable information to inform public health measures and infection prevention and control strategies, and regular feedback to the local school communities. It builds on the asymptomatic testing pilot that the MGH School Outreach Team conducted in in December 2020, which demonstrated asymptomatic students with COVID-19 attending schools were unaware of their infections.

As of April 12, 2021, all schools in Ontario have transitioned to remote learning due to a rising number of COVID-19 cases and community transmission. As a result, the MGH School Outreach Team is offering asymptomatic testing to special education classrooms and select congregate schools with children with complex medical issues that remain open.

**How to collect an oral nasal swab:**

Take swab out of bag. Do not drink the liquid!

- Use the swab to draw 5 circles on the back of your tongue.
- Use the swab to rub the inside of your cheek 3 times.
- Do the same thing on your other cheek.
- Put the swab just inside your nostril and rub all around 3 times.
- Do the same thing in your other nostril.
- Snap the swab into the tube and tighten lid. Do not drink the liquid!

Visit [www.tehn.ca/OralNasalSwab](http://www.tehn.ca/OralNasalSwab) for video instructions.

**كيفية جمع مسحة الأنف عن طريق الفم**

المخرج المسحة من الحقيبة. لا تشرب السائل!

- استخدم المسحة لرسم 5 دوائر على ظهر اللسان.
- استخدم المسحة لخدش باطن الخد 3 مرات.
- افعل نفس الشيء على الخد الأخرى.
- ضع المسحة داخل فتحة الأنف وادعها تحرك 3 مرات.
- افعل نفس الشيء في فتحة الأنف الأخرى.
- انقل المسحة في الأنبوب واتمم إغلاق الأنبوب بإحكام. لا تشرب السائل!

لمزيد من المعلومات، يرجى زيارة [www.tehn.ca/OralNasalSwab](http://www.tehn.ca/OralNasalSwab) لمشاهدة مقاطع الفيديو التعليمية.

**Ako zobrať vzorku výteru z úst a nosa:**

Vyberte stierku z vrecúčka. Tekutinu nepite!

- Stierkou urobte 5 krížových pohybov vzadu na jazyku.
- Stierkou 3 krát trieť vnútornú stranu tváre.
- To isté urobte v druhej tvári.
- Stierku vsuňte nehlboko do nosnej dierky a trieť 3 krát dokola.
- To isté urobte v druhej nosnej dierke.
- Stierku dajte do tuby a urobte tesno zatvorenú viečko. Tekutinu nepite!

Ná [www.tehn.ca/OralNasalSwab](http://www.tehn.ca/OralNasalSwab) nájdete video s návodom.

# Supporting Educators



## Toronto East School Support (TESS)

A virtual town hall series that allows principals and teachers to ask safety-related questions and receive answers in real-time from Dr. Janine McCready, infectious diseases physician at MGH.



## IPAC Space and Environmental Assessment

An initiative that sees infectious diseases specialists from MGH conducting assessments of classrooms and other physical environments at schools. The specialists are then able to make recommendations on how these spaces can be made safer for staff and students.



## School-Based IPAC Champion Program

A pilot that teaches educators and administrative staff best practices and principles of infection prevention and control. This allows these individuals to pass this knowledge onto their colleagues so they can work together to develop and improve strategies to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19.



## Toronto East School Support (TESS): Hosting Virtual Q&A Sessions with School Staff

In August 2020, MGH's School Outreach Team partnered with East Toronto Family Practice Network (EasT-FPN), a network of more than 300 family physicians in East Toronto, to launch Toronto East School Support (TESS), a weekly virtual town hall that gives educators in East Toronto the opportunity to receive medical expertise and guidance in real-time to help ensure the safe reopening of schools.

Principals at priority schools were invited to the first series of TESS forums. They asked questions such as “Should all students be screened before they enter schools?”, “What’s the best way to prevent community infection during lunch?” and “Is it safe for children to participate in singing games while wearing masks?” Dr. Janine McCready, infectious diseases physician at MGH, provided answers to these questions, helping educators apply safety guidelines from school boards and government bodies in a way that’s effective and makes sense in their local settings.

The TESS series was eventually expanded to include teachers at all East Toronto schools and, prior to the closure of schools across Ontario on April 12, 2021, took place monthly. During the virtual town halls, Dr. McCready and family physicians from EasT-FPN offered guidance to educators so they can help ensure a safe in-person learning environment for their students. By offering an accessible space where educators may ask questions to infectious diseases experts, TESS aims to ensure principals, teachers and administrative staff may reach a place where they feel safe and comfortable so they focus their efforts on teaching.



## Infection Prevention and Control Space Assessments at Schools

In September 2020, MGH's School Outreach Team began offering on-site visits by infectious diseases physicians and infection control practitioners to priority schools in East Toronto. These visits allowed medical experts to evaluate school spaces and make recommendations based on infection prevention and control best practices. By visiting the schools, the team was able to better understand the specific challenges that different schools faced and identify infection control supports that may help.

These infection prevention and control space assessments continue to be available on an ongoing basis as requested by schools in East Toronto, including those that may be experiencing a high number of positive COVID-19 cases among students and staff. The on-site visits are also available to schools that participate in the School-Based IPAC Champion Program (see page 22).

In fall 2020, primary care clinical liaisons from East Toronto Family Practice Network (EasT-FPN) were also connected to 12 priority schools for enhanced support. These liaisons, as well as Dr. McCready, were readily available by phone and email to support principals with their COVID-19-related questions. This builds on the relationships established at the Toronto East School Support (TESS) forum (see page 20).

In addition, the MGH School Outreach Team responded to specific COVID-19-related requests from educators whenever possible in an effort to strengthen relationships with schools in the community and help protect students and staff. For example, the team coordinated a donation of custom-made three-layer children's masks to priority schools. They also developed an information sheet to help schools manage initial actions for a confirmed case in line with Toronto Public Health (TPH) and school board recommendations.



## School-Based IPAC Champion Program

In January 2021, MGH's School Outreach Team launched a School-Based IPAC Champion Program at a priority school in East Toronto. The program involved educators and administrative staff at the school learning about infection prevention and control (IPAC) best practices and principles so they're able to become advocates or "champions" of IPAC.

This allows these individuals to pass this knowledge onto their colleagues so, together, they can develop and improve strategies that further prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 at schools. The School-Based IPAC Champion Program is adapted from a similar program that MGH conducted with long-term care homes in East Toronto during spring 2020.

Ten staff members at the school participated in the pilot, including administrators, teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 6, and a Slovak-speaking member of the Toronto District School Board's (TDSB) support staff.



*"When this opportunity came, we jumped on it because we want to do better. We want to see how we can improve and how we can assure our community and re-establish that trust."*

**Mikki Hymus, principal at Grenoble Public School**



## School-Based IPAC Champion Program

During a series of virtual sessions completed over a two-week period, they received comprehensive information about COVID-19, including the different ways it may be transmitted and how COVID-19 tests work. They also learned information such as what areas in schools are considered “high touch” and require more frequent sanitation; how to arrange a classroom to encourage physical distancing among students; and the importance of well-fitting masks for students.

This strategy enabled MGH’s IPAC team to share their knowledge with principals, educators and administrative staff at schools. This offers these individuals a deeper understanding of IPAC and how they can create an individualized approach to protecting their students and staff from COVID-19 that considers their unique school setting and community.

*“I really appreciated how they broke everything down and how explicit they were when communicating the nuances of these different practices and principles.”*

**Lisa Tsue, special education resource teacher at Grenoble Public School**

*“There is tremendous anxiety from our staff about ensuring a safe back to school. So it brings us a lot of comfort to know we have a direct line of contact to these physicians and infectious disease experts and that we’re able to ask questions and receive guidance when we need it.”*

**Jeffrey Crane, principal at Thorncliffe Park Public School**





# Outbreak Management and Response

Even with a robust testing strategy and comprehensive support for educators in place, a rapidly evolving pandemic means there remains the potential for positive COVID-19 cases to spread within classrooms. In these events, the MGH School Outreach Team has developed strategies that help prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 while ensuring students, staff and families who test positive have the support they need.





## Confirmed Case Follow-Up

Since September 2020, the MGH School Outreach Team has been identifying which positive COVID-19 cases confirmed at MGH's COVID-19 Assessment Centre belong to students and staff at East Toronto schools. The team offers these individuals and their families case management support, including connecting them with local food security and income assistance resources, if needed.

The team also immediately notifies Toronto Public Health (TPH) of these positive cases. If the individual who tested positive was at school during a period of communicability and the family consents, the principal of that school is also notified with consent.

Working with Toronto Public Health (TPH) and Toronto school boards, the MGH School Outreach Team then develops a testing strategy to ensure the students and staff members in these individuals' classes have access to testing. This testing strategy is developed in consultation with the principal of the affected school to help ensure it caters to the individuals needs of the school and the surrounding community.

One strategy involves contacting each student's parent to inform them their child may have been exposed to COVID-19, to encourage them to have their child tested and to explain the importance of getting tested. If the parent agrees, the team schedules a convenient time for the student and members of their immediate household to receive a COVID-19 test at the MGH COVID-19 Assessment Centre or one of eight nearby temporary testing sites in East Toronto.

This proactive testing strategy has increased testing uptake by affected students and staff at East Toronto schools to 80 to 95 per cent. Previously, students and staff were informed that they may have been exposed



## Confirmed Case Follow-Up

to COVID-19 while at school through a letter from the school board. This letter encouraged these individuals to get tested but, without follow-up action that emphasized the importance of getting tested and made COVID-19 testing as accessible as possible, schools in East Toronto were only seeing about 10 to 15 percent of these individuals swabbed.

Another strategy involves the MGH School Outreach Team setting up on-site testing at the school for the affected class. This on-site testing offers students oral-nasal tests, which are less invasive than the traditional nasopharyngeal (NP) swab. Like with the broad-based asymptomatic testing initiative (see page 12), trained nurses help children collect the oral-nasal swab on-site. Older students who feel comfortable self-swabbing are able to do so and NP swabs are available by request. Affected students and staff are pre-registered in advance of testing and on-site registration is also available to maximize uptake.

Consent letters and documents outlining important testing information, translated into additional languages as needed, are distributed to students, staff and their families ahead of testing. Like with the broad-based asymptomatic testing initiative, the MGH School Outreach Team calls all affected individuals to explain the testing process, answer questions and obtain consent for testing.

These follow-up actions help ensure positive cases of COVID-19 connected to local schools are contained safely and swiftly. They connect individuals who test positive with the supports they and their families need; increase access to testing for students and staff who may have been exposed to positive cases; and offer affected individuals the information they need to make educated decisions about testing.

# Part Three: Conclusion

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## Conclusion

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, MGH's School Outreach Team has developed and implemented strategies that allow it to 1) act proactively; 2) build on existing and create new relationships with schools in East Toronto; and 3) respond to the evolving needs of the schools it supports.

This combination has enabled the team to support East Toronto schools in their ability to operate safely and quickly respond to suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19. By leading a number of innovative pilot projects at schools, the team has also been able to ensure it is exploring every avenue possible to protect students, school staff and their families.

We hope these strategies offer a model and learnings that other health care organizations may adopt to assist schools in safely opening and reopening during the pandemic. We look forward to continuing our work with schools in East Toronto to help ensure children and youth may continue to receive the in-person learning that is so vital to their health, happiness and development.

## Learn More

**READ:** MGH Newsroom: An ‘eye-opening’ experience: How MGH is transforming local educators into IPAC champions (March 22, 2021)

**READ:** The Globe and Mail: This Toronto doctor makes house calls to local schools (March 20, 2021)

**READ:** TVO: ‘Listen to the front-line people’: An infectious-disease doctor on COVID-19 in schools (March 9, 2021)

**LISTEN:** CBC Radio White Coat, Black Art: Here's how to know if your kid has COVID — and what to expect if they do (March 2, 2021)

**READ:** Toronto Star: COVID-19 testing offered at six Toronto schools this week as province mandate tells boards to boost numbers (February 17, 2021)

**READ:** MGH Newsroom: Michael Garron Hospital pilots take-home COVID-19 testing kits in East Toronto schools (February 16, 2021)

**WATCH:** MGH Newsroom: Sarah Downey hosts '5 Questions' with Dr. Janine McCready about supporting schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and how to safely celebrate over the holidays (December 9, 2020)

**LISTEN:** The Big Story Podcast: How hospitals are helping teachers as kids return to school (September 16, 2020)

**READ:** MGH Newsroom: MGH and East-FPN lead proactive, community-based approach to back-to-school planning (September 15, 2020)

**READ:** Toronto.com: Toronto hospital, doctors support east-end schools as classes resume (September 15, 2020)

**READ:** The Toronto Star: Educators have become the first line of COVID-19 defence. So Michael Garron Hospital and other doctors are providing a direct line of support for schools (September 8, 2020)

**READ:** MGH Newsroom: How to stay safe as Ontario reopens: Dr. Janine McCready, infectious diseases physician, suggests asking yourself these five questions (July 17, 2020)

*“Oftentimes, what’s happening in schools is reflective of what’s happening in the wider community. If we can proactively identify positive cases in schools, we can prevent transmission and improve our infection control strategies to ensure our communities are protected.”*

**Dr. Janine McCready, infectious diseases physician at MGH**