



In the pursuit of excellence... there is no finish line.

Notre Dame Catholic Elementary School

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Dear Niagara Catholic families:

As you may have read in the news, the Ministry of Education has announced that every student in Ontario will be provided with a package containing five rapid antigen testing kits by their school before they leave for the Christmas break. Your child will receive their testing kit package during the week of December 13, 2021.

Families may choose whether to participate in this voluntary testing opportunity while your children are at home for the Christmas break. For those who wish to use the rapid antigen tests, Public Health Ontario recommends that testing take place every 3-4 days during the break, beginning on December 23, until all tests have been used. Please note that these tests are to be used on individuals who are not showing any [symptoms of COVID-19](#). If your child shows any symptoms, they must be tested at a regular testing site. Your child is not required to take a rapid antigen test before returning to school in January. Please note that test kits must be stored in a dry environment, with a temperature between 2C and 25C.

Instructions on how to use the rapid antigen test kits are attached to this email, as is a letter from Niagara's Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Mustafa Hirji.

Test results are available within 15 minutes. If the test results conducted so far are negative, your child may attend school as usual, following all Public Health guidelines. A positive result on a rapid antigen screening test is considered a preliminary positive. A child that receives a positive result on a rapid antigen screening test should seek a PCR test to confirm that result, ideally within 48 hours, at a [local testing site](#) or pharmacy that offers testing and isolate themselves until they receive the results of the PCR test.

Testing is only one of the tools we have to protect ourselves against COVID-19. The Ministry of Education, Public Health Ontario and Niagara Region Public Health strongly recommend testing for anyone who is eligible. Niagara Region Public Health has made vaccinations for children aged 5-11 its priority at clinics for the next several weeks to ensure as many of our youngest students are vaccinated up to and during the Christmas break. Click [here](#) for a list of vaccination clinics hosted by Niagara Region Public Health for children aged 5-11. Individuals aged 12+ who are not yet vaccinated or fully vaccinated may still be able to receive their COVID-19 vaccine through a pharmacy or their primary care physician. The link above also provides information for families who are uncertain about vaccinating their children this winter. If you wish to access more information regarding vaccinations, please visit our [Niagara Catholic 2021-2022 School Reopening and Safety Guide page](#) and click on the links provided by Public Health. You may also find out more at the [Ontario Government website](#), as well as [Niagara Region Public Health's COVID-19 vaccination page](#).

Thank you for your continued support and patience as we work through another pandemic school year. I hope you all stay safe and well.