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To: PEI Post-Secondary Institutions
From: Chief Public Health Office
CC: Mark Demone, Neil Stewart
Date: May 3, 2021
Subject: Return to In-Room Learning for PEI Post-Secondary Institutions (Fall 2021)

As we continue into the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, we thank PEI post-secondary institutions for continuing to implement public health measures that limit transmission of the virus. We know the pandemic has had a significant impact on students, faculty, and staff. And we understand there is a strong desire to return to safe in-room learning this fall. The following provides guidance for PEI post-secondary institutions on public health measures relevant to in-room learning for the fall 2021.

It is expected that by the end of June 2021, all Island adults 16 years and older will be offered the first dose of a two-dose Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine. It is also anticipated that Island adults 16 years and older will be offered their second dose of vaccine by September 2021. As a result, with strong uptake of vaccine, most Island students, faculty, and staff will be fully vaccinated by early fall 2021. Similar vaccination programs are rolling out in other Canadian jurisdictions as well as in many other countries and many domestic and international students, faculty, and staff will also have had the opportunity to receive at least one dose of vaccine before beginning the fall term.

Vaccination with a Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine provides an essential layer of protection against moderate to severe COVID-19 disease. However, since vaccines have limitations and do not confer perfect immunity, it is anticipated that public health measures will also need to be maintained for some time. While closed spaces such as classrooms represent a higher risk for COVID-19 transmission, vaccination together with strong public health measures provides a basis for a return to safe in-room learning.

The following measures are proposed for in-room learning this fall:

- For unvaccinated students, faculty, and staff, physical distancing of 6 feet and masking must be maintained at all times. If classroom capacity is not determined by physical distancing, maximum classroom capacity is 50 persons or 50% of seating capacity, whichever is greater.

- For vaccinated students, faculty, and staff, physical distancing may be less than 6 feet. Maximum classroom capacity is 50 persons or 50% of seating capacity, whichever is greater.
- “Vaccinated” is defined for domestic students, faculty, and staff as having completed a COVID-19 vaccine series and for international students, faculty, and staff as having received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- Unvaccinated and vaccinated students, faculty, and staff should not mix in the same classroom setting except in special cases (e.g. accommodation).
- Cohorting is encouraged in keeping with public health guidance.
- Cleaning and disinfection of commonly touched surfaces should occur between classes.
- Other public health measures should be maintained (e.g. staying home when sick, washing hands, etc.)
- Operational plans with special attention to in-room learning should be updated and approved by the PEI Chief Public Health Office.

Verification of vaccination status for students, faculty, and staff prior to engaging in in-room learning is the responsibility of institutions. To support this work, recipients of COVID-19 vaccine on PEI will soon be able to receive their vaccine record electronically upon request. For recipients of COVID-19 vaccine in other provinces/territories or internationally there is no standardized vaccination record format. However, vaccination records should contain: the person’s name, address and date of birth; name of the vaccine and dose administered; the date on which the vaccine was administered.

PEI’s COVID-19 response continues to be dynamic as we respond to emerging epidemiology and evidence. As such, it is likely this guidance will need to be modified in the months ahead to reflect our current situation. We will continue to work with your institutions to provide the most up to date information and recommendations.

Thank you for your support of PEI’s COVID-19 response. Based on approval of operational plans by the Chief Public Health Office, post-secondary institutions in PEI are listed as a federal Designated Learning Institution for the purposes of any order issued under section 58 of the Quarantine Act (Canada). As we head towards the fall 2021, we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure a safe post-secondary learning environment for students, faculty, and staff.



Dr. Heather Morrison
Chief Public Health Officer



Dr. David Sabapathy
Deputy Chief Public Health Officer