August 31, 2020

Dear new and returning Trent students:

Welcome to Peterborough! As you know, COVID-19 makes this school year very different. Though the pandemic is new, and we continue to learn more about it, we know the choices we make—the choices you make—impact transmission rates in our community.

For those of you who are joining Peterborough for the school year, we expect you to join our community with the same spirit the community residents are very proud of: putting in the work to reduce the impact of this virus.

As a new or returning community member, your cooperation and adherence to public health guidelines influences whether we can keep our businesses and services open and prevent our health care system from becoming overwhelmed. The guidelines currently in place for Peterborough and area are outlined below.

Quarantine and Self-Isolation
Peterborough Public Health (PPH) has enacted a Section 22 order (under the Health Protection and Promotion Act) for our region. This means, you must follow Public Health instruction to isolate if you have tested positive for COVID-19, or self-quarantine if you have come in contact with an infected COVID-19 individual. We expect your full compliance.

Mandatory Face Coverings
We have also issued instructions under provincial legislation for the mandatory use of face coverings. This means that while in Peterborough, face coverings must be worn at all times inside commercial establishments, including bars and restaurants, and that hand hygiene protocols and products are to be followed and used. This guidance also applies to public transit and to private commercial transportation, such as taxicabs.

Limits on Size of Social Gatherings
PPH takes community safety very seriously. Indoor public or social gatherings must not exceed a maximum of 50 people, and outdoor gatherings must not exceed a maximum of 100 people. These limits will be enforced under the Reopening Ontario Act by local police services. We encourage you to stick to your social circle of less than 10 people as per the provincial guidelines. It’s the safest choice.

Physical Distancing, Getting Tested and Staying Home When Sick
Making the effort to practice physical distancing (staying at least 2 metres away from others), wearing a mask where you cannot physically distance, cleaning your hands frequently to maintain hand hygiene, getting tested if you think you have symptoms of COVID-19, and staying home if you are sick, will prevent community transmission. If you have symptoms of COVID-19 you can book an appointment to be tested by calling the Assessment Centre at Peterborough Regional Health Centre at 705-876-5086.
If you are coming from another part of the province or country currently experiencing community transmission of the coronavirus, I recommend you limit and track your contacts for the first 14 days. A helpful tool that assists in notifying your close contacts, should you become ill, is the COVID ALERT app. I recommend you activate it on your mobile phone as a way to help protect others in the event that you contract COVID-19. For information on how to download the app visit: www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-alert.html.

Currently, people aged 20 to 29 years of age are the most at-risk group for becoming infected with COVID-19. This is because young people who are infected often have mild versions of the COVID-19 illness, and can unknowingly spread it, before they know they are sick. This affects the larger community, including older family members and people at high risk of serious illness because of other health conditions. The choices you make and the efforts you take to follow public health advice will keep all of us safe. The community will be grateful to you for doing so. Information about local infection rates can be found at https://www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca/your-health/diseases-infections-immunization/diseases-and-infections/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov/local-covid-19-status/.

We all want to continue to reopen Ontario businesses and public spaces safely and gradually. We don’t want to have to pause or tighten public health measures. PPH is working hard to support adjustments to ensure your school experience, though different this year, is fulfilling and rewarding. We want you to have a successful year and, with your help, we will steer this new normal to keep our infection rates low and allow our community’s economy to recover.

If you have questions about COVID-19 please visit our website at www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca or call us at 705-743-1000.

Sincerely,

Rosana Salvaterra, MD, MSc, CCFP, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health