

[5-Dec-21]

To: Staff, Parents and Guardians of students at **Westwood Community High School**

RE: Notice of a COVID-19 Omicron variant of concern case in a school setting

Public Health staff have identified a case of COVID-19 who attended the school named above while infectious. This person is very likely to have the Omicron variant of COVID-19.

The new Omicron variant of COVID-19 has been designated as a variant of concern by the World Health Organization and the Public Health Agency of Canada. We do not yet have enough information to know if the Omicron variant spreads more easily or causes more severe illness than other variants and how it might affect our communities. Early notification and testing will help us reduce the spread of the disease while we learn more about this variant.

Please be aware of the following requirements and recommendations:

- All staff and students must continue to use the COVID-19 [Alberta Health Daily Checklist](#) daily to determine if they may attend school.
- If staff or students develop symptoms, they must isolate at home immediately. Complete the AHS [COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) tool or call Health Link at 811 as soon as possible to arrange for COVID-19 testing.
- If there are additional recommendations for exposed groups, those people will be contacted directly.
- If staff or students require medical attention, please call ahead to the health care provider or call Health Link at 811 so that safe care can be provided.
- **Alberta Health will be providing free Rapid Testing Kits to the school. Please see the attached information sheet.**

COVID-19 is passed from person to person through tiny droplets of liquid, spread by coughing, sneezing, talking, laughing and singing. Indoor gatherings and crowded places increase the chance of spreading the virus through the air.

To help minimize spread of COVID-19, we recommend the following:

- Get immunized against COVID-19. Immunization protects the individual and those who are not immunized. The best way to protect children too young for COVID-19 vaccine is to ensure all adults and older children around them are immunized.
- If eligible for COVID-19 vaccine and not fully immunized, please [book an appointment](#) online or call 811.
- Ensure all immunizations are up to date, including annual influenza vaccine.
- All household members should wash hands often with soap and water thoroughly for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty.
- Encourage household members to not touch their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the garbage and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Stay home if you're sick. [If your kids are sick](#), keep them home from childcare or school at the first sign of illness.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are touched often and shared by everyone in your home such as door knobs, light switches and bathroom taps.
- Wear a mask and keep your distance from others when in public places.
- Limit time spent in indoor, crowded public places when possible.

For further information, please call Health Link at 811, or visit the Alberta Health Services website for [COVID-19](#).

Thank you.

Public Health,
Communicable Disease Control

Rapid Testing Kit

Alberta Health will be providing the school with free rapid tests. **These tests are not a replacement for AHS testing.** Close contacts of the case will receive another letter with further recommendations. These at-home tests should be used the day you receive them and continue to be used every second day for a minimum of 14 days after the last date of exposure. If your child tests positive on a rapid test they must isolate immediately and should seek testing through AHS.

Information for Rapid Testing Kit

What is contained in my test kit?

- The test kit you obtained contains five BTNX COVID-19 Rapid Tests and a Procedure Card.
- You will receive two boxes of tests for a total of 10 tests.

Who can use rapid tests?

- Individuals aged 14 and older can collect their own samples.
- Children aged 2-13 when an adult collects the sample.

When do I use the tests?

- As long as you continue to have no symptoms, you will perform the rapid test on the day you receive the test and every second day after.

How do I use the test?

- To use the test, follow the instructions for Option B: Nasal Swab, on the BTNX Procedure Card in this kit (do not follow instructions for Option A: Nasopharyngeal Swab).
- A video on how to perform a BTNX COVID-19 Rapid Test on your child is available [here](#).
- A video on how to perform a BTNX COVID-19 Rapid Test is available [here](#).

What do I do if I have a positive result?

- On your test device, if your result shows two lines: one at the 'C' and another at the 'T' mark, it is presumed to be positive.
- If you have a positive test result, it is likely that you have COVID-19. You:
 - must immediately isolate for 10 days or until you have a negative PCR test; and
 - should book a confirmatory PCR test at an AHS assessment centre alberta.ca/GetTested.
- You should not continue performing rapid tests.

What do I do if I have a negative result?

- On your test device, if your result shows one line at the 'C' and no line at the 'T' mark, it is presumed to be negative.
- A negative result does not rule out infection. This means that you could still have COVID-19 even though the test is negative. While you are not required to isolate, you must continue to follow all public health guidelines.

What if I have an invalid test?

- If your test result does not match either the NEGATIVE or POSITIVE examples in your Procedure Card, the test may not have worked. Re-test until you receive either a positive or negative result.

What do I do if my child develops symptoms?

- If your child develops COVID-related symptoms, isolate and call 811 or visit alberta.ca/GetTested to book a PCR test at an AHS Assessment Centre.

What do I do if I have questions about the Rapid Test Kit?

- Contact AH-Operations@gov.ab.ca