

Entire class at Glenbrook Elementary self-isolating after positive COVID-19 case

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An entire classroom in a Shelburne elementary school has been told to self-isolate following an assessment of a positive COVID-19 case by Wellington-Dufferin Guelph Public Health (WDGPH).

The Upper Grand District School (UGDSB) reported the positive case at Glenbrook Elementary in Shelburne on Friday (Sept. 25). Since the confirmed positive case of coronavirus, Public Health has directed the UGDSB to have the one class self-isolate.

In an email to Free Press, UGDSB communications and community engagement officer Heather Loney said, "As part of its investigation into a positive case, Public Health performs a risk assessment for any contact.

"All individuals determined to be at a high risk of exposure are directed to self-isolate and recommended to be tested," said Loney. "Due to the positive case identified at Glenbrook Elementary School, Public Health has directed one class to self-isolate. Public Health is working with those individuals to provide guidance on what further actions they should take."

The UGDSB and Glenbrook Elementary have not disclosed which classroom has been asked to self-isolate, and whether the positive case was a staff member or student.

The school, which is still open while the single class isolates, is the first within the UGDSB to have a confirmed positive case of COVID-19.

Glenbrook Elementary Principal Tim Murray released a letter on Sunday (Sept. 27) to parents, guardians, and staff members. In the letter he says that custodial staff did a thorough cleaning and disinfection of the entire school on Sept. 25 (the date of the confirmed case), as part of enhanced cleaning protocols.

Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO of WDGPH says the case is a reminder that COVID-19 is still present within the region.

"This is an important reminder that we all must wear a mask, practice good hand hygiene, maintain physical distancing and keep our groups and gatherings small," said Dr. Mercer. "Fewer cases in our community means fewer cases in our schools."

The decision on who should isolate, and who are considered high risk contacts is based on an assessment by Public Health.

"Each time we manage a case we do a risk assessment to determine high risk contact and reach out to them so they can self-isolate and get tested," said Public Health spokesperson Danny Williamson.

"We do not report publicly high risk contacts, as once in touch with Public Health they are no longer a risk to the public or school community. If they, in turn, become a positive case then we contact high risk contact of the new case."

According to Williamson an outbreak is when there are "two positive cases that are linked (one positive case caused another)".

Although the positive coronavirus case is the first within the UGDSB, it is not the first within a school in Dufferin County.

Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board (DPCDSB) reported a positive case at St. Benedict Elementary school in Orangeville on Sept. 22. The school has been listed as open and with no closed classes.