



December 15th, 2020

Dear Parents and Families of students attending school in Halton Region,

The past several months of isolation, uncertainty and lifestyle changes due to the pandemic have been challenging for everyone. At Halton Region Public Health, we recognize the actions that each of you have taken to keep our schools and communities safe, such as keeping your child(ren) home when ill, encouraging them to frequently wash their hands, wearing a mask when indoors, and maintaining a physical distance of two metres from others when outside your home. We appreciate your efforts to find new ways to connect and for your flexibility in this ever-changing environment. Thank you for doing your part.

This pandemic has brought us together as a community, has shown how resilient we can be in the face of adversity and has revealed how Halton continues to work together to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is still present in our community and we must remain vigilant over the holidays to help keep our community safe.

As we all know, the holidays are going to look a little different this year. It is recommended that you only celebrate in person with the people you live with and celebrate virtually with everyone else. Family members that live alone may choose one other household to celebrate with in-person. The Ontario government has also provided some good advice on how to [celebrate safely during COVID-19](#) this season in order to protect your loved ones.

Here is some advice for parents on how to help your children cope as the holiday season approaches:

- **Make time to talk** – Encourage your children to share their thoughts and feelings and help them understand why things have to be different this year.
- **Stay positive** – Focus on the rituals that you can continue to do together instead of the ones you can't.
- **Create new traditions** – See this as an opportunity to start new traditions to make this holiday season special.
- **Keep it simple** – Focus on the parts of the holiday that are most meaningful to you.
- **Stay connected, be present and stay safe!**

Health Canada's approval of a COVID-19 vaccine is great news for our community, province and country. For the latest information and emerging details on distribution timelines, priority regions and populations, please visit the Province's [COVID-19 vaccines webpage](#). We will update our website and communicate with the community on what this means for Halton as more information from the Province becomes available.

Regional Municipality of Halton

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While this is exciting news and indeed a new light at the end of the tunnel, I want to remind everyone that our collective efforts remain critical and to not let your guards down. This includes:

- Staying home, except for essential purposes such as going to work or school, buying essential items like groceries or medicine or attending medical appointments.
- Limiting close contact to those that live with you and maintain a two metre (six foot) distance and wear a mask from anyone outside of your household (including family and close friends).
- Avoiding all social gatherings such as play dates, birthday parties, and dinner parties with friends or family. This includes any holiday celebrations.

Thank you for working together, taking this seriously and above all for being kind to one another.

Please watch my [video](#) wishing you a safe holiday season and continue to visit halton.ca/COVID19 for the latest information on cases and public health guidance, including the [Provincial COVID-19 Response Framework](#) and what this means for Halton residents.

Happy Holidays.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hamidah Meghani'.

Yours in health,
Dr. Hamidah Meghani
Medical Officer of Health
Halton Region