

Residents urged to 'go back to basics' as school gears up

As York Region elementary and secondary students enrolled for in-class learning prepare to head back to school this Thursday, September 10 in a staggered back-to-school week, York Region Public Health is encouraging the community to 'get back to basics' to keep community transmission of COVID-19 down.

'As numbers of new cases of COVID-19 decrease, the risk of transmission decreases and the risk of outbreaks in the schools decrease, so it is incumbent that we go back to basics' and the basics are: physical distancing by two metres or more, ensuring that we wear masks in indoor public places and on transit, that we wash our hands frequently and we stay home if we're sick,' said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region's Medical Officer of Health, in his Monday update. 'The latter point cannot be emphasized more.'

His update came less than a week after York Region residents were warned about two instances of possible exposure to the virus.

More than 20 individuals who attended a series of wedding events in Whitchurch-Stouffville, Markham and Toronto between August 28 and August 29 have now tested positive for COVID-19, including 18 residents of York Region.

Confirmed cases can be tied to August 28 celebrations at a private residence in Whitchurch-Stouffville, at Toronto's Rexdale Singh Sabha Religious Centre, and at the Lakshmi Narayamandir Temple, also in Toronto, as well as an August 29 celebration at a private residence in Markham.

'To assist with contact tracing, York Region is asking all individuals who attended an event associated with this wedding' to monitor for new signs and symptoms related to COVID-19 until Saturday, September 12 (14 days after last possible exposure),' said York Region Public Health. 'If you are currently experiencing symptoms, self-isolate immediately, call York Region Public Health at 1-800-361-5653 and seek assessment and testing at a COVID-19 Assessment Centre.'

Transit users are also being urged to stay vigilant after an individual who travelled on a Viva Blue bus on the Yonge Street corridor tested positive for the virus.

The person in question took Viva Blue from Yonge and Finch to Bernard Avenue in Richmond Hill between 12 noon and 2 p.m. on Sunday, August 30. Anyone who was on Viva Blue within that window is asked to monitor for new signs and symptoms related to COVID-19 until Sunday, September 13 '14 days after the last possible exposure.

'In compliance with YRT's mandatory face mask or covering bylaw, the individual wore a mask during the bus trip, which reduces the transmission of the virus to others,' said the Region.

By Brock Weir