

Friday, Nov. 19, 2021

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**Dear Parents and Guardians,**

Yesterday the Government of Ontario made COVID-19-related announcements that will affect Near North District School Board (NNDSB) students. The two garnering the most attention relate to taking COVID-19 tests over the winter break and the return to regular timetabling in secondary schools in February.

In its efforts to keep schools safe and open for in-person learning, the Ministry of Education will be distributing 11 million rapid antigen screen tests to public school students in advance of the December break. Students will be asked to do five tests over the break in preparation for return to in-person learning. More communication will be sent home closer to the start of the winter break with details of this initiative.

The Ministry also announced that school boards will be permitted to resume regular timetabling of four courses a day beginning in February 2022 because high vaccination rates among youth aged 12-17 have contributed to low COVID-19 cases among secondary school-aged students.

The board just learned of this yesterday, and NNDSB's executive team is taking the time to understand the entirety of the announcement. We will, as always, work with the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit and the co-terminus boards to determine the best course of action to keep our staff and students safe.

Sincerely,  
Near North District School Board