

Oral Health School Screening Information for School Staff

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why do we screen?

Legislated by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

2. What do we expect to achieve through screening?

- Recommend preventive services for eligible children.
- Help identify if a child needs emergency treatment.
- Prevent children from unnecessary suffering due to untreated and poor oral health.
- Assist low-income families to obtain financial assistance for oral health care through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program.
- Collect data for planning and evaluation of current and future programs.

3. How do we decide which grades to screen?

Children in kindergarten may not have seen a dental care provider before and this screening ensures all kids get a first visit. Children in Grade 2 have their first permanent molar (back) teeth and research indicates oral health status in grade 2 is a good reflection of overall oral health status of the school population. Therefore, grade 2 is selected as the sentinel grade to determine the school's intensity level, which is used to identify which other grades should be screened.

Percentage of Grade 2 Students With 2 or more Decayed Teeth (current screening year results 2016/2017)	Grades to be Screened in 2016/2017 School Year
0% to 9.4%	JK, SK, grade 2
9.5% to 13.9%	JK, SK, grade 2 and grade 8
14% and higher	JK, SK, grade 2 and grades 4,6,8

4. Are any children, other than those in the specified grades, also screened?

Yes, selected students who presented with urgent treatment needs in the previous year. Parents of children in other grades may request their child be screened as well.

5. What is the “re-screen” process?

The new re-screen process is a requirement of the provincial program and will help to ensure students in need of urgent care receive treatment. This process requires Oral Health staff to confirm through an additional screening whether dental treatment has been started before referring a child to Highland Shores Children's Aid for dental neglect. Minimal time is required with the student to re-screen and Oral Health staff will contact schools to notify when they will be coming back for a re-screen of students.

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Information for School Staff (continued)

6. Is the screening limited to those students who do not regularly see a dentist?

We offer screening to all children, including those who do regularly see their dentist, as a means to collect oral health and surveillance data. This information is used for program planning, implementation, and evaluation.

7. Is consent required?

Yes, informed consent is required in health care. However, “implied”, rather than “written”, consent is accepted by the Ministry for school screening.

8. How do we get “informed” consent from parents?

It is required that parents are notified of the upcoming session at the school. Therefore, we request each school to send the details in the school newsletter prior to the scheduled screening date. We will provide the newsletter insert electronically. Notification allows parent the opportunity to annually decline screening with a written note.

9. How do we get “informed” consent from students?

The screening process is described to the students by an oral health staff member prior to the screening session. No child is forced to participate.

10. What should you do if a student does not want to go to the screening clinic?

- Reinforce to the child that they will not be screened against his/her will.
- Encourage the student to attend the screening clinic and discuss any concerns with oral health staff.
- Advise staff if child does not want to participate.

11. What is provided to those students who are: absent on the scheduled screening date; excluded from the screening by their parent/caregiver; and/or, refuse to participate in the screening?

Every student in the designated grades will receive an Oral Health Report Card containing educational messages and Public Health contact information, regardless of whether they participated in screening.

12. Does the dental hygienist use medical gloves?

- The “no touch” technique is followed by the dental hygienist. Therefore, no contact is made with the mouth during the screening and disposable gloves are not required in accordance with the Ministry guidelines.
- If a hygienist must make contact with a child’s mouth, hands will be sanitized and non-latex gloves will be used.

13. Is a different instrument used for each child?

Yes, a different sterilized instrument is used for each child.

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Information for School Staff (continued)

14. Where should I link parents to information about school screening?

You should direct them to the Health Promotion Department, Oral Health Program, at Public Health for more information, or with any questions they may have:

- Phone: 613-966-5500 ext. 680
- Visit: www.hpepublichealth.ca

15. What resources does Public Health offer to assist with teaching about oral health in schools?

Teaching tools and curriculum support for oral health is available through Ophea at <http://teachingtools.ophea.net>

For more information contact Hastings Prince Edward Public Health

Phone: 613-966-5500 ext. 680 | Toll-free: 1-800-267-2803 ext. 680 | TTY: 711 or 1-800-267-6511



Raising Healthy Kids



We are committed to providing accessible publications, programs and services to all. For assistance please call 613-966-5500; TTY: 711 or email accessibility@hpeph.ca. For more information, please visit www.hpepublichealth.ca.