

# For safe and healthy schools all workers need paid sick days

PERMANENT



IMMEDIATE



NO BARRIERS



## Health experts, teachers, parents, and frontline workers sound the alarm for paid sick days

“We now know that 58% of workers in Canada do not have paid sick days,” said Carolina Jimenez, a registered nurse without paid sick days.

Without paid sick days, parents can't stay home with sick children. Meanwhile, too many workers inside the education system - from cleaners to school bus drivers, and from crossing guards to occasional teachers - don't have paid sick days.

“Those denied paid sick days are our patients working low-wage, precarious jobs and who are disproportionately women, Black, Indigenous and other racialized workers,” said Jimenez who is also the coordinator of the Decent Work and Health Network.

“Canada is among the bottom quarter of countries globally that do not guarantee paid sick leave on the first day of illness – a crucial measure that allows our patients to stay home at the first sign of symptoms. We cannot wait for COVID-19 cases to start spiking again, governments must act now to provide paid sick days for all workers on a permanent basis.”

“There is no question that infections often spread quickly and easily in workplaces,” said Dr. Monika Dutt, Family Physician and Public Health Specialist from Nova Scotia. “Jurisdictions with paid sick days saw a 40% reduction in influenza rates during flu waves compared to cities without.

“Unfortunately, the temporary sick leave program that was announced by the federal government is not the policy that will protect our patients. Paid sick days must be permanent and they must be absolutely universal.”

“Paid sick days must also be free of barriers such as sick notes,” continued Dr. Dutt.

“As revealed in the report, 76% of physicians surveyed said they write at least 1 sick note a day, and 83% agreed that patients can determine when to return to work on their own, confirming that visits to the doctor for sick notes are unnecessary and a waste of public resources.”

Email the Premier and Prime Minister  
[decentworkandhealth.org/paidsickdays](https://decentworkandhealth.org/paidsickdays)

# Prescription for a #SafeSeptember

## ✓ Fully-funded 5-day in-class learning with 15 or smaller student cohorts

Parents who choose not to send kids to school, or in the case of further school closures, need adequate, guaranteed job protection and income supports. This will ensure a single weekly cohort for children.

Additional staffing and space will be required such as the reopening of closed schools, and the repurposing of other community spaces.

We will need to fight to keep these class sizes post-pandemic.

## ✓ Funded, safe, before- and after-school childcare centre reopenings which allow students to remain in their school cohorts

Funding to support a child care recovery plan as outlined in the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care Report "From Reopening to Recovery" [https://www.childcareontario.org/fro m\\_reopening\\_to\\_recovery\\_a\\_plan](https://www.childcareontario.org/fro m_reopening_to_recovery_a_plan)

## ✓ Safe Buildings

New funding for more custodians, PPE, cleaning supplies, and infrastructure repairs such as ventilation, sinks, and water bottle filling stations.

## ✓ Equity

Additional funding to allow school boards to address systemic barriers, and inequity as they plan to reopen schools.

## ✓ Worker protections

21 emergency paid sick days and full status for all workers including parents and caregivers in Ontario. This is essential so that students with symptoms of COVID-19 will be able to stay home from school without barriers. Flexible working schedules for parents and guaranteed income supplements when work is affected due to lack of childcare, layoffs, or illness, or further school shutdowns.

## ✓ Funding for Health and Wellbeing

Free food programs and a public health nurse for every school to support a plan to respond to COVID-19 symptoms at school in a manner which is both responsive and respectful of the children.

## ✓ Addressing Racism

We support community demands such as those put forward by LAEN, BLM and Parents of Black Children and the TRC: Police-free schools across Ontario, K-postsecondary. Improved funding for Afrocentric and Indigenous programming and curriculum. Decolonized curriculum that addresses anti-Black racism, white supremacy, colonization, and all forms of systemic oppression & racism.

## ✓ Housing Security

Provincial ban on evictions, and a funded strategy to house, with dignity, all in need of housing now.

## ✓ Student Support

Funding for increased social and learning supports for students and families such as educational assistants, social workers, and child and youth workers.

### These demands have been developed by:

The *Ontario Parent Action Network*, *Ontario Families for Public Education*, and *Ontario Education Workers United*.

### For more information please visit:

[linktr.ee/safeseptember](https://linktr.ee/safeseptember)

### Ontario Education Workers United:

Email us at: [ontarioewu@gmail.com](mailto:ontarioewu@gmail.com)  
Follow us on Twitter or Facebook.

### Ontario Parent Action Network:

[linktr.ee/schoolwalkins](https://linktr.ee/schoolwalkins)  
Email us at: [schoolwalkins@gmail.com](mailto:schoolwalkins@gmail.com)  
Follow us on Twitter and Facebook

### Parents of Black Children: [parentsofblackchildren.org](https://parentsofblackchildren.org)

### Black Lives Matter Canada: [BlackLivesMatter.ca](https://BlackLivesMatter.ca)

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action:

[trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf)

### Decent Work and Health Network:

[DecentWorkandHealth.org](https://DecentWorkandHealth.org)

**Email the Premier: [decentworkandhealth.org/paidsickdays](https://decentworkandhealth.org/paidsickdays)**