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## Sunday, January 24 Update

Dear Neighbour,

I am relieved that cases of COVID-19 in Toronto are starting to decline, but the arrival of new variants underscores the utter importance of effective public health directions to truly get the virus under control, and Canadians vaccinated as quickly as possible. It is a race against time.

Many of you have contacted our office to express concern about people and businesses not following the rules. If you wish to report a rule violation, please go to [this City website](#) for instructions on how to report, or call 311.

In the coming weeks, we will be doing more organizing on the issue of workplace safety and the need for paid sick days because many workers continue to contract COVID-19 at work. Please contact our office at [jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca) if you want to work with us on this issue, or are a worker who has concerns about the safety of their workplace.

Yours,

*Jessica Bell*

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)

My newsletter for this week includes:

- [Join me in demanding a safe return to school](#)
- [Vaccine rollout has been dangerously slow](#)
- [Local groups working to save the Foundry steamrolled by MZO](#)
- [NDP calls for more transit, less crowding](#)

A promotional banner for an education round table. The background is orange and yellow with a faint pattern of graduation caps. The text is in white and blue. The main title is 'EDUCATION ROUND TABLE' in large orange letters, followed by 'A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL' in blue. Below this, a blue box contains the date and time: 'Thursday, January 28, 6-7:00 p.m. on Zoom'. Two circular portraits of women are shown: Marit Stiles on the left and Jessica Bell on the right. Below each portrait is their name and title. At the bottom, a dark grey box contains the RSVP link: 'RSVP www.jessicabellmpp.ca/safereturn'.

## EDUCATION ROUND TABLE

### A SAFE RETURN TO SCHOOL

Thursday, January 28, 6-7:00 p.m. on Zoom



**Marit Stiles**  
MPP DAVENPORT



**Jessica Bell**  
MPP UNIVERSITY-ROSEDALE

RSVP [www.jessicabellmpp.ca/safereturn](http://www.jessicabellmpp.ca/safereturn)

## Join me in demanding a safe return to school

Internal government [documents revealed by the Toronto Star](#) show the Ford government ignored advice from public health experts to reduce class sizes to 15 students and introduce a large in-school asymptomatic testing program. Now schools are closed, and parents and kids are dealing with mental health, social, economic and education challenges.

Our priority must be getting kids back into schools safely. As the return date for in-person learning approaches, we must work together to [ensure the Ford government follows expert advice](#).

That's why on January 28th I am hosting a virtual round table with Education Critic Marit Stiles to hear directly from parents, education workers and community members so we can work together and advocate for change. I encourage you to join us.

Advanced registration required. [RSVP here](#).

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Despite vaccinations being a critical component to controlling and preventing the spread of COVID-19, Ontario's vaccine rollout has been dangerously slow, especially in [long-term care homes](#). It's clear we must develop a rollout plan based on a 24/7 schedule so there is no delay in keeping people safe.

While the Ontario government has released its eligibility plan for Phase 2, my office has continued to hear from [seniors, frontline health workers, and people with chronic health conditions](#) who are unsure where they fit into the phased COVID-19 Implementation Distribution plan. During this uncertain time, transparent and clear communication is key. That's why [I have asked the Minister of Health](#) for more information on the province's vaccination rollout plan.

The details so far show Phase 2 is expected to begin in March 2021 and includes:

- Older adults, beginning with those 80 years of age and older and decreasing in five-year increments over the course of the vaccine rollout;
- Individuals living and working in high-risk congregate settings;
- Frontline essential workers (e.g., first responders, education workers, food processing industry);
- Individuals with high-risk chronic conditions and their caregivers; and
- Other populations and communities facing barriers related to the determinants of health across Ontario at greater risk.

You can find more information on Ontario's ethical framework for vaccination decision-making [here](#).

If you have questions or concerns regarding the vaccine rollout, please do not hesitate to contact our office at [jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca).

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Local communities should have a say in how their neighbourhoods are built.



## Local groups working to save the Foundry steamrolled by MZO

The Dominion Foundry complex in Toronto's West Don Lands, a listed heritage site recognized by the Smithsonian Institution, is in imminent danger of demolition ordered by the province.

For over a year, the [International Resource Centre for Performing Artists](#) (IRCPA), Corktown Residents and Business Association (CRBA) and Toronto City Council have been working together to regenerate the site into a thriving cultural community centre. In October, the Ford government issued a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) for the Foundry site, overruling the ongoing local planning and consultation.

As Premier, Doug Ford has [issued an unprecedented number of MZO's](#) which allow the government to skip important consultations and duck accountability. MZO's are intended to be used sparingly and only in exceptional circumstances, but Ford is using them frequently.

buildings without releasing a specific plan for the site and without consulting or warning city officials and community members.

Local consultations are vital to proper municipal planning and residents deserve a say in what happens in their community. The IRCPA, CRBA, Toronto City Council and the Ontario NDP are calling on the Ford government to stop its lobbyist-driven MZO in the Foundry, as well as the nearby West Don Lands site, and restore transparent and evidence-based planning that includes public consultation and respect for heritage conservation, the environment and local decision-making.

To add your name in support of the Foundry and community consultation, [click here](#).



## NDP calls for more transit, less crowding

There are increasing reports of overcrowded transit lines across the GTA of essential workers cramming into busses and train cars to get to work, [as seen in this video](#).

Instead of tackling overcrowding, [the Ford government is cutting GO and Union Pearson Express transit service](#) which means fewer trains, fewer busses and more overcrowding

Essential workers who can't work from home, including health care workers, PSWs and first responders, rely on public transit. They are going to work to help our province get through this crisis, and we need to do everything possible to keep them safe and prevent the virus from spreading in our communities.

The NDP's more buses, less crowding petition is available [here](#).

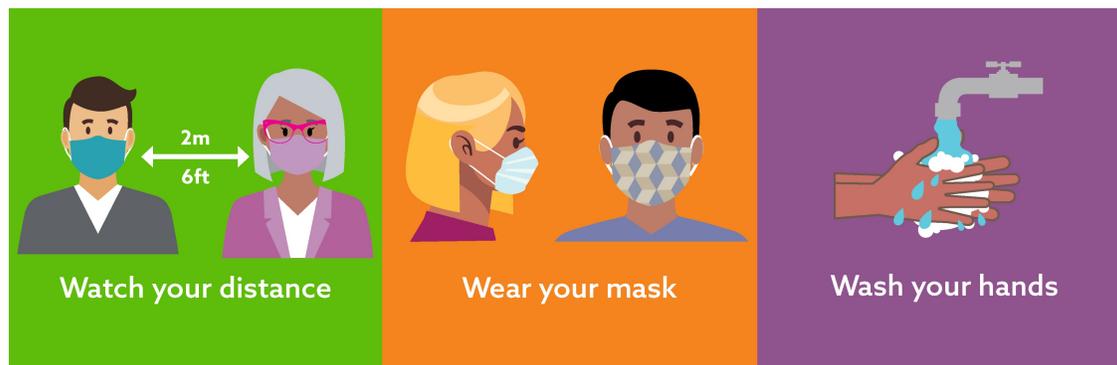
## Support for Learners funding available

To help with additional costs during the 2020-2021 school year due to COVID-19, the Ontario government is providing eligible applicants a one-time payment of \$200 for each child or youth up to Grade 12 and/or \$250 for each child or youth up to age 21 with special needs. The deadline to apply is February 8, 2021.

[Click here for details on eligibility requirements and how to apply.](#)

### 3 STEPS FOR SELF-PROTECTION

We all have a role to play to reduce COVID-19 spread & keep our city safer:



[TORONTO.CA/COVID19](https://toronto.ca/covid19)

 **TORONTO** Public Health

## Now is the time to follow public health guidelines

As COVID-19 cases climb in Ontario, please consider these reminders from Toronto Public Health to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed:

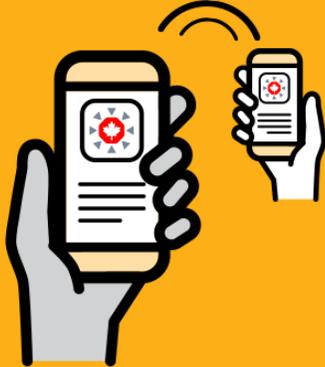
- Limit non-essential trips out of your home and follow [travel advice](#)
- Keep [two metres \(six feet\) distance](#) from others
- [Wear a mask or face covering](#) in indoor public spaces and when you can't keep physical distance
- Clean your hands often. Use soap and water or an alcohol-based (70-90 per cent) hand sanitizer

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- Cover your cough or sneeze with your elbow or a tissue. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell

Download the [COVID Alert app](#) so you can be notified directly if you have been in close contact with someone who was contagious with COVID-19. I have downloaded the app and I encourage you to do the same.

**Protect your community.  
Download the COVID Alert app.**





**Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: [www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus](http://www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus)**

As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at [jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca)



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