

**From:** CASLPO <caslpo@caslpo.com>

**Sent:** March 21, 2022 2:00 PM

**Subject:** CASLPO Guidance and FAQs - Ministry of Health Lifting of Directives

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College of Audiologists and  
Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario

Ordre des audiologistes et  
des orthophonistes de l'Ontario

March 22, 2022

**To:** All CASLPO Registrants (Please share with CASLPO Colleagues)

The following is further guidance regarding the lifting of pandemic restrictions.

This builds on our advice provided through email on March 15, 2022 regarding the announcement issued by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Chief Medical Officer of Health. The [Media Technical Brief](#) states that masking mandates will be dropped in most public settings on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

**The lifting of mask mandates does not apply to health care settings.**

**All practice environments where audiologists and speech-language pathologists (SLPs) provide their services are health care settings.** If you are providing intervention as an audiologist or SLP, you are providing health care regardless of your practice location or setting. This includes schools where you may remove a student from the classroom for direct intervention. Audiologists and SLPs must follow Ontario mask requirements in all settings until April 27<sup>th</sup>. Patients regardless of the setting may be encouraged to continue wearing masks if tolerated.

CASLPO's [point of care risk assessment](#) (PCRA) is a crucial step in every setting for determining the infection, prevention and control (IPAC) measures needed to minimize risk. The PCRA is a continual assessment of risk that takes place before, during and after intervention. You may decide that COVID-19 screening questions are a useful part of your PCRA.

**Answers to FAQs received by CASLPO's Practice Advice Team:**

**Q1.** After March 21<sup>st</sup>, do registrants working in schools need to continue active screening of students for COVID-19 symptoms before withdrawing them from the classroom?

The Ministry of Health is lifting the requirement for daily on-site screening and cohorting as of March 21<sup>st</sup>. Active COVID-19 screening will no longer be a mandated requirement.

School boards can maintain their own individual policies and practices around active COVID-19 screening. Follow your school board, employer, and local public health unit recommendations. Continue with your point of care risk assessment (PCRA). Based on your clinical judgement, you may choose to include COVID-19 screening questions in your PCRA.

**Q2.** After March 21<sup>st</sup>, do registrants need to continue COVID-19 screening and masking in every setting in which they work?

All registrants in health care settings are to continue masking until April 27<sup>th</sup>. According to the Ministry of Health, organizations have the authority to maintain or create screening and masking policies. Follow the policies and procedures of your workplace. Continue to exercise your professional judgment regarding appropriate IPAC measures based on your PCRA and clinical judgement.

**Q3.** After April 27<sup>th</sup>, what will happen with masking requirements for health care settings?

The Ontario Ministry of Health intends to remove all remaining Ministry of Health Directives, measures and orders, including masking requirements, in all settings on April 27<sup>th</sup>. CASLPO will continue to monitor for information and developments that impact practice and will provide updates as this date approaches.

**Q4.** As measures are lifted, how do we address differing views of patients and families on masking and screening measures?

The varying opinions of patients and families may lead to challenging conversations. Prioritize patient-centred care and risk assessment in your daily practice. Notify patients of your masking and screening requirements or policies beforehand. Should mandatory masking be removed on April 27<sup>th</sup>, it is expected that some patients will wish to remain masked, some will want their audiologist or SLP to be masked and registrants may still request some patients to wear a mask based on risk assessment. CASLPO registrants are advised to use a patient-centred approach and to continue to use PPE based on their professional judgement. Risk assessment, careful communication, modeling tolerance around differences of opinion and professional judgement will be important in guiding your decisions.

As the pandemic situation continues to evolve, the College will continue to keep registrants up to date on CASLPO's [Providing Patient Care in a Pandemic](#) web page.

Contact CASLPO's [Practice Advice Team](#) if you have questions.

**Stay Safe. Stay Healthy!**

**Brian O'Riordan**  
Registrar

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