

## Outbreaks reported in King

By **Mark Pavilons** Editor Local Journalism Initiative

King Township has experienced significant COVID-19 outbreaks in recent weeks and some deaths at a local nursing home. Sadly, there have been four deaths at King City Lodge Nursing Home due to COVID-19. The latest fatalities occurred between Nov. 19 and 29. They included a 95-year-old female, a 69-year-old male, a 98-year-old female and an 89-year-old female. York Public Health reports that Nobleton Public School had an outbreak. Outbreaks are declared in schools with two or more laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases, within a 14-day period, with at least one case could have been infected in the school. As with all cases, York Region Public Health conducts a thorough investigation to identify any close contacts of the COVID-19 cases. All close contacts are contacted by Public Health. In the school setting, contacts are likely to be students and the teacher in the same cohort, siblings of the case in different grades, any school staff who interacted with the case's cohort while the case was infectious and students on the same bus. Notification letters are issued to parents, guardians and staff who may have been exposed to COVID-19 in the school. Keeping COVID-19 transmission low at the community level is key to preventing the introduction of the virus into schools. The primary goal is to make school as safe as possible, balancing the risk of COVID-19 transmission with reducing other harms to the well-being of students, families and staff. Health department staff support school boards in their reopening plans and provide public health information and support implementing provincial standards and guidance. York Public Health also noted a wedding in King Township resulted in roughly 10 confirmed cases of COVID-19. As of Nov. 27, there were 15 confirmed cases and 7 probable associated with wedding events in the Township of King. Of those, 10 of the confirmed and all of the probable were from York Region, 5 of the confirmed were from outside of York Region. The individual from the Township of King was charged the \$750 fine plus a surcharge of \$130 (total \$880). For provincial guidance on what happens if there is a COVID-19 outbreak at a school, please visit the province's website. Additionally, on October 1, the province released an updated COVID-19 Guidance: School Outbreak Management. This guidance document provides information for local public health units (PHUs) investigating cases, outbreaks and suspected outbreaks associated with elementary or secondary (K-12) school settings. It is intended to supplement existing public health guidance on the management of cases and contacts of COVID-19 in Ontario. Public Health has a collaborative history of working with the Public and Catholic school boards in York Region related to communicable and infectious diseases. Based on our experience York Region Public Health is using a similar approach to existing infectious diseases practices for school settings, which includes communicating to the school community. For more details, visit [york.ca/SafeAtSchool](http://york.ca/SafeAtSchool) which includes the following resource: If COVID-19 is Detected in a School, What Does Public Health Do?