

News Sports Opinion Entertainment Life Sunshine Girls Driving Comics Puzzles Horoscopes
Newsletters Healthing TheGrowthOp ePaper Videos Refer a Friend

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

SIGN UP

...economy of the "renewable energy"
Economy, Investor, Work and Finance
Financial Post: Introducing 5 Newsletters

Manage Print
Subscription

Sections

Search

Subscribe

)



Ontario

Health professionals call on Premier to keep Ontario schools open

The harms from school closure to kids are proving more dangerous than the virus

Anthony Furey

Mar 30, 2021 • March 30, 2021 • 2 minute read • [55 Comments](#)





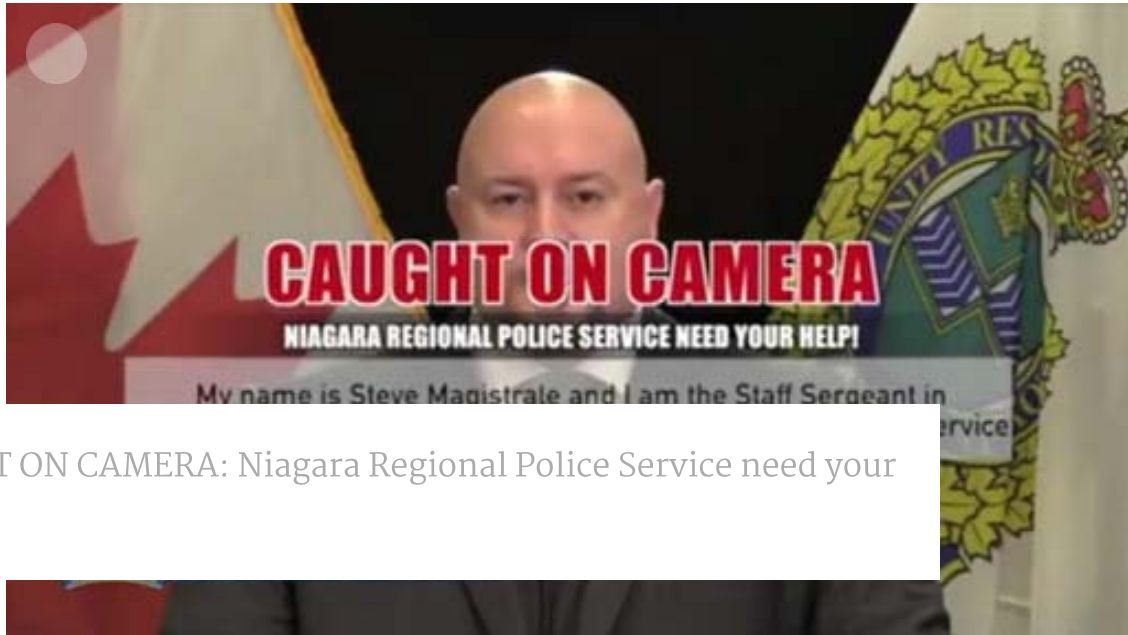
Ontario Premier Doug Ford on a conference call at Queen's Park on Friday, Feb. 26, 2021. PHOTO BY JACK BOLAND /TORONTO SUN FILE

More than 300 physicians and health professionals are calling on Ontario Premier Doug Ford and Education Minister Stephen Lecce to keep the province's schools open for the rest of the school year.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

“We respectfully maintain that schools must remain open for the duration of this academic year, and in the future, regardless of community rates of SARS-CoV-2,” states a letter shared with the *Sun* that comes with over 300 co-signers.



CAUGHT ON CAMERA: Niagara Regional Police Service need your help!

The letter comes as many Ontario parents fear the prospects of a third prolonged school closure as virus cases move upwards.

But the authors stress that rising community rates is not a justification for closing schools again.

“Children are often asymptomatic or exhibit a low symptom burden,” the letter, sent to Ford and Lecce on Tuesday, states.

“Moreover, we know that risk of hospitalization and death from SARS-CoV-2 is less than that of other influenza-like illnesses in children.”

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded
yet, but your article continues below.

They added: “We have learned that children are not a major source of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in households or in schools, and this has been appreciated globally ... There has been a consistently lower prevalence of infection in younger children than in adults.”

But while kids are not getting the virus severely and not spreading it in any meaningful way, the harms associated with school closures and other lockdown measures have proven to be very serious.

In terms of the harms to kids, the authors bring up a number of troubling stories: That the Kids Help Phone went from 1.9 million calls in 2019 to 4 million in 2020; that McMaster Children’s Hospital reports the number of youth admitted following suicide attempts have tripled during the pandemic and that those admitted for substance abuse has doubled; SickKids reports that youth admitting for eating disorders has increased to unprecedented levels.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded
yet, but your article continues below.

“School closures negatively impact the physical and mental health of children as well as their social development,” the letter states.

“Children can safely attend in-person learning and this is the best option for their physical and mental health as well as their social development.”

The hundreds of signatories include infectious diseases specialists, paediatricians, ER

doctors and other health professionals — mostly from Ontario, but include concerned experts from across Canada.

Dr. Alanna Golden, one of the lead authors of the letter, says it's important for people to advocate for kids.

“We need to prioritize the needs of our children during this pandemic,” Golden writes in an email to the *Sun*.

“Schools play a crucial role in the overall well-being of our children and we, as a society, need to advocate for schools to stay open.”

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

This advertisement has not loaded yet, but your article continues below.

Other signatories include Dr. Kwadwo Kyeremanteng, an intensive care physician who treats COVID-19 patients at the Ottawa Hospital, Dr. Martha Fulford, an infectious diseases physician at Hamilton Health Science and associate professor at McMaster University, and Dr. Joan Robinson, divisional director for pediatric infectious diseases at the University of Alberta and editor-in-chief for the Canadian Paediatric Society journal *Paediatrics & Child Health*.

In early February, a similar letter was sent to politicians calling on them to re-open schools across Canada and keep them open.

That one had just over 100 signatures.

Since then, more medical professionals are stepping forward to point out the low-risk children face from COVID-19 and the need to acknowledge the harms to children caused by lockdown measures.



LATEST NATION

The Toronto Sun Headline News

Sign up to receive daily headline news from the Toronto SUN, a division of Postmedia Network Inc.

Email Address

Sign Up

By clicking on the sign up button you consent to receive the above newsletter from Postmedia Network Inc. You may unsubscribe any time by clicking on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of our emails. Postmedia Network Inc. | 365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4 | 416-383-2300

TRENDING

- 1 **SUNshine Girl Christina**
- 2 **LILLEY: Ford can't let public health doctors move goalposts on Ontario's reopening**
- 3 **EXTRA! EXTRA! Olympics Disaster? Wimbledon Shapovalov! Spears Update! Wilson-Raybould quits**
- 4 **12-year-old Louisiana boy shoots home invader to protect mom**

5 LILLEY: Ontario emerging from big COVID chill

THIS WEEK IN FLYERS

COMMENTS

Postmedia is committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion and encourage all readers to share their views on our articles. Comments may take up to an hour for moderation before appearing on the site. We ask you to keep your comments relevant and respectful. We have enabled email notifications—you will now receive an email if you receive a reply to your comment, there is an update to a comment thread you follow or if a user you follow comments. Visit our [Community Guidelines](#) for more information and details on how to adjust your [email](#) settings.

NewsSportsOpinion
EntertainmentLifeSunshine Girls
DrivingE-Paper

Follow the Toronto Sun



[Advertise With Us](#)[Digital Ad Registry](#)[Site Map](#)[Contact](#)[Privacy - Updated](#)[Terms of Use](#)[Copyright](#)

365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4

© 2021 Toronto Sun, a division of Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.