

Communicable Disease *Prevention Plan*

SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

August, 2022

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Introduction

All school staff have a shared responsibility in protecting themselves and students from the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable disease. The BCCDC reports that school-aged children have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, including worsened wellbeing, more child stress, less connection to friends, and learning impacts. Getting children to return to closer-to-normal learning, recreational and social activities is an important pandemic recovery action.

With BC's highly immunized population providing greater community protection against COVID-19, our schools can return to closer-to-normal operations balanced with ongoing prevention measures.

All employees are expected to read, know and organize their work in accordance with this **Prevention Plan** and **BC Centre for Disease Control Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools**. The **Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings** has been developed by the Ministry of Education to compliment the BCCDC and WorkSafeBC guidance and provides more details specific to school settings and applications of the health and safety guidelines to curriculum, programs and other educational activities.

Resources: [Worksafe BC Guidance for Workplaces](#)
[BCCDC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)
[Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)



COVID-19 Preventative Measures

1. **GET FULLY VACCINATED** - Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools.
2. **STAY HOME WHEN SICK** - All students, staff, and school visitors must complete the daily health check.
3. **HAND HYGIENE** - Everyone should clean their hands more often! Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.
4. **RESPIRATORY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE** - Cover your coughs. Do not touch your face.
5. **MINIMIZE PHYSICAL CONTACT** - No sharing of food, drinks, or personal items. Spread students and staff out to different areas when possible. Take students outside more often. Remind students to respect the personal space of others.
6. **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION** - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces every 24 hours. General cleaning of the school should occur daily.
7. **NON-MEDICAL MASKS** can provide an additional layer of protection.

Stay Home When Sick

- **Students, staff or other adults should stay at home when sick**, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction and the spread of COVID-19 in schools.
- Parents and caregivers **must perform the Daily Health Check with their children** and follow the directions as to when to stay home. You can find the [daily health checklist here](#).
 - » **If a child has any key symptoms of illness, they must not go to school.**
- **Staff, volunteers and other adults must perform a daily health check** prior to entering a school. You can find the [daily health checklist here](#).

Daily Health Check:

Everyone going into a school must complete a daily health check, including staff, visitors, and students. A daily health check means checking yourself or your child for new symptoms of illness, including symptoms of COVID-19.

Symptoms of illness (including COVID-19) include things like:

- Fever (above 38°C) or chills
- Difficulty breathing
- Runny Nose
- Headache
- Diarrhea
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Sneezing
- Body aches
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Loss of appetite
- Extreme fatigue or tiredness
- Nausea or vomiting

IF YOU ARE SICK OR FEEL UNWELL, STAY AT HOME.
This is important to stop the spread of illness, including COVID-19, in schools.

If you are unsure about your symptoms, you can use the [Self-Assessment Tool](#), contact your health care provider, or call 8-1-1.

You can attend school if:

- *Your symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies), OR*
- *You have existing symptoms that have improved to where you feel well enough to return to regular activities,*

AND if you are not required to self-isolate, or your self-isolation period is over (based on a positive COVID-19 test result, if taken). For more information on self isolation, please visit the [BCCDC website](#).

For information on what to do when someone is sick in your household, please review our detailed [Covid Update from January 28, 2022](#).

Entering / Leaving the Building

- *Each school will implement strategies to prevent crowding when students and staff are entering and exiting.*
- *Each school will identify the entrances and exits to be used by students and staff.*
- *Wash your hands after you enter the building and disinfect your workspace as needed.*

School Hours / Access

- *Only use the designated entrances and exits.*
- *Schools will be open to staff from 7a.m. to 7p.m., 7 days a week.*
- *After hours student activities must be scheduled through Facility Rentals.*
- *Rentals for community events will be compliant with COVID-19 protocols.*
- *Parents and guardians will be encouraged to use phone or email to meet with staff or make an appointment.*

Hand Hygiene

When Staff and Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:

- When they arrive at school.
- Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch, outdoor learning activities, using playground equipment).
- Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student's desk or locker).
- Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple students (e.g., the gym, music room, science lab, etc.).
- After using the toilet.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Additional Staff Hand Hygiene:

- After contact with body fluids (e.g., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).
- After cleaning tasks.
- After removing gloves.
- After handling garbage.

BC Centre For Disease Control:
<http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

How to Hand Wash



1
Wash hands with warm (not hot or cold) running water



2
Apply liquid or foam soap



3
Lather soap, covering all surfaces of hands, for 20-30 seconds



4
Rinse thoroughly under running water



5
Pat hands dry thoroughly with paper towel



6
Use paper towel to turn off tap

Cleaning

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises and cleaning/disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces at least **once every 24 hours**.
 - » Frequently touched surfaces are items touched by large numbers of students and staff. They include door knobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, toilet handles.
 - » Shared equipment used by students including computer keyboards and tablets, manipulatives, toys, sports equipment and equipment used in shops, home economics rooms and science labs.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Administrators will work with facilities staff to coordinate student transitions with cleaning schedules.

Exceptions:

- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., children's books or magazines) and items with plastic covers (e.g., DVDs) can be contaminated if handled by a person with COVID-19; however, the risk is low. There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.
- Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often can be used, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.

Daily Sanitizing Routines

- Staff and students to wash hands upon arrival at school.
- Disinfect your work area as needed.
- Disinfect all shared surfaces, furniture, equipment etc. when finished.
- Staff and students should not share food, drinks, or other personal items (e.g., devices, writing implements, etc.).

Physical Distancing and Space Arrangements

In learning environments, schools can return to classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

Administrators should work with school staff on strategies to help create space between people, including:

- *Remind staff and students to respect the personal space of others.*
- *Use all available space to spread staff and students out; students should have enough room to carry out the planned activity without involuntary physical contact with others.*
- *Employ assigned entrances and floor markers to reduce crowding in common areas such as entrances, hallways, around lockers, and indoor break areas.*
- *Take students outside where and when possible.*

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact with Students and Among Students

School Gatherings and Events

- *For school gatherings and events that bring together multiple classes or other groupings of students (e.g., school assemblies, multiple classes doing a single activity) from the same school (but members of the school community beyond staff, students and necessary volunteers are not attending), there is not a specific capacity limit.*

On March 10, 2022, the Provincial Health Officer announced the Gathering and Events Order requiring proof of vaccination for certain community-led gatherings and events would be lifted end of day on April 7, 2022.

The order has now been lifted. All school gatherings and events can return to 100% capacity.

- *Organizers should apply a trauma-informed lens to their planning, including consideration of:*
 - » *respecting student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space;*
 - » *using space available to spread people out as much as possible, respecting room occupancy limits, and ensuring enough space is available to prevent involuntarily physical contact between attendees (i.e. overcrowding); and*
 - » *gradual transitions to larger gatherings (e.g. school-wide assemblies), including starting with virtual or smaller in-person options, shorter in-person sessions, etc.*
- *Schools should not implement proof of vaccination requirements for school-led gatherings and events.*

Music Education

- *Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after music equipment use.*
- *Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g., instrument mouth pieces) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.*

Physical Education

- *Spread out students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.*
- *Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected.*
- *Students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after using frequently touched pieces of equipment (e.g. before and after a sports game using a shared ball), as well as proper respiratory etiquette.*
- *Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g. water bottles) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.*

Additional Resources

- *For more information to support curriculum, programs and activities see pages 23-29 of the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) which can be found on the [District's website](#).*

Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities

Supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student.

Those providing health or education services that require being in close proximity to a student should follow their standard risk assessment methods to determine what PPE is needed for general communicable disease prevention in accordance with routine practices. Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting).

Students are not required to wear a mask or face covering when receiving services, though may continue to based on their or their parent/caregiver's personal choice.

Schools should continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.

Students with Medical Complexity, Immune Suppression and/or Receiving Delegated Care

According to the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), most children with immune compromise can follow the same precautions for COVID-19 as the general population and can safely attend in-class instruction.

In-class instruction may not be suitable for some children with severe immune compromise or medical complexity, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with a medical health care provider.

What to Do If a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms At School

IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL

Staff must take the following steps:

1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in the designated area.
2. Ensure the student keeps their mask on. If the student does not have a mask they will be provided with a disposable mask or tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Used tissues will be disposed of as soon as possible and hand hygiene performed.
3. The office will contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
4. Where possible, maintain a 2-metre distance from the ill student. If not possible, staff supervising the student will wear a mask or face covering.
5. Staff must avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If staff do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
6. Once the student is picked up, all staff supervising the student must practice diligent hand hygiene.
7. The custodian must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).

Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.

IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK

Staff must notify the administrator and go home as soon as possible.

If unable to leave immediately:

1. Symptomatic staff must separate themselves into an area away from others, outside if practical.
2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.
3. Use a mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to leave the premises.
4. The custodian must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).



**BC COVID-19 Symptom
Self-Assessment Tool**

Non-Medical Masks

Students are not required to wear a mask or face covering. The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors.

A person's choice should be supported and respected.

Staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in personal prevention practices aligned with existing professional practices to address behaviour. Approaches should not exclude students from participating in school or potentially result in stigma.

Schools should continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one, or who become ill at school.



General Ventilation and Air Circulation

There is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, contributes to the spread of COVID-19. School districts are required to ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers.

In order to enhance school ventilation, schools should consider:

- *Moving activities outdoors when possible (for example, lunch, classes, physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit.*
- *Ensuring that the ventilation system operates properly and maximize air exchange where possible.*
- *Opening windows when possible.*
- *When using air conditioners and fans in ventilated spaces, air should be moved from high places to lower places instead of blowing air directly from one person's breathing zone to another's. Avoid horizontal cross breezes. Use of portable air conditioners and fans in unventilated spaces with doors and windows closed should be avoided, except when necessary during high or excessive heat events.*

Note: Good indoor air ventilation alone cannot protect people from exposure to COVID-19. However, it may reduce the risk when used in addition to other preventive measures.



Staff Meetings and Professional Development Activities

- *Staff meetings and professional development activities held in person must respect room occupancy limits and use available space to spread people out.*
- *Consider use of virtual options and gradual transition to in-person meetings.*

Prep/Photocopier/Supply Rooms

- *Wash hands before and after using equipment.*
- *Administrators should work with staff to set occupancy limits to prevent involuntary physical contact and to allow for the respect of the personal space of others.*

Other Shared or Specialty Spaces

- *Administrators will develop protocols for use of other shared spaces within their individual buildings (libraries, gyms, shops, etc.) and post signage.*
- *Protocols for these spaces must be in line with district protocols.*

Protect Yourself and others from communicable disease

We all have an important
role in helping prevent
the spread of an infection.



Staffroom and Breaks

- ***Wash your hands before and after using the staffroom.***
- ***Use visual cues (floor markers/posters) to promote physical distancing, and set occupancy limits to avoid involuntary physical contact and to allow for the respect of the personal space of others.***
- *Bring your own lunch. If you have to leave the school during a break, make sure you follow the same protocols that you did when you arrived.*
- *Bring a lunch/snack that does not require a lot of preparation (limit microwave use, surface use, utensil use, etc.).*
- *Disinfect the areas, surfaces, appliances, etc. that you use in the staffroom.*
- *Do not share food or drinks.*
- *Consider ways to minimize crowding in common staff spaces, such as encouraging employees to use alternative spaces for lunch and breaks.*

Staff Washrooms

- *Follow the plan for washroom use established by your administrator that includes washroom occupancy limits.*
- *Make sure to wash your hands when you leave the washroom.*
- *Follow COVID-19 hand-washing guidelines as posted.*

WorkSafeBC Requirements

If a worker is injured as part of their workplace duties/tasks, follow the established procedures.

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you have reasonable cause to believe that performing a job or task puts you or someone else at risk, you must not perform the job or task. You must immediately notify your supervisor or employer, who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe and remedy the situation. For more information about the steps to follow: www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/refusing-unsafe-work

If workers are expected to follow special safety measures such as deep cleaning, working alone, or working from home, they should know and follow any “Safe Work Procedures” for those tasks. Contact your supervisor/ principal/ vice-principal if you have any questions or concerns about work procedures.

Report all workplace injuries to your supervisor.

Our partners at Morneau Shepell are continuing to work with the District through LifeWorks. They have developed tools to help with:

- [Coping with COVID-19](#)
- [Emotional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (webinar)

Contact Information

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COVID-19 PROTOCOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Creating a safe and healthy environment for all of our students and staff is our top priority. We all have an important role to play and a responsibility to maintain and ensure safe working conditions in our learning community, for ourselves and for all others involved.

Employer (School District)

- *Select, implement, and document risk assessments and appropriate site-specific control measures.*
- *Ensure that all resources and materials required to implement and maintain the plan are reasonably made available as practical when required.*
- *Ensure that supervisors and workers are informed about the content of safety policies.*
- *Conduct a periodic review the effectiveness of the plan. This includes a review of the available control technologies to ensure that these are selected and used when practical.*
- *Maintain records of training and inspections.*

Supervisors (Principals & Vice Principals)

- *Ensure that workers are knowledgeable regarding the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.*
- *Direct work in a manner that eliminates or minimizes the risk to workers.*
- *Post or relay educational and informational material in an accessible area for workers to review.*

Workers (Teachers, Education Assistants, Support Staff)

- *Know the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.*
- *Participate in COVID-19 related training and instruction.*
- *Follow established work procedures and instructions as directed by the employer or supervisor.*
- *Report any unsafe conditions or acts to the supervisor.*
- *Know how and when to report exposure incidents.*

Facilities Managers

- *Maintain an inventory of PPE for custodians, **cleaning and disinfectant products**, and well-maintained equipment used for cleaning and disinfecting.*
- *Provide adequate instruction to custodians on the hazards associated with cleaning work areas and on the safe work procedures specified in this Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan.*
- *Direct the work in a manner that ensures the risk to trades and custodians is minimized and adequately controlled.*
- *Revise the work schedule to ensure priority intensive cleaning of impacted work area surfaces and touch points.*

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

- *Make recommendations to the employer for the improvement and implementation of the Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan.*
- *Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers, and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations*
- *Consult with workers and the employer on issues related to the Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan.*
- *Make recommendations to the employer on orientation/training on the Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan and to monitor their effectiveness.*
- *Complete a monthly COVID-19 **Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools Health & Safety Checklist** and submit to District Occupational Health and Safety Committee.*