

The Board of Education of School District No.83



Communicable Disease Plan

2024-2025

Communicable Disease Plan Overview

The Ministry of Education's [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) is the source of information for communicable disease planning for K-12 school settings. The Ministry of Education guidance document has been developed from information in the BCCDC's [Public Health Communicable Diseases Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) document and the Addendum December 29, 2021. In case of any variance between these two Guidance documents, the School District will follow the Ministry of Education document. [WorkSafeBC](#) guidelines have also been incorporated into this Communicable Disease Plan for staff-only spaces. This document will be updated regularly to incorporate new information and direction from the Ministry of Education, Public Health and WorkSafeBC. The authority to implement the safety plan at each site is with the site Administrator in consultation with the site Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC).

Risk Identification

Three primary routes of transmission have been identified for Communicable Diseases such as seasonal influenza and COVID-19. These include inhalation, deposition, and touching.

Inhalation - Droplet Transmission (Direct)

Inhalation of air carrying very small fine droplets and aerosol particles that contain infectious virus. Risk of transmission is greatest within three to six feet of an infectious source where the concentration of these very fine droplets and particles is greatest.

Larger droplets are heavier, and they usually fall to the ground within two meters.

Smaller droplets, also known as aerosols, are lighter and they can float in the air for longer. Smaller droplets can collect in enclosed spaces when there is not enough fresh air. Indoor accumulation is greater when more people share a space, spend more time together, or exercise, sing, shout, or speak loudly. These conditions can lead to COVID-19 transmission.

Most COVID-19 infections are spread from one person to another through respiratory droplets deposited directly into the eyes, nose, and mouth.

Deposition Contact Transmission

Deposition of virus carried in exhaled droplets and particles onto exposed mucous membranes (i.e., “splashes and sprays”, such as being coughed on). Risk of transmission is likewise greatest close to an infectious source where the concentration of these exhaled droplets and particles is greatest.

Touching

COVID-19 can also spread by touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Even though COVID-19 can survive for hours or days on different surfaces, infection from contact with contaminated surfaces appears to be rare.

Signs and Symptoms

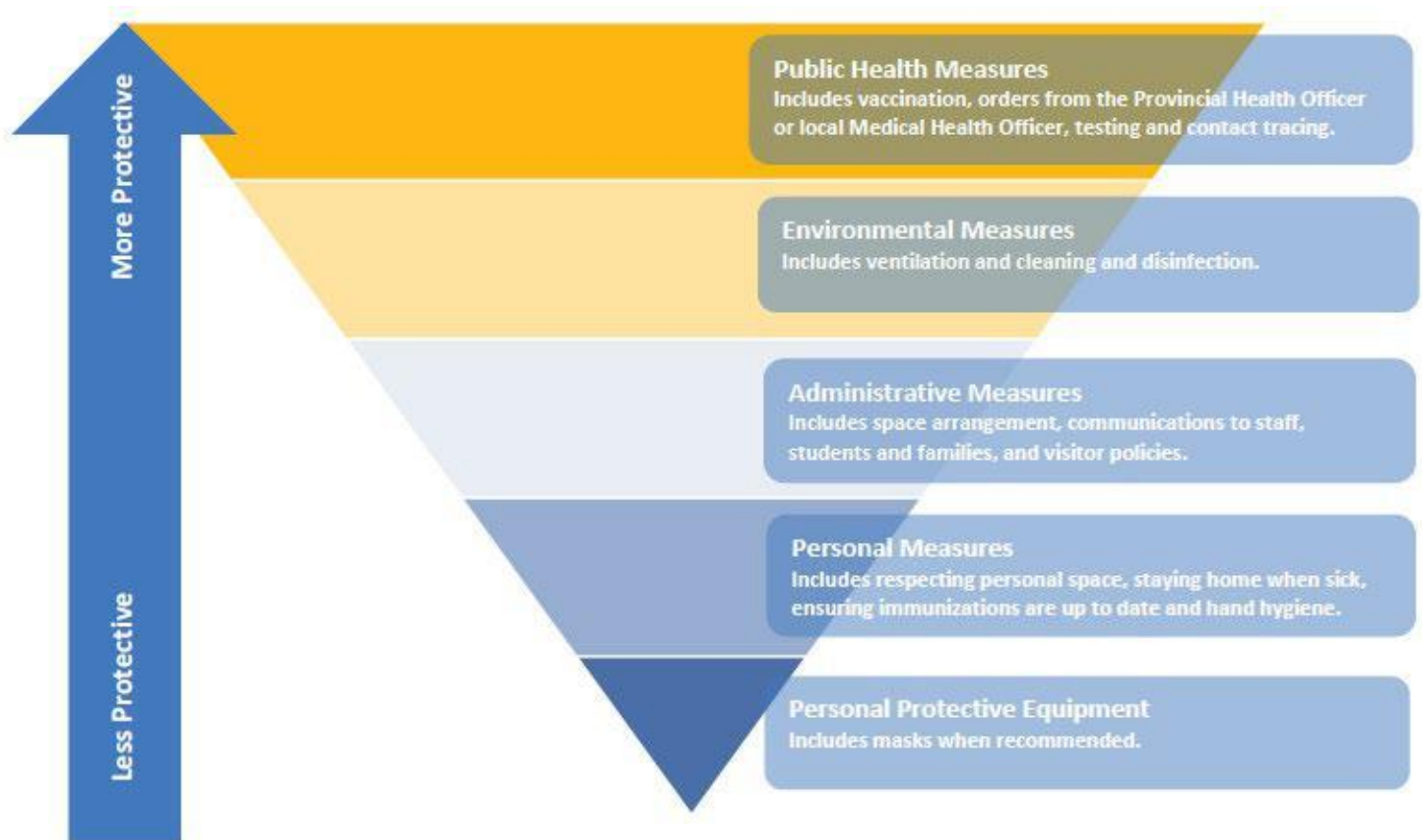
The key symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, chills, cough, difficulty breathing, loss of sense of taste or smell. Other symptoms may include sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue or tiredness, headache, body aches, nausea/vomiting, diarrhea. Children may show symptoms differently than adults. For example, fatigue may show in children as poor feeding, decreased activity, or changes in behavior. Symptoms can appear up to 14 days after exposure.

Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures

Infection prevention and exposure control measures help create safe environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19. These are more effective in settings such as schools where there is a relatively consistent grouping of people and multiple measures of various effectiveness can be routinely implemented, including:

- Robust illness policies for students and staff.
- Reinforcement and adoption of effective personal practices (e.g., hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette).
- Various environmental measures (e.g., enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, ensuring HVAC systems are operating properly, etc.).

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in schools. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of communicable diseases is substantially reduced.



1. Vaccination (Public Health measure)

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools and communities. North Okanagan-Shuswap Public Schools recognizes the public health benefits of vaccination programs to reduce illness, disability and death from community acquired diseases and will support Public Health messaging for vaccinations against communicable diseases; and may collaborate with Public Health to offer vaccination clinics. Seasonal influenza vaccinations will be offered to staff each fall season.

2. Following Public Health Orders and Guidance (Public Health measure)

The Ministry of Education's [Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) and Addendum is the source of information about COVID-19 for K-12 school setting. Local, regional, provincial, or federal Public Health recommendations and orders may be put in place for individual schools, groups of schools, a school district, a local community, or an entire region. These recommendations and orders, if they apply to school districts, will be followed by School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap).

3. Stay Home if ill – (personal measure)

If individuals show symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste/smell), they should not go to school or work until they seek health guidance (see item 5, Returning After Illness). Parents/caregivers and students can use the [K-12 Health Check app](#). Staff and other adults can refer to the Daily Health Check (see [Appendix 4](#)).

Individuals may attend school if a member of their household develops symptoms compatible with COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste/smell) provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise whether the asymptomatic student/staff must remain on self-isolation depending on their vaccination status, and when they may return to school.

If individuals begin to experience symptoms while attending a school, the symptomatic individual will be promptly sent home. If the individual cannot be sent home immediately, they will be separated from others (at least 2m) and provided with a medical mask. Schools must provide supervision for younger children. Supervising staff should wear a medical mask and face shield if they are unable to maintain physical distance. Avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible, and practice diligent hand hygiene. Staff responsible for facility cleaning should clean and disinfect the surfaces/equipment which the symptomatic person's bodily fluids may have been in contact with (e.g., their desk in a classroom, the bathroom stall they used, etc.) prior to the surfaces/equipment being used by others. Cleaning/disinfecting the entire room the person was in (a “terminal” clean) is not required in these circumstances. School Administrators must develop procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school.

Individuals who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal.

4. Returning After Illness (personal measure)

When a staff, student or other adult can return to school depends on the type of illness. If they had COVID-19 or another communicable disease, they could return according to the guidance provided to them from Public Health. For other illnesses, generally, the person can return when their symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities. The school district will

not require a health-care provider note (i.e., a doctor's note) to confirm the health status of an individual, beyond those required as per usual practices (i.e., required by Collective Agreements, to support medical accommodation, etc.).

6. Communicable Disease Plan Orientation (administrative measure)

Early and ongoing health and safety orientation will be provided for staff (including newly hired staff and staff who change worksites), parents/caregivers, students and other adults in the school (e.g., teacher candidates in practicums, volunteers) to ensure all members of the school community are well informed of their responsibilities and resources available. Health and safety orientation for staff will follow WorkSafeBC guidelines and will involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplaces. The School District will ensure the following:

- Everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, will receive information about the workplace's measures, practices, and policies for managing communicable disease.
- All workers understand the measures in place at the workplace.
- Supervisors are knowledgeable about the measures, practices, and policies in place, and incorporate these into supervision practices at the workplace.
- Workers know how to raise health and safety concerns.

7. Hand Hygiene (personal measure)

Rigorous handwashing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness (antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds (temperature does not change the effectiveness of washing hands with plain soap and water). Use portable hand-washing sites and/or alcohol dispensers containing at least 60% alcohol, where sinks are not available. Students may bring their own sanitizer or plain soap if they are on the list authorized by Health Canada or have a medical condition that requires specialized soaps. If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub may not be effective at eliminating microbes. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty. If it is not available, use an alcohol-based hand wipe followed by alcohol-based hand rub.



When Student Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
- When they arrive at school. - Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch). - 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 cohorts (e.g., the gym, music room, science lab, etc.). - After using the toilet. - After sneezing or coughing into hands. - Whenever hands are visibly dirty.	- When they arrive at school. - Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch). - Before and after eating and drinking. - Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating. - Before and after giving medication to a student or self. - After using the toilet. - After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood). - After cleaning tasks. - After removing gloves. - After handling garbage. - Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

For more information on hand washing see [Appendix 5](#).

9. Cough/Sneeze Etiquette (personal measure)

Cough/sneeze etiquette includes:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Or cough and sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hands.
- Use tissues to contain secretions and dispose of used tissues promptly. Wash hands immediately.
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands regularly.

10. Physical Distancing and Spacing Recommendations (administrative measure)

Strict physical distancing (2m) is not required but attempt to create space and spread people out whenever possible. There are a number of strategies to consider creating space between people and to support students and staff in returning to school using a trauma-informed approach:

- Remind students and staff about respecting others personal space using visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- Use available space to spread people out, both in learning environments and gathering and event, where possible. Consider establishing and posting [occupancy limits](#) for spaces.
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times focusing on entry and exit areas, and other places where people may gather and crowd.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through using floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors.

When carpooling, spread out occupants as much as possible, set the vehicle's ventilation to bring in fresh outside air, open windows when weather allows. Non-medical masks must be worn by vehicle occupants.

Ensure high-touch points such as steering wheel, seat belts, driving controls, gear leaver, windows, keys, and door handles are cleaned regularly. Sanitize hands before and after the trip.

11. Gatherings and Events (administrative measure)

School gatherings and events can occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, or provincial Public Health recommendations and Orders. School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) will follow any applicable local, regional, or provincial Public Health recommendations and Orders pertaining to gatherings and events. (*See [Appendix 10](#) for current additional measures, recommendations, or Orders, if any). Organizers should apply a trauma-informed lens to their planning, including respecting student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space, using available space to spread people out as much as possible, respecting [room occupancy limits](#), and ensuring enough space is available to prevent involuntary physical contact between attendees. Consider starting with virtual or smaller in-person options and shorter sessions before considering larger gatherings.

Examinations or assessments are not considered school gatherings; however, they must still be delivered in accordance with the safety guidelines outlined in this document.

After hours community use of facilities is allowed in alignment with relevant local, regional, provincial, and federal Public Health recommendations and Orders. School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) will follow any applicable local, regional, or provincial Public Health recommendations and Orders pertaining to community use of facilities (*See [Appendix 10](#) for current additional measures, recommendations, or Orders, if any). Health and safety measures include participant's following hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, staying home if ill and where possible, limiting building access to only those areas required for the purpose of the activity. Community users are responsible for collecting names and contact information of participants to support contact tracing.

12. Cleaning and Disinfecting (environmental measure)

Schools will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#) document. See [Appendix 7](#) for more information.

Cleaning is the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g., dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from cleaning cloth.

Disinfection is the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects, never on the human body.

Cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces used by larger numbers of students and staff (e.g., door handles, light switches, faucet handles, toilet handles, hand railings, water fountains, keyboards, toys, service counters, appliances) at least 1x/day. Otherwise, only cleaning of surfaces touched by fewer people (e.g., desks used by a few students, manipulatives) is required 1x/day. Other general cleaning should occur in line with regular practices. Frequently touched items that are not easily cleaned do not need to be limited (fabrics, paper products, carpet, upholstery) but users should sanitize hands often.

There is no need for textbooks, laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., children's books or magazines) and items with plastic covers (e.g. DVDs) to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.

Laundry should be placed in a laundry basket with plastic liner. Do not shake dirty items. Wearing gloves is optional. If choosing to wear gloves, ensure hand hygiene is performed before and after use. No other PPE is required. Clean hands with soap and water immediately after removing gloves (see [Appendix 6](#)).

13. **Ventilation** (environmental measure)

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute to the spread of the virus. Good indoor air ventilation alone cannot protect people from exposure to COVID-19; however, it may reduce risk when used in addition to other preventive measures. 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 of workers ([Part 4 of the OHS Regulation](#)). HVAC systems should be regularly maintained for proper operation and ensure that schools with recycled/recirculated air systems upgrade their current filters to a minimum MERV 13 filter if possible, and that schools with fresh air intake systems increase their average air exchanges as detailed on the [ASHRAE website](#).

Consider moving activities outdoors when possible and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit, increasing air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system, managing air distribution through building automation control systems, and, where possible, opening windows if weather permits and the HVAC system function will not be negatively impacted. If opening windows and doors, consider site security issues. Provisions for when a school/worksites ventilation systems are temporarily compromised (e.g., partial power outage, ventilation break down) should be developed.

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. Communicable disease prevention measures need to be balanced against the risk of excessive heat events in warmer months. Schools are encouraged to use BCCDC resources, including on [Heat Event Response Planning](#) and [Wildfire Smoke](#), in planning for excessive heat events.

See the [WorkSafeBC website](#) and [ASHRAE Reopening of Schools and Universities Guidance](#) for more information on ventilation and air exchange.

14. **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as gloves, is not needed for staff beyond that used as part of routine practices for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work. With regards to masks, there are several categories of masks.

N95 respirators: N95 respirators properly fit-tested to the individual will protect the wearer from COVID-19. N95 respirators should be reserved for school-based staff, bus drivers, custodians who have direct contact with students. For more information on N95 respirators visit the [BCCDC website](#).

Medical grade disposable masks: If a person shows symptoms of COVID-19, these types of masks are an appropriate barrier to help stop cough or sneeze droplets from spreading. Schools will be provided with a limited supply of medical disposable masks for First Aid rooms/kits and as an option for individuals who show symptoms while at the site. Otherwise, medical masks should be reserved for healthcare workers as much as possible. Medical masks will be located in the office and First Aid rooms. **Non-medical cloth masks or face covering:** Are not an effective barrier against all COVID 19 variants, and therefore are not permitted by staff or students.

Medical masks, 3 ply or 4 ply are required to be used indoors in schools and on school buses by all K-12 staff and students, except when:

- there is a barrier in place; or
- eating and drinking; or
- a person is unable to wear a mask because they do not tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons); or
- a person is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person; or
- the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it; or
- the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g., actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity, etc.); or
- while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment), where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important.

Masks are not required outdoors.

Exceptions will also be made for staff and students who cannot tolerate masks (e.g., health or behavioural reasons). Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e., a doctor's note) to confirm if staff and students cannot wear a mask. In situations where staff and students cannot tolerate wearing a mask due to health or behavioural reasons, the site administrator or department supervisor must be informed and will work with the staff, student, or parent/caregiver to identify other measures, if any. No student should be prevented from attending or fully participating at school if they do not wear a mask. Schools should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in the use of masks and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature. The use of masks should not reduce or replace the other infection prevention and exposure control measures mentioned previously.

It is important to wear a non-medical mask correctly. How to put on and take off a non-medical mask can be found [here](#). Visit the [BCCDC website](#) for information on proper use of masks.

Additional guidance for mask use during specific educational programs (e.g., music, physical education, sports) is detailed in [Appendix 1](#), and for supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity see [Appendix 8](#). In addition to a non-medical mask, those providing health or education services that require being in close proximity to a student should follow their standard risk assessment methods to determine if additional PPE is required, in accordance with routine practices.

When working with students where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, options include having the staff member wear a mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.

Additional relevant local, regional and provincial public health recommendations and Orders may apply. (*See [Appendix 10](#) for current additional measures, recommendations, or Orders, if any).

Face Shield: Face shields protect the wearer from direct transmission exposure by protecting the wearer from other people's cough and sneeze droplets. Staff have the option of wearing a face shield and will be provided one upon request. Schools will have face shields available for staff. If choosing to wear a face shield, a non-medical mask or face covering must also be worn.

Site Communicable Disease Plans

Site Administrators must assess their workplaces in order to identify places where there is risk of transmission. This process must involve consultation with the site safety committee and/or worker representatives. To understand the risk at your workplace, consider the following:

- where do people congregate, such as break rooms, or meeting rooms (if applicable).
- what job tasks or processes require workers to come into close proximity with others.
- what tools, machinery, and equipment do people come into contact within the course of their work;
- what surfaces are touched often (see item 12, Cleaning and Disinfecting).
- what emergency procedures need to be revised (evacuation, lockdown, etc.), if at all.

See [Appendix 9](#) for considerations when planning school Communicable Disease Plans. Continually assess the workplace after operations resume to ensure risks continue to be identified and managed.

Site-Based Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC)

JOHSCs have an important function during this pandemic. Not only will JOHSCs continue to perform their duties according to their committee's Terms of Reference, but also:

- familiarize themselves with the district's Communicable Disease Plan.
- be consulted in the development of the site Communicable Disease Plan.
- support and assist with implementation of the site Communicable Disease Plan.
- provide feedback on the effectiveness of implemented control measures.

A JOHSC must meet regularly at least once each month, but because of the fluid situation of the pandemic, JOHSCs will need to meet on a more frequent and as-needed basis to ensure consultation on safety processes are continually occurring. Some examples of when JOHSCs should connect include:

- when a new version of the district's Communicable Disease Plan is released.
- when changes in site operations occur.
- when new safety procedures are developed, or existing safety procedures are

adjusted. Documentation of consultations must occur.

Supportive School Environments

Schools can support students to practice personal preventative measures by:

- having staff model these behaviours.
- sharing reliable information to parents, families, and caregivers.
- promoting safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids like floor markings and signage.

Staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventative practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature. Staff should also utilize a trauma-informed lens when planning school activities and interacting with other staff and students, including considerations around respecting others personal space. Trauma-informed practice is an informed way of approaching your practice through a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events. Trauma-informed practice includes providing inclusive and compassionate learning environments, understanding coping strategies, supporting independence, and helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual student needs.

Appendix 1 – Curriculum, Programs and Activities

All curriculum, programs and activities should operate in alignment with Provincial K-12 Health and Safety Guidelines, including school -led activities held off campus (e.g., sports academies, community-based programs/courses). Students and staff are required to follow the safety protocols required by the off-campus facility. Where there is a conflict, the safety protocols required by the off-campus facility should be followed. Schools should continue to implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices (e.g., cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to the activity. Equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per cleaning and disinfecting guidelines outlined in this document.

Dual Credit

Students may earn "dual credit" towards graduation by enrolling in and successfully completing courses at specific post-secondary institutions. For students taking dual credit courses taken in secondary schools, the guidelines outlined in this document apply. For students taking dual credit courses in post-secondary institutions, schools must ensure students are aware of and adhere to the communicable disease plans set out by post-secondary institutions. Information on COVID-19 measures in [post-secondary institutions](#) can be found on the [B.C. Government website](#) and on individual institution websites.

Field Studies

When planning field trips, staff should follow existing District policies and procedures as well as the guidance in this document. Additional measures specific to field trips should be taken, including for transportation, including school bus transportation, public transit and carpooling. See guidance in the transportation section in this document. Schools must ensure that volunteers providing supervision are trained in and strictly adhere to required health and safety guidelines. Alignment with relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders, including for international travel. Schools should consider guidance provided for overnight camps from [BCCDC](#) and the [BC Camps Association](#) when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

Food/Culinary Programs

Schools can continue to include food preparation as part of learning programs for students. The following guidelines should be applied:

Food Safety - In the case of food and culinary programs, where food is prepared as part of learning and is consumed by the students who prepared it continue to follow normal food safety measures and requirements and implement the cleaning and disinfecting measures outlined in the [cleaning and disinfecting](#) section of this document. FOODSAFE Level 1 covers important food safety and worker safety information including foodborne illness, receiving and storing food, preparing food, serving food, and cleaning and sanitizing. It is a helpful resource for those seeking education and training on food safety practice.

Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols - Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Students and staff should wash their hands in alignment with normal food safety measures and requirements. Refer to the [cleaning and disinfecting](#) section for cleaning/disinfecting protocols. For laundry, follow the instructions provided in the [cleaning and disinfecting](#) section of these guidelines.

Food Services

Schools can continue to provide food services, including for sale. Some schools offer food services that are regulated under the [Food Premises Regulation](#). These are typically cafeterias, though may include some meal programs. If food service is provided that is regulated under the Food Premises Regulation, no additional measures beyond those articulated in this document and regular requirements outlined in the regulation need to be implemented (e.g., a FOODSAFE trained staff member, a food safety plan, etc.). [Food Safety Legislation](#) and the [Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools](#) continue to apply as relevant. For food contact surfaces, schools should ensure any sanitizers or disinfectants used are approved for use in a food service application and are appropriate for use against

COVID-19. These may be different than the products noted in this document for general cleaning and disinfection. Additional information is available on the [BCCDC website](#). Schools can continue to accept food donations to support learning and the delivery of meal programs, breakfast clubs and other food access initiatives. Schools should continue to emphasize that food and beverages should not be shared. School meal programs should follow regular operating practices.

Fundraisers

Schools can continue to offer fundraisers that can be implemented in line with the guidelines outlined in this document. If the fundraisers involve the sale of food items, they should also align with the [Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools](#).

Kindergarten Program and Entry

Include information about communicable disease prevention measures that will be in place as part of communications to students and their families prior to school start. Parents/caregivers must follow guidelines for visitors. Provide opportunities for kindergarten students to learn and practice respecting personal space, recognizing they are unlikely to be able to do this at all times. Gently remind students of the expectations throughout the day and encourage students to kindly support one another. Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g. fabrics) or at all (e.g. sand, foam, playdough, etc.) can be used, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use. Carpets and rugs (e.g., for circle time activities) can also be used.

Music

K-12 staff, and students must wear masks when indoors and a barrier is not present. Masks can be temporarily removed while engaging in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g., playing a wind instrument), but must be worn while singing. 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. The B.C. Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in B.C. have also developed [Guidance for Music Classes in BC During COVID-19](#). In the case of any discrepancy in guidance, schools and school districts are expected to follow the Ministry of Education guidelines.

Physical Education and Outdoor Programs

Spread out students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible. K-12 staff, and students are required to wear masks during PHE/outdoor program classes when they are indoors and a barrier is not present. Students are not required to wear masks during high intensity physical activities (e.g., stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); masks use during these activities is left to student's personal choice. Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity physical activities outdoors whenever possible.

For low intensity activities (e.g., yoga, walking), students K-12 are required to wear masks when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.

Why are masks not required during high intensity physical activity in middle & secondary schools? During high intensity physical activity, respiration rates are increased (resulting in a wet mask) and the wearer is more likely to touch their face and adjust the mask frequently. These factors lessen the protective value a mask may offer. In addition, a wet mask is more difficult to breathe through; those wearing masks during high intensity activities should change them as soon as they become wet.

Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the cleaning and disinfecting section of this document. 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 between uses.

Playgrounds

There is no current evidence of COVID-19 transmission in playground environments. Playgrounds are a safe environment. The following measures should be taken when using playgrounds. Ensure appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play. Attempt to minimize unintentional physical contact between students. Sand and water can be used if children wash their hands before and after play. COVID-19 does not survive well on surfaces, other than hard surfaces. There is no evidence showing that the virus survives on sand, in water or on playdough.

School Libraries/Learning Commons

At this time, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper, or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing/return of books or paper-based educational resources to students because of COVID-19. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., books, magazines, worksheets, etc.) and items with plastic covers (e.g., DVDs) are low risk items. Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as normal. There is no need to clean, disinfect or quarantine these items for any period of time. For information on cleaning, including technological devices, see the guidelines in the cleaning and disinfecting section. The BC Teacher Librarians Association has developed [Recommendations for Access to Library Learning Commons Resources to Meet COVID-19 Requirements](#). In the case of any discrepancy in guidance, schools and districts are expected to follow the Ministry of Education guidelines in this document.

School Sports

Intra- and inter-school programs, activities (e.g., intramural, sports team practices, games), sports academies and events can continue in alignment with the following guidance. Requirements of relevant local, regional and provincial public health recommendations and Orders for community gatherings and events (*See [Appendix 10](#) for current additional measures, recommendations, or Orders, if any). School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) will follow any applicable local, regional, or provincial Public Health recommendations and Orders pertaining to school sports. Masks are worn by K-12 staff and students, other adults when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present. Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity sport activities (e.g., stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these activities is left to students personal choice. Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity sport activities outdoors whenever possible. For low intensity sport activities (e.g., stretching, golf), students are required to wear masks when they are indoors and a barrier is not present. Use all available space to spread students and staff out as much as possible. Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the cleaning and disinfecting section of this document. 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. Sport activities should be held outside whenever possible. See the [Return to School Sports Plan from BC School Sports](#) for additional information. In the case of any discrepancy in guidance, schools and school districts are expected to follow the Ministry of Education guidelines.

Trades in Training Programs

Ongoing collaboration and communication with post-secondary institutions for Trades in Training or other pre-trades apprenticeship programs is crucial. Ensure that staff and students in the K-12 school and the post-secondary institution are aware of communicable disease prevention measures in place. Diligent student self-assessment of health when transitioning between the secondary school and post-secondary institution. Given the unique structure of Trades Training Programs and oversight by the Industry Training Authority (ITA), new information on assessments and programming for these courses is available online. Information for workers is available on the

[WorkSafeBC Communicable Disease Prevention](#) webpage, including [COVID-19 and communicable disease information for workers](#).

Theatre, Film, Dance Programs

Spread out students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible. K-12 staff are required to wear masks during these programs when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present. Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear masks during these programs when they are indoors and a barrier is not present, except during high-intensity physical activity. Shared equipment such as set pieces, props, cameras etc. should be cleaned and disinfected as per cleaning and disinfection guidelines in this document and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after using frequently touched pieces of equipment. The Association of BC Drama Educators (ABCDE) is currently developing additional guidelines for teaching drama during COVID-19. Staff should refer to the [ABCDE website](#) for more information. In the case of any discrepancy in guidance, schools and districts are expected to follow the Ministry of Education guidelines.

Work Experience

The work environment has changed due to the impacts of COVID-19 and employers will need to follow current guidelines from the [Provincial Health Officer](#) and [WorkSafeBC](#). Students can still engage in work placements in accordance with the following guidance. Schools and school districts must ensure students are covered with the required, valid workplace insurance for placements at standard worksites and follow WorkSafeBC guidelines. Information for workers is available on the WorkSafeBC [Communicable Disease Prevention](#) webpage, including [COVID-19 and communicable disease information for workers](#). For current, and any new placements, standards in the ministry [Work Experience Program Guide](#) must be followed. *Note: As part of setup and monitoring, worksite visits can now be conducted virtually if needed.*) Schools and school districts will assess and determine if it is safe for their students to continue with existing work placements or to begin new placements, [considering Provincial Health Officer](#) and [WorkSafeBC](#) guidance regarding COVID-19. To ensure awareness and support for placements under these conditions, it is recommended that school districts and schools obtain parent/guardian sign-off for all new and continuing placements during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students and support workers who accompany special needs students to work sites, life skills course and locations, etc., will adhere to the communicable disease prevention plan of the workplace including wearing PPE if required.

Emergency and Evacuation Drills

Schools should continue to practice various emergency procedures including six school fire evacuation drills, required annually by [BC Fire Code 2.8.3.2](#).

- Staff should be notified in advance of emergency/evacuation drills (i.e., no “surprise” drills).
- The BC Fire Code requires schools to conduct “total evacuation fire drills” involving all occupants in the building. Partial building evacuations involving smaller groups of students would not comply with the fire drill requirements of the BC Fire Code.
- Schools must continue to review their fire safety plans on a minimum annual basis, as per the BC Fire Code, to “ensure it takes account of the changes in use and other characteristics of the building” (such as pandemic-related protocols). Changes to school fire safety plans, including fire drill procedures, should be developed in cooperation with the local fire department.
- Emergency procedures may require modification to adhere to communicable disease plans (e.g., designating additional muster locations to reduce crowding where required). Schools may also need to consult with their local medical health officer for guidance on current public health Orders, which may affect site specific emergency and evacuation procedures.
- In the event of an actual emergency, procedure modifications may be suspended to ensure for a timely, efficient and safe response.

Appendix 2 – Transportation Safety Plan (as of August 31, 2021)

Employees are required to review the *School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap)* Communicable Disease Plan and follow all instructions and signage posted in District schools and buildings.

1. The following information is in addition to the District's Communicable Disease Plan and drivers are required to practice the procedures as set out below.
2. Wash stations and restroom facilities are available at each school.

THE BUS DRIVER:

1. Must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school or worksite and complete the Daily Health Check form.
2. Will wash their hands often, including before and after completing trips.
3. If no wash station is available, hand sanitizer will be available and used by the driver when entering the bus.

THE PASSENGER:

1. Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. If a child has any symptoms, they must follow the directions specified in the Daily Health Check.
2. Students should clean their hands before and after taking the bus. Hand sanitizer is available, and students may use upon loading or unloading the school bus.
3. All students will have assigned seats and may not switch or move seats unless permitted to do so by the driver.
4. Only registered riders may be transported on the school bus, no guest passengers are permitted to ride.
5. Other than a student's water bottle, food or beverages may not be consumed while riding on the school bus and lunch/snacks must remain in the student's backpack or lunch kit.

EXCEPTIONS FOR STAFF and STUDENTS:

The guidance outlined above regarding mask requirements does not apply to staff, students and visitors in the following circumstances:

- a) to a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioral reasons.
- b) to a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person.
- c) if the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it.
- d) if a person is drinking.
- e) if a person is behind a barrier; or
- f) while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements is important.

SCHOOL BUS TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURE:

1. Elementary students may be assigned 3 per seat.
2. Middle and secondary students shall be assigned 2 per seat.
3. The assigned seating plan will be available in the bus.
4. To reduce the number of close in-person interactions on school buses, the following strategies are required:
 - a) Open windows when the weather permits.
 - b) If space is available, students should each have their own seat (unless sharing with a member of them

household) and sit separated side to side and front to back.

- c) The seating arrangement can be altered whenever necessary to support student health and safety (e.g., accommodating children with a physical disability, responding to behavioral issues, etc.)
5. The Bus driver, students and staff will practice respiratory etiquette while riding on the school bus.

TRANSPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES:

Transporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require drivers to provide support services and be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student.

1. When drivers are working with a student inside the bus, they are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield).
2. When working with students where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, options include the driver wear a mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.
3. To minimize the number of close proximity encounters between the student and driver, whenever possible, the parent or CEA should assist with securing the student in the seatbelt.
4. Parents and CEAs are required to wear a non-medical mask when assisting the student on the school bus.

FIELD STUDIES:

When performing work on Field Studies drivers shall follow the existing guidelines and procedures contained in this document and as outlined in the Communicable Disease Plan.

THE SCHOOL BUS:

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. School buses should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the Disinfectants for Public Settings document.

PRODUCTS & PROCEDURES:

Cleaning: the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g., dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents and steady friction from a cleaning cloth. All visibly soiled surfaces should be cleaned before being disinfected.

Disinfection: the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects, never on the human body.

Vital Oxide: Product in use for cleaning and disinfecting the school bus.

1. When used for cleaning, the product shall be sprayed on a cloth or paper towel and used for wiping or cleaning touchpoints in the school bus.
2. When used for disinfecting the bus the product will be dispensed using a Handheld Sprayer.

In addition to the district's regular school bus cleaning schedule:

1. Driver's clean touch points between each run either by lightly spraying the entire bus or by spraying SNAP or Vital Oxide on a micro-fibre cloth and wiping touch points only.
2. At the end of each day, drivers will perform their regular cleaning of the bus and do a final thorough disinfecting spray of the entire bus using either SNAP or Vital Oxide in a small spray bottle.
3. Driver's personal items will be removed from the bus each day.
4. Waste containers will be lined with bags and removed each day.
5. The above procedures will apply any time a spare bus is being used.

Personal Protective Equipment:

1. Gloves will be provided for cleaning touchpoints inside the school bus.
2. non-medical masks and face shields will be available for bus drivers.

Appendix 3 – Staff Only Spaces

Schools: In areas exclusively for staff (e.g., break rooms, photocopy rooms, school office) follow the guidelines outlined in this document.

Non-instructional Facilities: Non-instructional facilities (e.g. School Board Office, Hollywood Road Educational Services, maintenance/operations facilities, Dehart) will follow [WorkSafeBC guidance for workplaces](#).

In non-instructional facilities utilize floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding (e.g., in the break room, by the photocopier, etc.). For gatherings (e.g., meetings, training, pro-d, etc.), respect room occupancy limits, use available space to spread people out, and consider virtual options. Gatherings must also occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders (*See [Appendix 10](#) for current additional measures, recommendations, or Orders, if any), and any related WorkSafe BC guidance. School District No. 83 (North Okanagan-Shuswap) will follow any applicable local, regional, or provincial Public Health recommendations and Orders pertaining to gatherings and events.



Appendix 4 – Daily Health Check – Individual Self Screening (Optional)

The following [Daily Health Check](#) will be used by staff, visitors, parents/caregivers to complete prior to they or their child(ren) coming to school. Students can also use the [K-12 Health Check App](#).

 DAILY HEALTH CHECK	
KEY SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS	WHAT TO DO
Fever (above 38°C) Chills Cough Difficulty breathing Loss of sense of smell or taste	If yes to 1 or more of these symptoms: Stay home. Contact a health care provider or call 8-1-1 about your symptoms and next steps.
OTHER SYMPTOMS	WHAT TO DO
Sore throat Loss of appetite Headache Body aches Extreme fatigue or tiredness Nausea or vomiting Diarrhea	If yes to 1 symptom: Stay home until you feel better. If yes to 2 or more of these symptoms: Stay home for 24 hours. If symptoms don't get better or get worse, contact a health care provider or call 8-1-1 about your symptoms and next steps.
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:	WHAT TO DO
Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	If yes: Fully vaccinated students, staff and other adults who have travelled outside of Canada may qualify for the fully vaccinated traveller exemption . Students, staff and other adults who are not fully vaccinated and have travelled outside of Canada CANNOT attend school for 14 days after arrival , as part of federal requirements .
CLOSE CONTACT	WHAT TO DO
Have you been notified by public health that you are a close contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	If yes: Follow the instructions provided by Public Health.

You can also check your symptoms with the [K-12 Health Check](#) or the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#).

Call 8-1-1 with any questions about symptoms of illness. If you have severe symptoms, like difficulty breathing (struggling to breathe or you can only speak single words) or chest pain, call 9-1-1 or go to the nearest Emergency Department.

Visit the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#) for more information on COVID-19.



Appendix 5 - Handwashing

REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19. WASH YOUR HANDS.



1-833-784-4397

@canada.ca/coronavirus



Public Health
Agency of Canada

Agence de la santé
publique du Canada

Canada

When Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
- When they arrive at school. - Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch). - 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 cohorts (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.). - After using the toilet. - After sneezing or coughing into hands. - Whenever hands are visibly dirty.	- When they arrive at school. - Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch). - Before and after eating and drinking. - Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating. - Before and after giving medication to a student or self. - After using the toilet. - After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood). - After cleaning tasks. - After removing gloves. - After handling garbage. - Whenever hands are visibly dirty.



Appendix 6 – Glove Removal



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)



Glove removal procedure

To protect yourself from exposure to contamination, you must take your gloves off safely.

How to remove gloves safely



1. With both hands gloved, grasp the outside of one glove at the top of your wrist.



2. Peel off this first glove, peeling away from your body and from wrist to fingertips, turning the glove inside out.



3. Hold the glove you just removed in your gloved hand.



4. With your ungloved hand, peel off the second glove by inserting your fingers inside the glove at the top of your wrist.



5. Turn the second glove inside out while tilting it away from your body, leaving the first glove inside the second.



6. Dispose of the gloves following safe work procedures. Do not reuse the gloves.



7. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible after removing the gloves and before touching any objects or surfaces.



Appendix 7 – Cleaning and Disinfecting



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



CLEANING AND DISINFECTANTS FOR PUBLIC SETTINGS

Good cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in BC.

This document provides advice to public groups, transit, schools, universities, child care and other institutions in BC on cleaning for non-health care settings.

Make sure to wash hands with plain soap and water after cleaning or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.


OR


Cleaning: the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g. dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from cleaning cloth.

Disinfection: the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects; never on the human body.

All visibly soiled surfaces should be cleaned before disinfection.

Cleaning for the COVID-19 virus is the same as for other common viruses. Cleaning products and disinfectants that are regularly used in households are strong enough to deactivate coronaviruses and prevent their spread.

Recommendations:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces should occur at least once a day.
- Clean and disinfect highly touched surfaces at least twice a day and when visibly dirty (e.g. door knobs, light switches, cupboard handles, grab bars, hand rails, tables, phones, bathrooms, keyboards).
- Remove items that cannot be easily cleaned (e.g. plush toys).

Cleaning

For cleaning, water and detergent (e.g. liquid dishwashing soap), or common, commercially available cleaning wipes should be used, along with good physical cleaning practices (i.e. using strong action on surfaces).

Disinfection

For disinfection, common, commercially available disinfectants such as ready-to-use disinfecting wipes and pre-made solutions (no dilution needed) can be used. Use the figure and table below for guidance. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions printed on the bottle.



Ministry of Health



BC Centre for Disease Control

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.

Non-medical inquiries (ex. travel, physical distancing): 1-888-COVID19 (1888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300



IPC v3.2

Appendix 8 – Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities

School districts and independent schools are expected to implement health and safety measures that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities.

Most students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity are not considered at greater risk of experiencing severe illness from COVID-19. For guidelines specific to [children with immune suppression](#) (e.g., children who have had a recent organ transplant, who are receiving chemotherapy, those with an illness impacting their immune system) refer to the [K-12 Education Recovery Plan](#) (p.5).

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. When staff are working with a student indoors, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield). Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used as part of the personal care routine normally encountered in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting).

Students in Grades 4 to 12 are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering when receiving services indoors and a barrier is not present. For students in Grades K to 3, the student or parent/caregiver should determine whether or not the student should also be wearing any PPE when receiving services in close physical proximity.

When working with students where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, options include having the staff member wear a mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.

If a person 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.

Community Resources and Supports

Families are encouraged to seek support from agencies they are familiar with and have accessed prior to the pandemic. Supports from Ministry of Children & Family Development, Child & Youth with Special Needs Services, Interior Health Nursing Support Services (for students requiring delegated nursing tasks), Autism funding and respite can be found here: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/resources-parents-caregivers-of-children-with-disabilities-diverse-abilities.pdf>.

Students who were not considered vulnerable before the pandemic may now experience challenges that affect their sense of safety, and their emotional and mental well-being. Both Child & Youth Mental Health (CYMH) and the Foundry (youth ages 12-24) are offering mental health support and treatment options. They can be accessed by a self-referral in-take system. <https://foundrybc.ca/kelowna>
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/child-teen-mental-health>

Adjusted Schedules, Supplemental Support Plans and Response Plans

Students who require or are currently on adjusted schedules, supplemental support plans or response plans will be supported on their plans. Students' needs will continue to be assessed on a case-by-case basis to ensure the safety and well-being for all.

Staff working with students who have adjusted schedules, supplemental support plans or response plans should review these plans before students return to school in collaboration with School Administrators and families.

Appendix 9 – Communicable Disease Plan Orientation Checklist

This checklist is intended to support school districts and independent school authorities in planning ongoing communicable disease orientation for staff (including newly hired staff and staff who changed worksites), other adults (including volunteers and teacher candidates in practicums) and students. Orientation sessions should provide a comprehensive overview of the key principles and guidelines outlined in the resources listed below, as well as information on how these principles and guidelines will be implemented at the school level:

- Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings
- Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools
- WorkSafeBC Communicable Disease Prevention: A Guide for Employers
- School/district communicable disease plan

Schools and school districts should ensure their Joint Health and Safety Committee is established prior to the orientation session. At the beginning of the school year, schools/school districts are encouraged to hold Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings more frequently to help identify and address any safety concerns in a timely manner.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

- ☐ Adopt a trauma-informed approach:
 - o where possible, have an employee trained in trauma-informed practice deliver some of the orientation
 - o conduct needs-based assessments and regular 'check-ins' after the orientation session, and provide contact information to students/staff for requesting additional supports
 - o provides information on how to access counselling services during school start up
 - o for staff: consider sharing the *Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal* webinar link. This free webinar developed by the Ministry of Education is intended to provide teachers, education assistants, and administrators with information, ideas and strategies that they can use to create compassionate spaces for students.
- ☐ Highlight the process used to develop the school/district plan (e.g., alignment with provincial direction, engagement at the local level) and the provincial guidelines:
 - o Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in B.C., the latest research, guidance from the Provincial Health Officer, and evidence that children are at a lower risk of developing and transmitting COVID-19, K-12 students can safely participate in full-time, in-class instruction in accordance with current public health guidelines for schools.
 - o The Provincial COVID -19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings have been developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the BC Centre for Disease Control, Indigenous rightsholders and education partners, including district/school leaders, teachers, support staff, and parents.
 - o These guidelines are based on the public health guidance developed by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control.
- ☐ Discuss the importance of implementing communicable disease prevention measures that promote equity and inclusion, and outline how these principles are reflected in the school/district plan

- ☐ Review the provincial K-12 guidelines and school/district plan, and describe what a school day will look like with the new guidelines (e.g., interactions between peers and staff, traffic flow throughout the school, transition time, recess/lunch, etc.)
- ☐ Outline how prevention and exposure control measures are being implemented in schools to ensure student and staff safety (see the Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures section for more information)
- ☐ Discuss measures for gatherings and events; provide opportunities for staff and students to put forward alternatives to continue to support events in a different format if needed (e.g., virtual events)
- ☐ Discuss preparation for potential transitions (e.g., regional public health order)
- ☐ Review school emergency and evacuation procedures (e.g., fire drill) considering relevant guidelines (see the Emergency and Evacuation Drills section for more information)
- ☐ Outline individual responsibilities (e.g., daily health check, stay home if sick, etc.) and remind everyone to do their part (e.g., practice diligent hand hygiene on a regular basis)
- ☐ Outline measures in place to support students and staff who are immune compromised
- ☐ Implement strategies to ensure staff and students who cannot attend orientation are made aware of communicable disease protocols (e.g., provide a booklet/a video on communicable disease plans)
- ☐ Provide enough time and space for staff, students and families to review the school/district communicable disease plan, ask questions, and provide input; provide contact information for any future questions that may arise
- ☐ Describe the process to address concerns and suggestions regarding the communicable disease plan (e.g., suggestions to support continuous improvement)
- ☐ Outline the process in place to assess and revise the school/district safety plan on an ongoing basis as well as how staff, students and families will be made aware of any changes in the plan
- ☐ Communicate proactively and on an ongoing basis about the changes made to policies, practices, and procedures to ensure staff, students and families are informed in a timely manner
- ☐ Provide a list of resources and links for more information (e.g., BCCDC resources, resources from the Government of Canada, guidelines developed by provincial associations, Ministry-developed trauma-informed practice resources or other resources such as videos from the BC Health Emergency Services)

CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO STAFF

- ☐ Walk staff (administrators, teachers, teachers teaching on call, support staff, itinerant staff, etc.) through what the first days of school will look like to welcome students back
 - o If appropriate, consider involving school staff representatives in the delivery of information pertaining to specific area of expertise
- ☐ Ensure orientation includes specific communicable disease protocols for itinerant staff and specialists (e.g., teachers teaching on call, counsellors, education assistants, teacher candidates)
- ☐ Include itinerant staff as well as on call and auxiliary staff in orientation sessions
- ☐ Implement strategies to ensure staff who work at multiple sites are made aware of communicable disease protocols in each of the sites (e.g., provide a booklet/a video on communicable disease plans for different schools)
- ☐ Share procedures and contact information in case of emergencies
- ☐ Introduce members of the Joint Health and Safety Committee or any other safety representative
- ☐ Outline existing processes to address requests, concerns or accommodations related to communicable disease prevention measures.



Appendix 10 – Current Additional Prevention Measures

Additional prevention measures are measures added by the Medical Health Officer (MHO) or the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) during a period of elevated risk. These measures will be based on local epidemiology and in proportion to the MHO's or PHO's assessment of risk. Current additional local, regional or Provincial recommendations and Orders include:



September 1, 2021

Dear School District Superintendents and Principals,

The new school year is around the corner and we are committed to supporting your efforts in welcoming students and staff back to school. Schools play an essential role in communities. Allowing children to return to closer-to-normal learning, recreational and social activities is important for their wellbeing during the pandemic.

In light of increased COVID-19 activity across the Interior Region, Medical Health Officers are recommending additional prevention measures above and beyond those included within the [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) and [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#). These measures should be implemented starting September 7th:

- Indoor assemblies are limited to 50 people or two classes (whatever is larger), in a single space.
- Visitors entering the school should be limited to those supporting activities that are of benefit to student learning and wellbeing (e.g. teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.).
- Extracurricular school sports should follow the [Interior Health Order](#) for Gatherings & Events, where sports and tournaments are allowed. Spectators should be limited to 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors.

We will provide written notice when these additional prevention measures can be removed.

Ensuring everyone eligible has two doses of COVID-19 vaccine is the most effective protective measure. Everyone eligible who is entering a school is strongly encouraged to get fully vaccinated.

Public Health will continue to conduct contact tracing for every case of COVID-19. The Interior Health Communicable Disease Unit will connect with any student or staff who tests positive for COVID-19 to determine whether they were infectious at school. Individuals identified by public health as [close contacts](#) will be directly provided with information on what actions they should take, including whether they should self-monitor or self-isolate. School district Superintendents will be made aware when an exposure at school is suspected to have resulted in school transmission. In these situations, it is anticipated that self-isolation will be recommended for close contacts who are unvaccinated, which may be larger groupings of students and staff, including entire classrooms.

The K-12 Pandemic Recovery Team (formerly Rapid Response Team) will continue to provide support to all IHA schools, including independent and First Nations schools.

Please include this information where relevant in your communications to staff, parents/caregivers and students in advance of school starting.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sue Pollock
Interim Chief Medical Health Officer

Dr. Carol Fenton
Medical Health Officer

Dr. Karin Goodison
Medical Health Officer

Dr. Shobhit Maruti
Medical Health Officer

Dr. Silvina Mema
Medical Health Officer

Dr. Fatemeh Sabet
Medical Health Officer

We recognize and acknowledge that we are collectively gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the seven Interior Region First Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate, and work together. This region is also home to 15 Chartered Métis Communities. It is with humility that we continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples across the Interior.