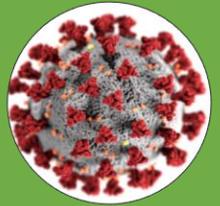


School District No. 59

COVID-19: Mandatory School Protocols

K-12 Education Restart Plan: Stage 2

(Revised September 16th, 2020 - updates are highlighted)



The Ministry of Education has a five-stage approach for resuming in-class instruction. Each stage is guided by health and safety guidelines, measures, protocols, and orders as well as the principles developed for continuity of learning during the pandemic. This Protocol is meant to address Stage 2, which is a return to face to face instruction.

Before a child is able to attend school, it is expected that parents will:

- complete a daily health check with their child, checking for symptoms of COVID-19 each day prior to dropping their child off at the school site. The parental check will include checking for fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
 - For mild symptoms without fever, students can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to school without further assessment.
 - If symptoms include fever, or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain unchanged or worsen, seek a health assessment. A health assessment can include calling 8-1-1, a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner, going to a COVID-19 testing centre or calling the Northern Health Online Clinic at 1-844-645-7811.

COVID-19 Preventative Measures for Staff



- Complete a daily health check. The key symptoms to watch for are fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. **Stay home when you are sick.**
- For mild symptoms without fever, staff can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to work without further assessment.
- If symptoms include fever, or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain unchanged or worsen, seek a health assessment. A health assessment can include calling 8-1-1, a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner, going to a COVID-19 testing centre, or calling the Northern Health Online Clinic at 1-844-645-7811.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, going to the washroom, before eating or preparing food, and entering the building. If sinks are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- When possible, maintain physical distancing and avoid close contact with people who are sick. Wear non-medical masks in high traffic/common areas, such as hallways or buses, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Reinforcing Preventative Measures for Students

- Principals will clearly communicate with parents and caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school, and to keep their children at home if they are ill. There is no school role for screening students for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health care professionals.
- Staff will work with the students to help them understand and practice safe physical distancing of **1-2 metres** between self and others while in common areas. Younger students should be supported to have minimized physical contact with one another.
- Staff will remind students in middle and secondary schools that they are required to wear non-medical masks in high traffic and common areas, such as hallways, concession, and buses, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Staff will work with the students to help them understand and practice coughing and sneezing etiquette; reminding students to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue, and then throw out the tissue if used and wash hands or use hand sanitizer afterwards.
- Staff will work with the students to help them understand and practice avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Cohorts

Cohorts reduce the number of in-person, close interactions a person has in school without requiring physical distancing to consistently be practiced.

- In **elementary and middle schools**, a cohort can be composed of up to **60** people.
- In **secondary schools**, a cohort can be composed of up to **120** people.
- Cohorts can be composed of students and staff.

Cohorts are smaller in elementary and middle schools due to the recognition that younger children are less able to consistently implement personal measures such as hand hygiene, reducing physical contact and recognizing and articulating symptoms of illness.

Cohorts are larger in secondary schools due to the increased ability of children in that setting to be able to consistently minimize physical contact, practice hand hygiene, ensure physical distance where necessary and recognize and articulate symptoms of illness.

School administrators will determine the composition of the cohorts. The composition of the cohort should remain consistent for all activities that occur in schools, including but not limited to learning and breaks (lunch, recess, classroom changes, etc).

Within cohorts, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available.

Cohort composition can be changed at the start of a new quarter, semester or term in the school year. Outside of these, composition should be changed as minimally as possible, except where required to support optimal school functioning. This may include learning, operational or student health and safety considerations.

Consistent seating arrangements are encouraged within cohorts where practical. This will assist public health should contact tracing need to occur.

School administrators must keep up-to-date lists of all members of a cohort to share with public health should contact tracing need to occur.

Interacting with Cohorts

Schools will minimize the number of adults (staff and others) who interact with cohorts as much as practical while supporting learning and a positive, healthy and safe environment.

Those outside of a cohort must practice physical distancing (1-2 metres) when interacting with the cohort. For example, a secondary school teacher can teach multiple cohorts but should maintain physical distance from students and other staff as much as possible. In an elementary or secondary school, two classes from different cohorts can be in the same learning space at the same time if a **1-2 metre** distance is able to be maintained between people from different cohorts.

Cohorts (cont.)

In **elementary schools**, students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they are outdoors and can minimize physical contact or if they are indoors and can maintain physical distance. Elementary-aged students are less able to consistently maintain physical distance. Outdoors is a lower-risk environment than indoors.

In **middle and secondary schools**, students can socialize with peers in different cohorts if they can maintain physical distance. Middle and secondary-school students are expected to be capable of consistently maintaining physical distance when it is required. If a student is unable to physically distance, the student should socialize within their cohort or where they can be supported to physically distance.

Unless they are part of the same cohort, staff and other adults are expected to maintain physical distance from each other at all times. This includes during break times and in meetings.

Students from different cohorts may be required to be together to receive beneficial social supports, programs or services (e.g. meal programs, after school clubs, etc.). Within these supports or services, it is expected that cohorts and physical distance are maintained as much as is practical to do so while still ensuring the support, program or service continues. This does not apply to extracurricular activities where physical distance between cohorts must be maintained.

Elementary and middle schools are likely able to implement cohorts without reducing the number of individuals typically within the school. Secondary schools may use both approaches: implement cohorts and reduce the number of individuals typically within the school to enable physical distance for out-of-cohort interactions. This may be necessary due to the larger number of people and the increased frequency of classroom exchanges that typically occur within secondary schools.

School Gatherings

School gatherings may occur within the cohort; however, these gatherings should happen minimally.

Gatherings must not exceed the maximum cohort size in the setting, plus the minimum number of additional people required (e.g. school staff, visitors, etc.) to meet the gathering's purpose and intended outcome. Additional people should be minimized as much as is practical to do so.

Schools should seek virtual alternatives for larger gatherings and assemblies.

Other Strategies

The following strategies should be implemented wherever possible in the K-12 school setting:

- Avoid close greetings (e.g., hugs, handshakes).
- Encourage students and staff to not touch their faces.
- Spread people out as much as is practical to do so.
- Consider different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
- For middle and secondary schools, consider arranging desks/tables so students are not facing each other and using consistent seating arrangements.
- Consider strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Take students outside more often.

COVID-19 MANDATORY PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

Other Strategies (cont.)

- Organize learning activities outside including snack time, place-based learning and unstructured time.
- Take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside.
- Playgrounds are a safe environment. Ensure appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play.
- For elementary students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
- For middle and secondary students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- All visitors should confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.
- Schools should keep a list of the date, names and contact information for all visitors who enter the school.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage greater space between students and staff.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

Parents, caregivers, health-care providers, volunteers and other non-staff adults (e.g. visitors) entering the school should be prioritized to those supporting activities that are of benefit to student learning and wellbeing (e.g. teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.).

Student Drop Off/Pick Up:

- Students will use designated entrance(s) and exit(s). These are site-specific.
- Students will maintain physical distancing as they enter/exit the school.
- Students will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when they enter/exit the school.
- Parents must drop off and pick up their students at their designated time (site specific).
- Schools will have further site-specific procedures for student arrival/exit at school.
- Schools will develop site specific procedures for students arriving and departing by bus.

Washrooms

- Schools will develop a washroom use plan for students in keeping with physical distancing expectations.
- Regularly review the COVID-19 handwashing guidelines (as posted) with students.
- Washrooms will be cleaned twice per day.

Food for Students

- Students must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before handling food.
- Students are not to share food items or contact food items that belong to others.
- Microwave ovens must be treated like other frequently touched items and cleaned frequently.
- Students will need to consume food items at their individual designated work area and clean the area when finished.
- All beverage and food containers should be clearly labeled with the student name.
- Students are discouraged from leaving the school to pick up food at breaks to limit potential exposure in schools.

Playgrounds and Outdoor Activities

- Take students outside more often.
 - Reassure students, parents and caregivers that playgrounds are a safe environment, and encourage appropriate personal hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play.
- Spread people out into different areas.
- Limit the number of students on certain pieces of playground equipment.

COVID-19 MANDATORY PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

Maintain Cleaning/Disinfecting Procedures

Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces is very important to help to prevent the transmission of viruses from contaminated objects and surfaces.

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises will occur **at least once every 24 hours**.
- Cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces **will occur twice every 24 hours**, including high-touch electronic devices (i.e., keyboards, tablets, smartboards).
- Soap and water will be used to clean work spaces.
- Regularly clean and sanitize items that are designed to be shared.
- Washrooms will be cleaned **twice every 24 hours**, keeping in line with high touch surface area protocols.
- Items that are not easily cleaned (e.g. fabric or soft items) will be limited.
- Garbage containers will be emptied daily.
- Schools may have rotating day-custodian coverage to disinfect common areas periodically throughout the day.

Staffroom and Breaks

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before you go into the staffroom.
- Whenever in shared spaces, maintain appropriate physical distancing.
- Bring your own lunch. We are asking you not to leave the building for lunch to limit potential exposure. If you have to leave, 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 (to limit microwave use, surface use, utensil use, etc.).
- Clean the areas, surfaces, appliances, etc. that you use in the staffroom.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer again before you go back to your classroom, office or workspace.
- Do not share food or drink.

Staff will Promote Good Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette with Students

Reinforce and remind the rule of “hands to yourself”. Students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer, particularly:

- When they arrive at school and before they go home.
- Before/after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).
- Between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).
- Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student’s desk or locker).
- After using the washroom.
- After handling common resources/equipment/supplies or pets.
- Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple cohorts (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.)
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Staff Should Wash Hands Frequently

Staff should wash hands or use hand sanitizer:

- When they arrive at school, before they go home. Before/after breaks (e.g. recess, lunch).
- Between different learning environments (e.g. outdoor-indoor transitions, gym to classroom).
- 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 washroom.
- After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).
- After cleaning tasks, or handling garbage.
- After removing gloves.

COVID-19 MANDATORY PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

Workspaces for Students

- Avoid close greetings (e.g. hugs, handshakes). Regularly remind students about keeping their “hands to yourself”.
- If possible, organize students into smaller groups that stay together throughout the day.
- Strive to minimize the number of different teachers and EAs that interact with groups of students throughout the day.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff.
 - For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
 - For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and washrooms.
- Assemblies and other school-wide events should be held virtually to avoid large gatherings of people in one space.

Other Shared or Specialty Spaces

- Administrators will develop procedures for use of other shared spaces within their individual buildings (libraries, gyms, shops, etc.).
- Procedures for these spaces must be in line with District protocols.

Universal Precautions

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after you have had contact with blood or other body fluids, after going to the washroom, before preparing or eating food, and after removing latex gloves. Use hand lotion to help keep your hands from becoming chapped or irritated. Intact skin is your first defense against infection!
- Wear gloves when in contact with blood or other body fluids, excrement or non-intact skin.
- Wear gloves when in contact with articles such as clothing or surfaces that have been contaminated with blood or body fluids.
- Replace torn or punctured gloves immediately.
- DO NOT clean up blood or other bodily fluids from surfaces, call administrator or speak with the on-site custodian regarding clean-up
- If you have cuts or open sores on your skin, cover them with a plastic bandage.

Illness and Self-Assessment Protocol

Stay Home When Required to Self-Isolate:

The following students, staff or other persons **must stay home and self-isolate**:

- A person confirmed by public health as a case of COVID-19; or
- A person confirmed by public health as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak of COVID-19; or
- A person who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.

Anyone required to self-isolate will be supported by public health. Additional information is available from [BCCDC](#).

Stay Home When Sick:

Staying home when sick is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction to and the spread of COVID-19 in schools. When COVID-19 is present in the community, the risk of introducing COVID-19 into schools is reduced if staff, students and parents/caregivers:

- Perform a **daily health check**.
- **Stay at home** when sick.
- Get a health assessment and/or **COVID-19 test** when sick.

These steps do not replace usual health care. Health questions can be directed to 8-1-1 or your health care provider. These recommendations are discussed in more detail below and may change over time.

Daily Health Check:

A daily health check is a tool to reduce the likelihood of a person with COVID-19 coming to school when they are infectious. Symptoms of COVID-19 can be mild and are similar to other respiratory infections. Most people in BC with these symptoms do not have COVID-19.

- School administrators must ensure parents, caregivers, school staff and other adults routinely entering the school are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for key symptoms of illness prior to entering the school. (i.e. perform a daily health check).
- Parents and caregivers should assess their child daily for key symptoms of illness before sending them to school (i.e. perform a daily health check for their child).
- Staff and other adults should assess themselves daily for key symptoms of illness prior to entering the school (i.e. perform a daily health check).
- There is no need for schools to verify that the health check has occurred every day, nor to require that parents submit a daily health check form to the school.

Stay Home When New Symptoms of Illness Develop:

Students and staff should stay at home when new symptoms of illness develop. The key symptoms to watch for are fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

COVID-19 MANDATORY PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

- If the staff or student (or their parent) indicates that the symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition and are not unusual for that individual, they may return to school. No assessment or note is required from a health care provider.
- For mild symptoms without fever, students and staff can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to school without further assessment.
- If symptoms include fever, or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain unchanged or worsen, seek a health assessment. A health assessment can include calling 8-1-1, a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner, going to a COVID-19 testing centre, or calling the Northern Health Online Clinic at 1-844-645-7811.

When a **COVID-19 test is recommended** by the health assessment:

- If the COVID-19 test is **positive**, the person should stay home until they are told by public health to end their self-isolation. In most cases this is 10 days after the onset of symptoms. Public health will contact everyone with a positive test.
- If the COVID-19 test is **negative**, the person can return to school once symptoms have improved and they feel well enough. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless the person develops a new illness. [BCCDC](#) has information on receiving negative test results.
- If a COVID-19 test is recommended but is not done because the person or parent chooses not to have the test or a health assessment is not sought when recommended, and the person's symptoms are not related to a previously diagnosed health condition, they should stay home from school until 10 days after the onset of symptoms, and then may return if feeling well enough.

If a **COVID-19 test is not recommended** by the health assessment, the person can return to school when symptoms have improved and they feel well enough. Testing may not be recommended if the assessment determines that the symptoms are due to another cause (i.e. not COVID-19).

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

Other Considerations for Managing Illness at Schools:

- A person with mild symptoms may elect to seek COVID-19 testing, even when this is not required according to the above guidance. Having a pending COVID-19 test result should not, by itself, be a reason to exclude a person from school if there are no other reasons to exclude them.

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school. Most illness experienced in B.C. is not COVID-19, even if the symptoms are similar.

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. They do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and should not be required to provide a health-care provider note. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms they should seek assessment by a health-care provider.

If you have further concerns, please contact the local public health unit to seek further guidance (250-719-6500).

COVID-19 MANDATORY PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

There is no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health-care professionals.

If a staff or student in a school is confirmed by public health as positive for COVID-19, public health will work with school administration to determine what actions should be taken, including if any staff or students who have been in contact with that person need to self-isolate, and if other staff and students' families should be notified.

Schools must not provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school, including if they display symptoms of COVID-19, unless directed to by public health.

What to Do if a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms

If a Student Develops Any Symptoms of Illness

Parents must keep the student at home.

IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL:

If a child begins to exhibit symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 (fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, loss of appetite, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting):

Staff must take the following steps:

1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area.
2. Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
3. Where possible, maintain a 2-metre distance from the ill student. If not possible, staff should wear a non-medical mask or face covering if available and tolerated or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.
4. Provide the student with a non-medical mask or tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene.
5. Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
6. Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.
7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning 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 a Staff Member Develops Any Symptoms of Illness

Staff must stay home.

IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK:

Staff should go home as soon as possible.

If unable to leave immediately:

1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others.
2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.
3. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up.
4. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).

Students and staff should return to school according to the guidance under the 'Stay Home When Sick' sections of this document.

A health-care provider note should not be required for students or staff to return.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Non-medical masks or face coverings may be useful for middle and secondary students and staff when physical distancing cannot be consistently practiced, and a person is interacting with people outside of their cohort.

Examples of when a non-medical mask should be worn include:

- middle and secondary students on a school bus;
- middle and secondary students in common areas when students are outside of their cohort and physical distancing cannot be practiced;
- staff working across cohorts when physical distancing cannot be practiced;
- staff in a break room where physical distancing cannot be practiced.

Non-medical masks are not recommended for elementary-aged students due to the increased likelihood they will touch their face and eyes, as well as require assistance to properly put on and take off their mask (requiring increased close personal contact from school staff).

No student should be required to wear a mask if they do not tolerate it.

Those wearing non-medical masks must still seek to practice physical distancing whenever possible. There must be no crowding, gathering or congregating of people, even if non-medical masks are worn.

Non-medical masks should not be used in place of the other measures detailed in this document.

Face shields are a form of eye protection for the person wearing it. They may not prevent the spread of droplets from the wearer. Face shields should not be worn in place of non-medical masks, except for those providing services where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important for student health and development and physical distancing cannot be practiced.

Students and staff should be supported to know how to properly put on, wear, take off and store non-medical masks and other face coverings.

Schools should consider requesting students and staff have a non-medical mask or face covering available at school so it is accessible should they become ill while at school.

It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.

COVID-19 MANDATORY PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

Supporting Documents:

- **[BC's K-12 Education Restart Plan](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-education-restart-plan.pdf)**: Updated July 29th to outline the five-step approach for resuming in-class instruction.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-education-restart-plan.pdf>
- **[Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Setting](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf)**: Updated September 3rd to provide detailed information and guidelines pertaining to health and safety in K-12 schools.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf>
- **[WorkSafeBC K-12 Education Protocols](https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/education)**: Updated September 11th to provide guidance and protocols for returning to operation for K-12 education providers.
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/education>
- **[BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf)**: Updated September 11th to provide health and safety standards for schools to operate in Stage 3.
http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf

Additional information may be found on the School District
No. 59 website: www.sd59.bc.ca

