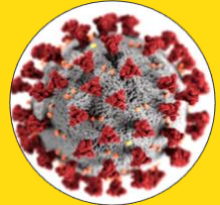


**School District No. 59**  
**COVID-19**  
**Communicable Disease Protocols**  
**for Schools**



**K-12 Education Recovery Plan**

**(Revised August 30, 2021)**

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

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# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## Overview

The Ministry of Education has shifted from a pandemic response to a recovery. This recovery 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 a return to face to face instruction.

### **Before a child is able to attend school, it is expected that parents/caregivers 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. Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the [K-12 Health Check](#) app for daily assessment of symptoms, or reference the SD59 Daily Health Check Form. The parental check will include checking for fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea and vomiting, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue, headache, body aches and diarrhea.
- **Keep child at home when sick.**
- provide their child with a water bottle (water fountains may not be available).

### **Students in Grades 4 – 12**

- All students in grades 4 - 12 are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses.

### **Students in Grades K – 3**

- Students in Grades K - 3 are encouraged to wear a mask in indoors in schools or on school buses, but are not required to do so – mask wearing remains a personal or family/caregiver choice for these students, and their choices must be respected.

## **COVID-19 Preventative Measures for Staff**



- Complete the active daily health check, checking for symptoms of COVID-19 each day prior to coming to work. Staff can utilize the [BC COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms, or reference the SD59 Daily Health Check Form. The health check will include checking for fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea and vomiting, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue, headache, body aches and diarrhea. School and district administrators are required to verify that staff and other adult health checks have been completed before they enter the school.
- **Stay home when you are sick.**
- 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.
- All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their learning group, except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking
- 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.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through. 2 metre physical distancing is not required.

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plan Reviews**

Schools must regularly review COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plans and should do so with their Site Committees and address areas where there are identified gaps in implementation. Schools are to use the BCCDC COVID-19 School Health and Safety Checklist (See Appendix C) to support these plan reviews.

## **Learning Groups**

Public Health no longer recommends Learning Groups.

## **COVID-19 Procedures for Staff - Multiple Sites**

In order to support students, families and staff, School District #59 has many staff who work at multiple sites including but not limited to the district learning services team (speech, elementary counsellors, educational psychologist, literacy teachers, etc.) and on call teachers (TTOCs and TOCs) and on call educational assistants (EA). These staff work in multiple schools and with multiple learning groups.

1. Staff who work at multiple sites are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking
  - Outdoors
2. When entering schools, staff who work at multiple sites must follow all school COVID-19 protocols and procedures (daily health checks, entrance and location routines, hand hygiene, sign in, etc.). Staff must familiarize themselves with these protocols before going to a school.
3. When possible, staff who work at multiple sites can participate virtually in meetings with others if it meets their job requirements and responsibilities.
4. Staff who work at multiple sites must schedule their visits with schools to ensure space and availability for working with students, families and staff. Schools will designate the contact person (for example: administrator, learning assistance teacher, etc.). In addition, they need to coordinate with other staff when possible to limit the number of outside staff in a school at a given time.
5. Staff who work at multiple sites must keep a detailed log, including names (first and last) of anyone with whom they worked (students, families, staff, community agencies, etc.)
6. TTOC, TOC and EA substitutes will need to follow all COVID-19 Communicable Disease Protocols:
  - a. District administration/staff and/or school-based administrators will meet with TTOC, TOC and EA substitutes to review district and school COVID-19 Communicable Disease Protocols prior to working at school sites.
  - b. TTOCs, TOCs, and EA substitutes are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools at all times, except when:
    - There is a barrier in place
    - Eating or drinking
    - Outdoors

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **COVID-19 Procedures for Community Agencies**

School and district staff also work closely with community agencies such as the Ministry of Children and Families, Children and Youth Mental Health, Children and Youth with Special Needs, etc. in order to support student and family needs. These community agencies are an integral part of the school team for many students and families and may need to come into the school to be a part of this team.

1. When entering schools, community agencies must follow all school COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plan protocols and procedures (daily health checks, entrance routines, hand hygiene, sign in, etc.). Schools must ensure that the community agency is familiar with these protocols prior to coming to the school.
2. When possible, schools may connect with the community agency virtually.
3. Schools will designate a contact person (for example: administrator, learning assistance teacher, etc.) to schedule times and locations to meet with outside agency in the school building.
4. Community Agency staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools at all times, except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking
5. Community agencies will be asked to keep a detailed log including names (first and last) of anyone with whom they worked (students, families, staff, etc.) during their time at the school.

## **COVID-19 Procedures for Students with Diversabilities**

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).

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. More information on masks and face coverings is available on the BCCDC website.

- 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.

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 what PPE is needed for general communicable disease prevention in accordance with routine practices.

Schools will have non-medical masks and face shields available for staff.

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

- a. Staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools at all times, except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking

## **School Gatherings and Events**

School gatherings and events (including inter-school events) can occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders. Organizers should apply a trauma-informed lens to their planning, including consideration of:

- respecting student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space;
- using space available to spread people out as much as possible, respecting room occupancy limits, and ensuring enough space is available to prevent involuntarily physical contact between attendees (i.e. overcrowding); and
- gradual transitions to larger gatherings (e.g. school-wide assemblies), including starting with virtual or smaller in-person options, shorter in-person sessions, etc.

## **Visitors**

Schools can leave front doors unlocked for visitor access but may wish to encourage visitors to make appointments.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that visitors are aware of communicable disease protocols and requirements, and have completed a daily health check, prior to entering the school.

- Information on communicable disease protocols and requirements for visitors should be posted by the entrance to the school, on the school's website and included in communications to students and families.

Schools must have a sign in/sign out process in place for all visitors and staff who are not typically onsite (e.g. TTOCs, itinerant teachers/specialists, maintenance or IT personnel, district/authority administrators).

- All visitors must wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school. See the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) section for more information, including exceptions to mask requirements for visitors.
- Where possible, visitor access should be limited to those areas required for the purpose of the visit (e.g. school office for drop-off/pick-up of items, gymnasium for a sports event, etc.), and parents/caregivers should be encouraged to drop-off/pick-up students outside of the school.
- Parents/caregivers and other visitors should respect others' personal space on school grounds, including outside.

After hours community use of facilities is allowed in alignment with other health and safety measures:

- Use must occur in line with those activities permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders
- Diligent hand hygiene
- Respiratory etiquette
- Ensuring participants stay home if they are feeling ill
- 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 activities by the local health authority.

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **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.
  - Where possible, bus line up areas should be set up to prevent crowding.

## **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.

## **Washrooms**

- Schools will develop a washroom use plan for students to prevent crowding.
- Regularly review the COVID-19 handwashing guidelines (as posted) with students.

## **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 and disinfected.
- Students should 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.

## **Workspaces for Students**

- Avoid close greetings (**e.g. hugs, handshakes**). Regularly remind students about keeping their **“hands to yourself”**.
- Learning spaces are arranged to maximize the space available and to minimize people directly facing one another (where possible).
- 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.



# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **Physical Education**

Spread out students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.

K-12 staff and students in Grades 4 to 12 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<sup>6</sup> (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these activities is left to students' choice. Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity physical activities outdoors whenever possible.

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

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.

Why are masks not required during high intensity physical activity? 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.

## **Music Classes**

K-12 staff and students in Grades 4 to 12 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.

## **School Sports**

Intra- and inter-school programs, activities (e.g. intramurals, sports team practices, games), sports academies and events can continue in alignment with the following guidance: o Requirements of relevant local, regional and provincial public health recommendations and Orders for community gatherings and events.

- Masks are worn by K-12 staff, other adults and students in grades 4 to 12 when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present.
  - o Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity sport activities<sup>7</sup> (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these activities is left to 8 Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity sport activities outdoors whenever possible.

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

- 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 outlined in this document.

## **Emergency Evacuation Drill**

Schools should continue to practice emergency (e.g. fire, lockdown) and evacuation drills, including the six required annual fire drills as per BC Fire Code 2.8.3.2, and modify current procedures to adhere to health and safety guidelines (e.g., providing additional muster spots to prevent crowding/congestion).

- 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 evacuations involving smaller groups of students would not comply with the fire drill requirements of the Fire Code.
- Schools must continue to update their fire safety plans on an 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 current pandemic-related protocols). School fire safety plans, including fire drill procedures, should be developed in cooperation with the local fire department and other regulatory authorities.
- Emergency procedures may require modification to adhere to communicable disease plans (e.g. designating additional muster locations to reduce crowding where required, making efforts to minimize involuntary physical contact between participants, etc.). 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, emergency procedures must take precedence over COVID-19 preventive measures.

## **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 learning groupss (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).
- 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.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

## **Staffroom and Breaks**

- Staff are required to wear masks indoors (See PPE section for more guidance).
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before you go into the staffroom.
- If you have to leave the building, 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.



# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## 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.

## Maintain Cleaning/Disinfecting Procedures

The following frequency guidelines must be adhered to when cleaning and disinfecting:

- General cleaning of the premises, and cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, **at least once in a 24-hour period.**
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Empty garbage containers daily.

The requirements for daily cleaning and disinfecting outlined above do not apply to spaces/equipment that are not being used by students, staff or visitors. Many schools may have implemented procedures such as sign-in sheets posted next to room entrances that help custodial staff focus cleaning/disinfecting activities on those spaces that have been utilized by staff or students.

Frequently touched surfaces include:

- Items used by larger numbers of students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles.
  - Limiting access to water fountains is no longer recommended. Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after use.
  - **School communicable disease plans should not include restricting access to water, washrooms or other spaces that support student learning and well-being (e.g. gymnasiums, libraries, support rooms, etc.). Schools should return to full operation of all spaces in alignment with the protocols outlined in this document.**
- Shared equipment (e.g. computer keyboards and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for science labs, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing machines and sewing equipment for home economic programs, PE/sports equipment, music equipment, etc.)
- Appliances (staff and students can share the use of appliances and other objects, but treat items like microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers or laminators as frequently touched surfaces)
- Service counters (e.g., office service window, library circulation desk)

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. in Kindergarten and StrongStart classes) can also be used.

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g. children's books or magazines) and items with plastic covers (e.g. DVDs) can be contaminated if handled by a person with COVID-19; however, the risk is low. There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **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 Policies and Protocols**

The School District has developed local protocols that:

- Ensure staff and other adults (e.g. parents, caregivers, visitors) entering the school/worksites are aware of their responsibility to complete a daily health check prior to entering the school/worksites (e.g. emails/letters to parents and staff, orientation video, signage on doors) and to stay home if they are sick.
- Clearly communicate with parents/caregivers their responsibility to complete a daily health check with their child, and keep them home from school if they are sick.
- Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work to be sent home as soon as possible.
  - Some students or staff may not be able to be picked up immediately. As such, schools should have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably and is separated from others (at least 2M), and provide the student or staff with a non-medical mask if (unless they are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms and are at risk of vomiting).
    - Schools must provide supervision for younger children. Supervising staff should wear a non-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 bodily fluids may have been in contact with while they were ill (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.
- Establish procedures that allow for students and staff to return to school/work in line with the guidance in the Staying Home, Self-Isolation and Symptoms section.

This is to ensure students and staff who are not sick are not kept out of school/away from work longer than necessary.

- Schools and districts should not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practices).

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **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.

- Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.
  - Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the provincial K-12 Health Check app for daily assessment of symptoms.
- Staff and other adults should complete a daily health check prior to entering the school.
- If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.

## **Staying Home, Self-Isolation and Symptoms**

### **Stay Home When Required to Self-Isolate**

Students, staff or other adults **must stay home if they are required to self-isolate**.

### **Symptoms of Illness and Return to School**

**Students, staff or other adults should stay at home when sick**, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction to and the spread of COVID-19 in schools. The following resources provide guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness:

- Parents/caregivers and students can use the [K-12 Health Check](#) app.
- Staff and adults can refer to the BCCDC's [When to get tested for COVID-19](#)
- Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the [BCCDC online Self-Assessment Tool](#), call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.

When a staff, student or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced (as indicated in the [K-12 Health Check](#) app and the BCCDC "[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)" resource), if a COVID-19 test is recommended, and the type of illness they had (e.g. COVID-19 or other illness). See Appendix A – COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing and Return to School for more information.

Students and staff 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. 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.

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.

**Northern Health Online Clinic and Information Line: [1-844-645-7811](tel:1-844-645-7811)**

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **Protocol if a Student/Staff Develops Symptoms of Illness at School**

If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school, schools will:

- Provide the student/staff with a non-medical mask if they don't have one (exceptions should be made for students and staff who cannot wear masks for medical and/or disability-related reasons).
- Provide the student/staff with a space where they can wait comfortably that is separated from others.
  - The student is to be supervised and cared for, when separated.
- Make arrangements for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible.
  - Contact the student's parent/caregiver with a request to have their child picked up as soon as possible.
- Clean and disinfect the areas the student/staff used.
- Request that the student/staff stay home until COVID-19 has been excluded and symptoms have resolved.

**Students, staff or other adults should stay home when sick.**

## **Protocol in the Event of a Confirmed Covid-19 Case in a School**

If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, and were potentially infectious while they were at school:

- Public health will perform an investigation to determine if there were any potential close contacts within the school. (To learn more about contact tracing, visit the BCCDC website.)
  - Students and staff who have interacted with the confirmed case may be asked to stay home while public health completes their investigation.
- If it is determined that there are close contacts within the school, public health will notify the school administrators to request class and bus lists to assist with contact tracing and provide guidance on what steps should be taken.
- Public health may then:
  - Recommend 14-day isolation if necessary (for confirmed close contacts).
  - Recommend monitoring for symptoms if necessary.
  - Provide follow-up recommendations if necessary.
- Schools will continue to provide learning support to students required to self-isolate.
- Together, schools/school districts and public health officials will determine if any other actions are necessary.

**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.**

**The District and school personnel 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.**

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Personal protective equipment (including masks) can provide an additional layer of protection. Non-medical masks and face coverings (masks) have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. They provide some protection to the wearer and to those around them.

In the event a regional or provincial public health recommendation or Order requires stricter non-medical mask use than what is outlined in this document, that recommendation or Order should be followed.

Those wearing masks should still continue to respect others personal space.

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

Masks should not be used in place of the other safety measures detailed in this document.

## **K-12 Staff**

All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses.

## **Supporting Students with Complex Needs**

Supporting students with complex behaviours, medical complexities or receiving delegated care may require staff providing health services or other health care providers to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a medically complex or immune suppressed student.

- People providing these services in schools must wear a mask (medical or non-medical) when providing services and the service cannot be provided from behind a physical barrier. Additional PPE over and above that needed for routine practices and the use of a medical or non-medical mask is not necessary.
- Those providing health services in schools may be receiving different guidance related to PPE from their regulatory college or employer. Health service providers are encouraged to work with their employer to confirm what PPE is recommended for the services they provide in school settings.
- Parents and caregivers of children who are considered at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19

## **Students in Grades 4 - 12**

All students in grades 4 - 12 are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses.

## **Students in Grades K - 3**

Students in Grades K - 3 are encouraged to wear a mask in indoors in schools or on school buses, but are not required to do so – mask wearing remains a personal or family/caregiver choice for these students, and their choices must be respected.

## **Exceptions for Staff, Students and Visitors**

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

- To a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons;
- To a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
- If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument, engaging in high-intensity physical activity, etc.);
- If a person is eating or drinking;
- If a person is behind a barrier; 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 is important.

Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm if staff, students or visitors cannot wear a mask.

**No student should be prevented from attending or fully participating at school if they do not wear a mask.**

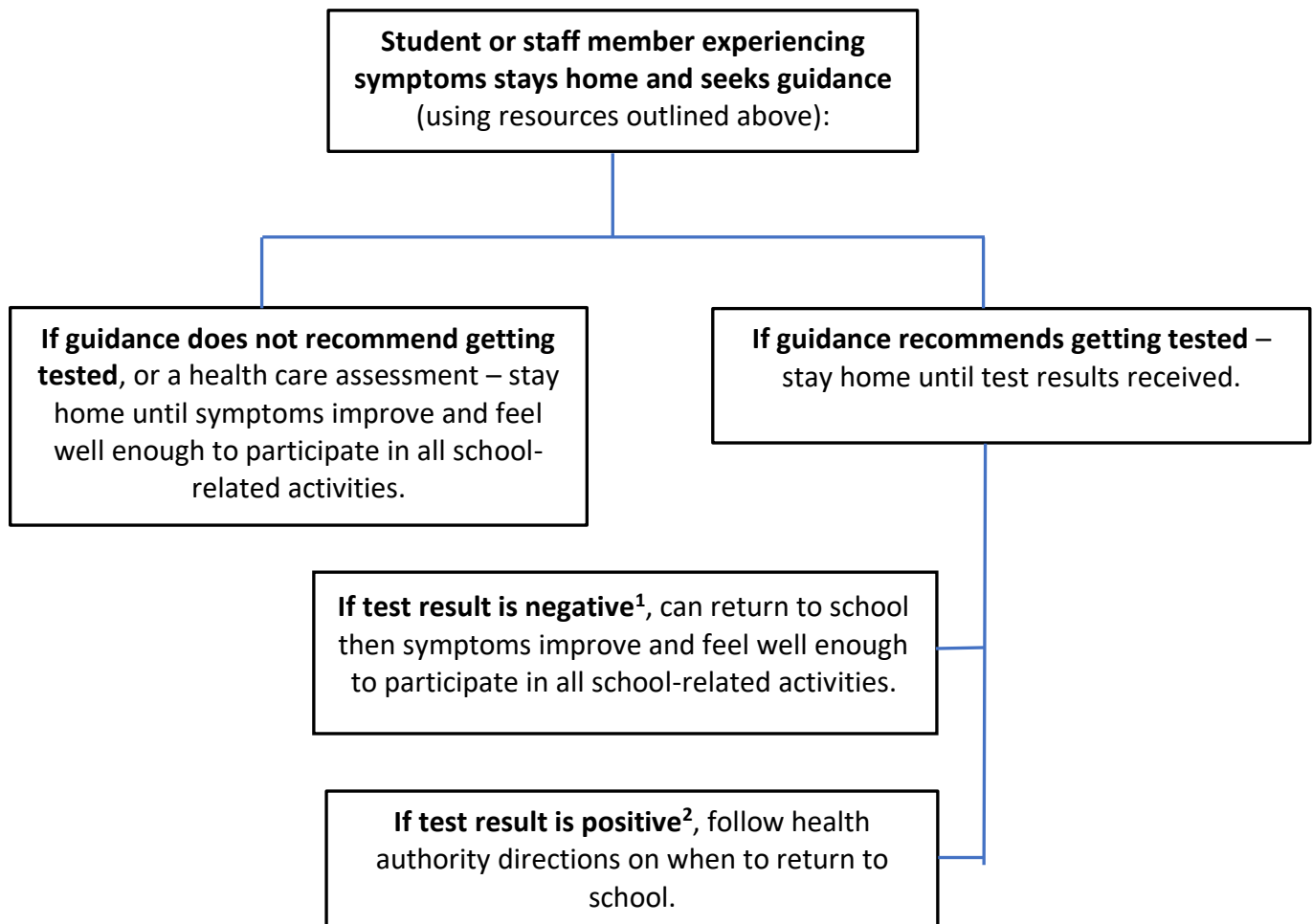


## **Supporting Documents:**

- **BC's K-12 Education Recovery Plan**: Updated August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 provides direction to boards of education and independent school authorities to deliver educational programs and supports in line with provincial pandemic recovery efforts in the 2021/22 school year by:
- **Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Setting**: Updated August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 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>
- **BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings**: Updated August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021 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](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf)

## Appendix A: COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing and Return to School

When a student, staff or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced and if a COVID-19 test is recommended. See the K-12 Health Check app and BCCDC When to get tested for COVID-19 resource for specific guidance. Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC on Self-Assessment Tool or call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.



1. 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.
2. Public health will contact everyone with a positive test. Visit the BCDC website for more information on negative test results.

## Appendix B-1: Daily Health Check for Students

### Daily Health Check for Students:

Based on current evidence, some symptoms are more likely to be related to COVID-19 than other.  
If your child has any of the symptoms listed below, follow the instructions.

Symptoms	What to Do
Fever higher than 38°C Chills Cough Difficulty breathing Loss of sense of smell or taste	<b>1 or more of these symptoms:</b> Get tested and stay home.
Sore throat Loss of appetite Diarrhea Nausea and vomiting Extreme fatigue Headache Body aches	If you have <b>1 of these symptoms:</b> Stay home until you feel better  <b>2 or more these symptoms:</b> Stay home and wait for 24 hours to see if you feel better. Get tested if not better after 24 hours
If you answer "YES" to either of the following questions, <b>you must stay home and self-isolate.</b>	
Have you or anyone in your household returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	
Are you or is anyone in your household a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	

When a **COVID-19 test** is recommended by health assessment, stay home until test results are received:

- If the COVID-19 test is **positive**, follow health authority direction on when to return to school.
- If the COVID-19 test is **negative**, you can return to school once symptoms have improved and you feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless you develop a new illness.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, you can return when symptoms improve, and you feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities. Testing may not be recommended if the assessment determines that the symptoms are due to another cause (i.e. not COVID-19).

## Appendix B-2: Daily Health Check for Staff

### Daily Health Check for Staff:

Based on current evidence, some symptoms are more likely to be related to COVID-19 than other.  
If you have any of the symptoms listed below, follow the instructions.

Symptoms	What to Do
Fever higher than 38°C Chills Cough Difficulty breathing Loss of sense of smell or taste	<b>1 or more of these symptoms:</b> Get tested and stay home.
Sore throat Loss of appetite Diarrhea Nausea and vomiting Extreme fatigue Headache Body aches	If you have <b>1 of these symptoms:</b> Stay home until you feel better  <b>2 or more these symptoms:</b> Stay home and wait for 24 hours to see if you feel better. Get tested if not better after 24 hours
If you answer "YES" to either of the following questions, <b>you must stay home and self-isolate.</b>	
Have you or anyone in your household returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	
Are you or is anyone in your household a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	

When a **COVID-19 test** is recommended by health assessment, stay home until test results are received:

- If the COVID-19 test is **positive**, follow health authority direction on when to return to work or school.
- If the COVID-19 test is **negative**, you can return to work once symptoms have improved and you feel well enough to participate in all work/school-related activities. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless you develop a new illness.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, you can return when symptoms improve, and you feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities. Testing may not be recommended if the assessment determines that the symptoms are due to another cause (i.e. not COVID-19).

## Appendix B-3: Daily Health Check for Visitors

### Daily Health Check for Visitors:

Based on current evidence, some symptoms are more likely to be related to COVID-19 than other.  
If you have any of the symptoms listed below, follow the instructions  
and do not enter the school/building.

Symptoms	What to Do
Fever higher than 38°C Chills Cough Difficulty breathing Loss of sense of smell or taste	<b>1 or more of these symptoms:</b> Get tested and stay home.
Sore throat Loss of appetite Diarrhea Nausea and vomiting Extreme fatigue Headache Body aches	If you have <b>1 of these symptoms:</b> Stay home until you feel better  <b>2 or more these symptoms:</b> Stay home and wait for 24 hours to see if you feel better. Get tested if not better after 24 hours
If you answer “YES” to either of the following questions, <b>you must stay home and self-isolate.</b>	
Have you or anyone in your household returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	
Are you or is anyone in your household a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	

When a **COVID-19 test** is recommended by health assessment, stay home until test results are received:

- If the COVID-19 test is **positive**, follow health authority direction on when it is safe to return to the school.
- If the COVID-19 test is **negative**, you can return to the school once symptoms have improved and you feel well enough. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless you develop a new illness.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, you can return when symptoms improve, and you 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).

## Appendix C: Health and Safety Checklist

### COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools

## Health and Safety Checklist



Complete this checklist with your school's health and safety committee to assess your school's communicable disease plan with the Ministry of Education's [COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#), which includes detailed guidance on the measures noted below. This checklist should be used in addition to the guidelines to develop and assess your school's communicable disease plan.

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Measures below should always be in place.

Public Health Measures		
Attendance & Record Keeping	Practices in place to:	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>maintain daily attendance records for staff, students, and visitors (including teachers on call, itinerant teachers/specialists, district/authority personnel, parents/caregivers, and volunteers), and</li> <li>maintain accurate class and bus lists.</li> </ul>	
	Daily attendance records should be kept for at least 45 days.	

Environmental Measures		
Ventilation and Air Exchange	All HVAC systems are operated and maintained as per standards and specifications, and are working properly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Portable air conditioners and fans are only used in ventilated spaces, with air moved from high to low.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Risk mitigation strategies are identified for excessive heat events or times of poor air quality.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Cleaning and Disinfecting	Frequently touched surfaces (those touched by larger numbers of people) are cleaned and disinfected at least 1x/day. Surfaces touched by fewer people are cleaned 1x/day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Practices are in place to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces when they are dirty.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Other general cleaning occurs in line with regular practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Practices are in place to clean and disinfect any surfaces a person's body fluids have contacted after they have displayed symptoms of illness.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included

Administrative Measures		
Gatherings and events	School extracurricular and social gatherings and events (including those occurring within and between schools) are in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, Provincial and Federal health recommendations and Orders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Space Arrangement	In indoor spaces, people have enough room to carry out intended activities without involuntary physical contact and all available space is used.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included

## COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools

### Health and Safety Checklist



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

Administrative Measures		
	For indoor gatherings, people are spread out within the available space and room capacity limits are not exceeded.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	During breaks and other unstructured time in indoor settings, strategies are in place to ensure there is enough space available to prevent involuntary physical contact.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Staff Specific Considerations	WorkSafe BC guidance for workplaces is used to determine measures for staff-only spaces within a school and/or for non-school spaces operated by the school district/authority.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Staff-only gatherings (e.g., meetings, professional development days, etc.) occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, Provincial, and Federal public health recommendations and Orders for workplace gatherings and events and any related WorkSafe BC guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Visitors, including Itinerant Staff, Temporary Teachers on Call, Parents and Others	Processes are in place to ensure itinerant staff, teachers on call and visitors are aware of the school's communicable disease plan and their responsibility to follow measures at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Curriculum, Programs and Activities	For music and physical education (and other subjects as necessary), prevention practices specific to the activity are implemented (e.g., cleaning mouth pieces and water bottles between use).	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Local and international field trips occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, Provincial, and Federal public health recommendations and Orders for local and/or international travel.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Bus Transportation	Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least 1x/day. Surfaces touched by fewer people are cleaned 1x/day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Practices are in place to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces when they are dirty.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Other general cleaning occurs in line with regular practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Practices are in place to encourage bus drivers and passengers to practice hand hygiene before and after trips.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Spread passengers out if empty seats are available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Windows are opened when the weather allows.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Bus drivers, adult volunteers and visitors, and students in Grade 4 or higher wear masks according to the guidelines or applicable public health orders/recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Grade K-3 students wear masks based on their personal or family/caregivers' choice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Food Services	Food services (e.g., meal programs, cafeterias, fundraisers, etc.), are following regular operational and food safety practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included

## COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools

### Health and Safety Checklist



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Preventable Health Services Activity

Administrative Measures		
Community Use of Schools	Community use of school facilities is aligned with related public health guidance, recommendations and Orders.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Water Fountains	The use of water fountains is not limited.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included

Personal Measures		
Daily Health Checks	Staff, parents and students are regularly reminded of their responsibilities to complete a Daily Health Check and are provided with resources on how to complete one (e.g., the <a href="#">K-12 Health Check</a> app).	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Stay Home When Sick / What To Do When Sick	Staff and students are regularly reminded to stay home when they are sick and are provided with resources on what to do when they are sick (e.g., the <a href="#">BC Self-Assessment Tool</a> app).	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Symptoms Develop at School	Practices are in place to appropriately respond when a staff member, student, or other person develops symptoms of illness while at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Returning to School After Illness	Health care provider notes (i.e., a doctor's note) are not required to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette	Hand cleaning facilities are available and accessible throughout the school and are well maintained.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included

Personal Protective Equipment		
Masks	Staff, adult volunteers and visitors, and students in Grade 4 and higher in "bricks and mortar" schools wear a non-medical mask or face covering (a "mask") according to the guidelines or applicable public health orders/recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Grade K-3 students wear masks based on their personal or family/caregivers' choice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	Masks are available for those who have forgotten theirs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included

Supportive School Environments		
Personal Prevention Practices	Strategies are in place to routinely support students to practice personal prevention measures like hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette (e.g., signage, included in morning announcements, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/> Included



## COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools

### Health and Safety Checklist



BC Centre for Disease Control  
Provincial Health Services Authority

Personal Space	Strategies are in place to encourage staff and students to consider and respect others personal space. Personal space is the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
Positive & Inclusive Approaches	Positive and inclusive approaches identified to support students' personal prevention practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included

The information included in this checklist is based on the Ministry of Education COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings. As such, there may be differences between the checklist and the information in this guidance document.