



September Startup Guidelines for Schools K-12 (COVID-19)



Table of Contents

COVID-19 Safety Plan: School Administrator Responsibilities	3
Site-Specific COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist Items:.....	3
Ongoing Administrator Responsibilities	5
Communication and Training and Orientation	5
Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures	5
Learning Groups	6
Physical Distancing	6
Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities	7
Itinerant Staff and Specialists	8
Personal and Shared Items	8
Student Transportation on Buses	9
PPE and Physical Barriers	10
Cleaning and Disinfection Minimum Requirements	10
General Ventilation and Air Circulation	12
Visitor Access/Community Use	12
Provincial/BCCDC/Ministry of Education Resources	12
BCCDC/Ministry Guidelines for K-12 (July 29, 2020)	12
Provincial COVID-19 H&S Guidelines for K-12 (Aug. 28 th ,2020)	12
BC Back to School Plan.....	12
BCCDC Frequently Asked Questions for Staff document	12
COVID-19 Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities	12
Appendix A: Summary of School-Based Control Measures	13
Appendix B: Daily Health Check Example	14
Appendix C: Protocol if a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms	15
Appendix D: Protocol in the Event of a Confirmed Covid-19 Case in a School	15
Appendix E: When to Perform Hand Hygiene at School	16
Appendix F: How to Wear a Face Mask Poster	17

Refer to the Provincial COVID-19 H&S Guidelines for K-12 for detailed information on the following:

Adult Education	Kindergarten Entry	Technology Education
Arts Education	Music Programs	Shared Office Space for Staff
Dual Credit	Physical and Health Education	School Libraries / Learning Commons
Extended Day Classes	Outdoor Programs	Theatre, Film, And Dance Programs
Field Trips	Playgrounds	Work Experience
Food / Culinary Programs	Sports	Extracurricular Activities
Food Services	Stem Programs	School Gatherings/Events
Textiles Programs	Science Labs	Community Use of Schools

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) for school staff 18

- About COVID-19 18
 - What is COVID-19? 18
 - How is COVID-19 spread? 19
 - Who is most at risk? 19
- Sickness At School Or At Home 20
 - What is a “health-check”? When and how do we do them? 20
 - Can asymptomatic students and staff go to school if someone else in their household is sick? 20
 - What should staff and students do if they get sick while at home? 20
 - Who must stay at home even if they are not sick? 20
 - What should happen if staff or students become sick while at school? 20
 - Should students or staff with seasonal allergies stay home? 20
- Physical Distancing 21
 - How do we practice physical distancing while at school? 21
 - Is it safe for students to play together on the playground? 21
 - How are students and staff expected to get to and from school? 21
- Hand Hygiene And Respiratory Etiquette 22
 - What type of soap should be used for hand washing? 22
 - Do we need to use warm water to wash hands? 22
 - Can we wash our hands with tap water if there is a boil water advisory? 22
 - When should hand hygiene be practiced? 22
 - Why are masks not recommended for children? 22
 - Why do staff members not need to wear masks? 22
- Cleaning 23
 - How often should surfaces be cleaned? 23
 - Is it safe to share books and other paper documents? 23
- Activities 23
 - How can physical activity be done safely? 23
 - Can students share sports equipment? 23
 - Is it okay to sing in groups? 23
- Mental Health 23
 - How can staff support the mental health of students? 23
- Shared Environment 24
 - Can staff share the use of microwaves, refrigerators, photocopiers, coffee pots, etc.? 24
 - Do we need to increase ventilation in the schools? 24

COVID-19 Safety Plan: School Administrator Responsibilities

- Review the [Provincial COVID-19 H&S Guidelines for K-12](#) and the [BC Back to School Plan](#)
- Review the [BCCDC Frequently Asked Questions for Staff document](#) with staff
- Implement your COVID-19 Safety Plan (complete the checklist on page 3 and 4 of the [September Start Up Guidelines for School K-12](#))
- Schedule a health and safety meeting during the first week back to review the [September Start Up Guidelines for School K-12](#) (including the COVID-19 Safety Plan checklist) with your JHSC.
- Ensure that a [Site-Specific COVID-19 Risk Assessment](#) is conducted for any site-specific safety concern that is not addressed in this September Startup Guideline
- Ensure all staff have been trained in the [Health and Safety Protocols and Procedures for Returning to Safe Operation Education \(K-12\)](#)
- Complete the online [Site Specific COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist \(by Sept. 10th\)](#)
 - **When you complete and submit this checklist on-line, a copy will be sent to you via email and this becomes your Site Specific COVID-19 Safety Plan.**
 - **Please post a copy for staff on your H&S bulletin board and post a copy in the office for public review.**

Site-Specific COVID-19 Safety Plan Checklist Items:

- Ensure that floor markings and posters are in place to address traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. It is important not to reduce the number of exits and we are adhering to the fire code
- Determine the composition of the Learning Groups.
 - In elementary and middle schools, a Learning Group can be composed of up to 60 people.
 - In secondary schools, a Learning Group can be composed of up to 120 people.
 - Learning Groups can be composed of students and staff.
- Ensure that the composition of the Learning Groups remain consistent for all activities that occur in schools, including but not limited to learning and breaks (lunch, recess, classroom changes, etc.)
- Establish consistent seating arrangements, where feasible
- Keep up-to-date lists of all members of a Learning Group to share with public health should contact tracing need to occur.
- Clearly communicate with parents and caregivers about their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school.
 - Consider having parents and caregivers provide a copy of a completed daily health check form that confirms they understand how to complete the daily health check and that it must be completed daily. An example is included as Appendix B.
 - Alternatively, conduct daily health checks for respiratory illness at drop-off by asking parents and caregivers to confirm the child does not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease.
- Ensure school staff and other adults entering the school are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease prior to entering the school.

- Ensure that visitors are aware of health and safety protocols and requirements prior to entering the school
- Ensure all visitors confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.
- Keep a list of the date, names and contact information for all visitors who enter the school.
- Minimize the number of adults (staff and others) who interact with Learning Groups they are not a part of, where feasible
- Ensure that any student, staff or other person within the school who has symptoms of COVID-19 **OR** has travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** has been identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak stays home and self-isolates **and** seeks assessment by a health-care provider and self-isolate while they await the results if they have cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms.
- Establish and communicate procedures for those who become sick while at school
- Ensure non-medical masks are available for staff if someone should become ill while at school.
- Report to Fraser Health any absenteeism in excess of 10% total school population due to flu like symptoms. **Schools are not to 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.**
- Facilitate regular opportunities for staff and students to practice hand hygiene.
- Ensure hand washing supplies are well stocked at all times including soap, paper towels and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Ensure that inter-school events including competitions, tournaments and festivals are **not** taking place
- Ensure that school gatherings occur within the Learning Group and not do exceed the maximum Learning Group size in the setting, including the minimum number of additional people required (e.g. school staff, visitors, etc.) to meet the gathering's purpose and intended outcome.
- Ensure that physical distance can be maintained between members of different Learning Groups during extracurricular activities including sports, arts or special interest clubs and that reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same Learning Group.
- If food is prepared within or outside a school for consumption by people other than those who prepared it (including for sale), ensure that the [WorkSafe BC Restaurants, cafes, pubs, and nightclubs: Protocols for returning to operation](#) are implemented as appropriate and as relevant to the school setting, in addition to normally implemented food safety measures and requirements (e.g. FOODSAFE trained staff, a food safety plan, etc.).
- Do not allow homemade food items to be made available to staff or students.
- Ensure that the school is cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#) document.
- Ensure hand sanitizer is available at the school entrance and to students and staff when hand washing is not available (ie: portables)
- Ensure that only District approved products for disinfecting and sanitizing are used and only used as directed. These include Percept (hard surface disinfectant), Sani Hands (hand/surface sanitizer) and Oxivir Plus Disinfectant Cleaner (Diluted)

Ongoing Administrator Responsibilities

- ❑ Conduct a periodic review of the effectiveness of the District COVID-19 Safety Plan and site specific COVID-19 Safety Plan (if applicable).
- ❑ Maintain records of all staff training, reviews and inspections.
- ❑ Re-examine all tasks in the workplace, especially those that require the direct care of students, and ensure that safe work procedures are updated with COVID-19 practices.
- ❑ Direct work in a manner that eliminates or minimizes the risk to workers.
- ❑ Monitor enhanced cleaning frequency and practices, including classrooms and high touch areas

Communication and Training and Orientation

Schools must clearly and consistently communicate guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and have resources available for information on COVID-19 as needed. Schools should provide early and ongoing health and safety orientation for staff, parents/caregivers and students to ensure employees, families and the school community are well informed of their responsibilities and resources available.

WorkSafeBC recommends that schools train their workers on:

- The risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease.
- Safe work procedures or instruction to be followed, including hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette.
- How to report an exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19.
- Changes they have made to work policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep records of that training.

Schools must document any COVID-19-related meetings and post minutes at a central location as well as keep records of instruction and training provided to workers regarding COVID-19, and any reports of exposure and first aid records.

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 “controlled” environments where multiple measures of various effectiveness can be routinely and consistently implemented.

Schools are considered a “controlled” environment by public health. This is because:

- Schools include a consistent grouping of people.
- Schools have robust illness policies for students and staff.
- Schools can implement effective personal practices that can be consistently reinforced and are followed by most people in the setting (e.g. diligent hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, etc.).
- Schools can implement a variety of health and safety measures (e.g., enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, using outdoor space for learning activities, grouping students and staff in learning groups to limit in-person interactions, implementing staggered schedules, etc.)

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 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 COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

Learning Groups

A learning group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term (e.g. a school quarter, semester or year) and who primarily interact with each other. A learning group could be made up of a single class of students with their teacher, multiple classes that sometimes join for additional learning activities, or a group of secondary school students with the same courses.

Learning group sizes

Learning groups are smallest in elementary and middle schools because it is more challenging for younger students to maintain physical distance. Students in secondary school are better able to minimize physical contact, practice hand hygiene and recognize if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

- Elementary: 60
- Middle: 60
- Secondary: 120

For learning groups examples, refer to <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school#learning-group>

Physical Distancing

Schools should minimize the number of adults (staff and others) who interact with learning groups they are not a part of as much as possible. Those outside of a learning group must practice physical distancing when interacting with the learning group.

During break times (e.g. recess and lunch), students may want to socialize with peers in different learning groups. There are different considerations for elementary and middle/secondary students when socializing outside of their learning group. Schools should make sure these considerations are clearly communicated and explained to students.

Elementary students:

When interacting with peers outside of their learning group, students should:

- Minimize physical contact when outdoors
- Maintain physical distance (2m) when indoors. If a student is unable to physically distance, the student should socialize within their learning group or where they can be supported to physically distance

Middle/Secondary students:

When interacting with peers outside of their learning group, students should:

- Maintain physical distance (2m)
- Consistently maintaining physical distance when it is required. If a student is unable to physically distance, the student should socialize within their learning group or where they can be supported to physically distance

To support physical distancing requirements, 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.
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.

- Create space between students/staff as much as possible:
 - Configure classroom and learning environment differently to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
 - Arrange desks/tables so students are not facing each other and using consistent or assigned seating arrangements.
 - Store excess equipment (e.g. equipment that might not be of use during the pandemic) in order to open more space in schools.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space
- Take students outside more often.
- Organize activities outside including snack time, place-based learning and unstructured time.
- Take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health/education, outside.
- Ensure appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play.
- 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.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage greater space between students and staff.
- 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
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through. Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school.

Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities

- Students with disabilities/diverse abilities who are not able to physically distance are not to be excluded from a learning group. Prevention and exposure control measures should be implemented to support students to access learning within a learning group (e.g. assigned seating, prompts, visual support, education using video modelling, social stories, etc.)
- 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 in close physical proximity with a student within their learning group, personal protective equipment, such as masks and gloves, 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).
- Non-medical masks are required in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their learning group. As such, 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) when outside of their learning groups, and when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Wearing 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) in schools outside of the circumstances outlined above is a personal choice and will be respected.

For more information, see the Services and Supports > Supports for Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities section of the [COVID-19 Operational Guidelines](#) for more information).

Itinerant Staff and Specialists

Schools should, where possible, assign staff to a specific learning group to help minimize the number of interactions between students and staff, while continuing to support students who may need special assistance. Examples could include assigning an educational assistant to a learning group where they can support one or more students in the same learning group, or assigning a teacher teaching on call or a teacher candidate on practicum to a learning group if they have been offered an extended assignment at a single school. Schools and school districts must consider learning group size limits when assigning staff to learning groups.

Staff outside of a learning group must practice physical distancing when interacting with the learning group. For example, a learning assistance teacher or a counsellor can work with students from multiple learning groups, but they should maintain physical distance from students and other staff as much as possible. In situations where staff outside a learning group cannot practice physical distancing, a [Site-Specific COVID-19 Risk Assessment](#) must be completed to determine what additional safety measures may be needed.

When staff are interacting with people outside of their learning group; physical distance cannot be consistently maintained; and none of the strategies outlined above are viable options, 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 a face shield).

Personal and Shared Items

Staff and students can continue to bring personal items to school, but they should be encouraged to only bring items that are necessary (e.g. backpacks, clothing, school supplies, water bottles).

Students can continue to use their lockers, as it is better for personal items to be stored in a locker than to be stored in classrooms or carried throughout the school. If possible, lockers should not be shared. If lockers have to be shared, schools should try to assign shared lockers to students in the same learning group.

Schools should implement strategies to manage the flow of students around lockers to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through. Staff and students should not share personal items (including electronic devices, writing instruments, etc.)

Additional measures should be taken, including:

- Personal items should be labelled with student's name to discourage accidental sharing.
- In elementary schools, adapt group activities to limit physical contact and reduce shared items.
 - Limit use of frequently touched items that can't be easily cleaned
 - Clean and disinfect laminated materials daily if multiple people touch them
- Avoid sharing all food and drinks, including homemade foods like birthday treats or bake sale items. If they show up at school, keep them from being shared
- Students should label all their personal items and not share them.
- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted on textbooks, paper, or other paper-based products.
 - Schools can share books or paper-based educational resources with students

Student Transportation on Buses

Code of Conduct Rules for Students have been updated to ensure that students will not be able to ride the bus if:

- They are experiencing symptoms of COVID 19
- They have come into close contact with someone with a confirmed case of COVID 19, or
- They have recently travelled outside Canada

Buses used for transporting students will be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided in the BCCDC's [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#) document. In addition, Drivers are to wipe down all handles and handrails in between runs with disinfectant wipes provided (the disinfectant wipes will be in a soft sealed bag to ensure compliance with CVSE standards) and the Custodial department to disinfect the busses at the end of each day

Bus drivers are encouraged to clean their hands often, including before and after completing trips. They will be provided with hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to use during trips. Parents have been asked to ensure students clean their hands before they leave home to take the bus, when they leave school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Bus drivers 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) when they cannot maintain physical distance. Face shields have been provided to Drivers to use during loading/unloading of students at each stop. This is to be in the open position while driving to ensure clear visibility while driving
- Middle and secondary school students are required to wear non-medical masks; exceptions will be made for students and staff who cannot wear masks for medical reasons
- Elementary school students are not required to wear masks

To reduce the number of close, in-person interactions, the following protocols are in place:

Procedure for Loading/Unloading of Students

- A student must be at the top of the stairwell, before the next student boards
- Students loading are to go directly to the back to an available seat, working their way forward to fill seats as to avoid passing other students on bus.
- Student will be unloading from the front first, in consecutive order toward the rear most seating where possible.

Physical Distancing

- Seating will be kept consistent and seats assigned where possible; up-to-date passenger and seating arrangement lists should be kept should contact tracing need to occur.
- If space is available, students should each have their own seat (unless sharing with a member of their own household) and sit separated side to side, and front to back.
- The seating arrangement can be altered whenever necessary to support student health and safety (e.g. accommodating children with a physical disability, responding to behavioural issues, etc.).

PPE and Physical Barriers

Non-medical masks are required to be used in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their learning group or household.

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) in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., itinerant teachers/specialists interacting with multiple learning groups). Staff can also wear a mask, a face covering or a face shield within their classroom or learning group if that is their personal preference. **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.**

Students in Middle and Secondary school are required to wear non-medical masks in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained; exceptions will be made for students who cannot wear masks for medical reasons. Even when wearing a mask, staff and students will still be required to maintain physical distance from people outside of their learning group.

- Students will have the choice to wear a mask in the classroom
- Staff will have the choice to wear a mask when interacting within their learning group
- Everyone must treat each other and those wearing masks with respect
- Elementary school students are not required to wear masks.

Plexiglass barriers will be provided to schools and sites with a public reception area. The installation or use of any additional physical barriers (ie: plexiglass) will be determined through the process of conducting a risk assessment and must be pre-approved by the District.

Cleaning and Disinfection Minimum Requirements

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises at least once every 24 hours.
 - This includes items that only a single student uses, like an individual desk or locker.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces at least twice every 24 hours.
 - These include doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students, keyboards and toys.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Use only the District approved products for disinfecting and sanitizing and only use as directed
 - Percept (hard surface disinfectant)
 - Sani Hands (hand/surface sanitizer)
- Limit the use of frequently touched items that are not easily cleaned.
- Empty garbage containers daily.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine). Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.

There are no additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures beyond those that are normally implemented and those noted in this document required. This includes when different Learning Groups use the same space (e.g. a classroom, gym, arts room, home economics or science lab, etc.). However, the District will continue to have Enhanced Cleaning in all schools and buses.

Enhanced Cleaning and Disinfecting Checklist

Day custodians will engage in enhanced hand touch cleaning at a minimum of twice per day:

- Main Entrance and all interior doors – twice daily
- Push plates and push areas above the door handles and crash bars both sides – twice a shift
- Handrails and elevators – twice daily
 - staircase handrails;
 - guardrails; and
 - elevator push buttons.
- Drinking fountains – every hour
 - handles, knobs and push buttons of drinking fountains and water bottle fillers.
- Washrooms – twice daily
 - faucet and countertop;
 - toilet and urinal flush buttons and handles;
 - toilet stall locking mechanisms, pulls and areas around both sides;
 - soap dispensers; and
 - hand dryers and paper towel dispensers.
- Reception area – twice daily
 - countertops / desktops;
 - light switches;
 - cabinet handles;
 - copiers printers touch screen and lid handles and edges; and
 - telephones.
- Staffroom – 2 times per day (after breaks)
 - door handles and light switches;
 - cabinet handles;
 - faucets;
 - appliance handles;
 - countertops, tables and area immediately underneath; and
 - chairs (top, back and armrest).

Evening custodians will engage in enhanced hand touch cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces once a day:

- Classrooms
 - Door handles and light switches;
 - cabinet handles;
 - teacher's chair (top, back and armrest);
 - student chairs and stools (top back);
 - desks and tabletops and immediately under the sides;
 - countertops; and
 - telephone.
- Washrooms (full clean)
 - sinks, faucets and countertops;
 - toilets and urinals including flush buttons and handles;
 - toilet stall locking mechanisms, pulls and areas around both sides;
 - soap dispensers;
 - hand dryers and paper towel dispensers; and
 - clean and damp mop floors

General Ventilation and Air Circulation

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, is contributing to the spread of the virus. School districts and independent school authorities are required to ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers (Part 4 of the OHS Regulation).

In order to enhance school ventilation, schools should consider:

- Moving activities outdoors when possible (for example, lunch, classes, physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit
- Ensuring that the ventilation system operates properly
- Opening windows when possible and if weather permits

Visitor Access/Community Use

Visitor access during school hours should be prioritized to those supporting activities that benefit student learning and well-being (e.g. teacher candidates, public health nurses, meal program volunteers, etc.).

- Schools must ensure that visitors are aware of health and safety protocols and requirements prior to entering the school (e.g., maintaining physical distance, requirement to wear a non-medical mask in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained.)
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that all visitors confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.
- Schools are to keep a list of the date, names and contact information for any visitors who entered the school.

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

- Maximum 50 person gatherings, in alignment with the Gatherings and Events Order of the Provincial Health Officer. Additional information is available from the BC Centre for Disease Control for gatherings and events in community settings.
- Diligent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette
- Physical distancing among older youth and adults
- 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
- Spaces and equipment used by community members should be cleaned and disinfected prior to students and staff re-entering the space. Cleaning for purposes of after school use cannot result in a reduction of cleaning for education purposes.

Provincial/BCCDC/Ministry of Education Resources

[BCCDC/Ministry Guidelines for K-12 \(July 29, 2020\)](#)

[Provincial COVID-19 H&S Guidelines for K-12 \(Aug. 28th, 2020\)](#)

[BC Back to School Plan](#)

[BCCDC Frequently Asked Questions for Staff document](#)

[COVID-19 Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities](#)

Appendix A: Summary of School-Based Control Measures



1. STAY HOME WHEN SICK

All students and staff with common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory diseases must stay home and self-isolate.



2. HAND HYGIENE

Everyone should clean their hands more often!

Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.



3. RESPIRATORY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Cover your coughs.

Do not touch your face.

No sharing of food, drinks, or personal items.



4. PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING PHYSICAL CONTACT

Spread students and staff out to different areas when possible.

Take students outside more often.

Stagger break and transition times. Incorporate individual activities.

Remind students to keep their hands to themselves.



5. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice every 24 hours (once during the school day).

General cleaning of the school should occur at least once a day.

Use common cleaning and disinfectant products.

Appendix B: Daily Health Check Example

The following is an example of a tool that can be used for parents and caregivers to complete prior to their child coming to school. It should be adapted if used for school staff and visitors.

Daily Health Check			
1. Symptoms of Illness*	Does your child have any of the following symptoms?	CIRCLE ONE	
	Fever	YES	NO
	Chills	YES	NO
	Cough or worsening of chronic cough	YES	NO
	Shortness of breath	YES	NO
	Sore throat	YES	NO
	Runny nose / stuffy nose	YES	NO
	Loss of sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
	Headache	YES	NO
	Fatigue	YES	NO
	Diarrhea	YES	NO
	Loss of appetite	YES	NO
	Nausea and vomiting	YES	NO
	Muscle aches	YES	NO
	Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	YES	NO
	Dizziness, confusion	YES	NO
	Abdominal pain	YES	NO
	Skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes	YES	NO
2. International Travel	Have you or anyone in your household returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact	Are you or is anyone in your household a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have	YES	NO

*Check BCCDC's [Symptoms of COVID-19](#) regularly to ensure the list is up to date.

If you answered "YES" to any of the questions and the symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition (e.g. allergies), your child should **NOT** come to school.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of illness, contact a health-care provider for further assessment. This includes 8-1-1, or a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner.

If you answered "YES" to questions 2 or 3, use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if you should be tested for COVID-19.

Appendix C: Protocol if a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms

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

- 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.
- Encourage the student/staff to seek assessment by a health-care provider.
- Request that the student/staff stay home until COVID-19 has been excluded and symptoms have resolved.

Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should not return to school until they have been assessed by a health-care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases AND their symptoms have resolved.

Schools and school districts should notify their local medical health officer if staff and/or student absenteeism exceeds 10 percent of regular attendance, to help with the early identification of clusters or outbreaks.

Appendix D: 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 must 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.

Appendix E: When to Perform Hand Hygiene at School

When Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 Learning Groups (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.).• After using the toilet.• After sneezing or coughing into hands.• Whenever hands are visibly dirty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.



Coronavirus COVID-19

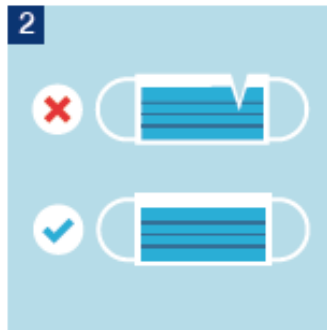
BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



How to Wear a Face Mask



1 Wash your hands with soap and water for 20-30 seconds or perform hand hygiene with alcohol-based hand rub before touching the face mask.



2 Check the new mask to make sure it's not damaged.



3 Ensure colour side of the mask faces outwards.



4 Locate the metallic strip. Place it over and mold it to the nose bridge.



5 Place an ear loop around each ear or tie the top and bottom straps.



6 Cover mouth and nose fully, making sure there are no gaps. Pull the bottom of the mask to fully open and fit under your chin.



7 Press the metallic strip again to fit the shape of the nose. Perform hand hygiene.



8 Do not touch the mask while using it, if you do, perform hand hygiene.



9 Replace the mask if it gets wet or dirty and wash your hands again after putting it on. Do not reuse the mask.

Removing the Mask



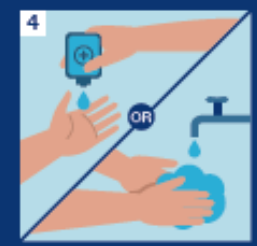
1 Perform hand hygiene.



2 Do not touch the front of your mask. Lean forward, gently remove the mask from behind by holding both ear loops or ties.



3 Discard the mask in a waste container.



4 Perform hand hygiene.

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) for school staff

Coronavirus COVID-19

COVID-19 has a very low infection rate in children (aged 0-18). There are now fewer cases across BC and public health is aware of where the disease is occurring. As such, parents and students have the option to return to in-class instruction as of June 1, 2020 with a goal of returning to full-time classes in September. This document addresses common questions related to COVID-19 public health principles at schools. This includes staying home when sick, encouraging physical distancing and minimizing physical contact, practicing hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and frequent cleaning and disinfecting. Check with your health care provider or local public health unit if you have any specific concerns. For the latest updates to this document, including answers to additional questions, please visit the [FAQ resource on the BCCDC website](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools). (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools>)

About COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus. Symptoms may include:

Common symptoms:

- Fever
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Loss of sense of smell or taste
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Gastrointestinal issues such as diarrhea or vomiting
- Loss of appetite

Less common symptoms:

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Abdominal pain
- Skin rashes or discolouration of fingers or toes

To find the latest information about COVID-19 visit covid-19.bccdc.ca. To assess your own, use the self-assessment tool at bc.thrive.health.

How is COVID-19 spread?

COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Respiratory droplets are small liquid particles that may travel about a metre through the air before settling on a surface. The virus is spread when a droplet comes in contact with a person's mouth, nose or eyes.

It can also be spread when a person touches an object or surface with the virus on it, and then touches their mouth, nose, or eyes before washing their hands.

COVID-19 is not airborne (i.e. spread through particles floating in the air) and will not stay in the air for long.

Who is most at risk?

Children (aged 0-18) have had a much lower rate of COVID-19 infection than adults in BC. Children who have developed COVID-19 have most likely acquired it from adults in the household setting. COVID-19 is more likely to spread between adults.

Some children may have a higher chance of more serious symptoms if they get COVID-19. This includes children under 1 year of age, those with weakened immune systems and those with pre-existing lung conditions.

School staff with certain underlying medical conditions, weakened immune systems, or those age 65 years or older may also have a higher chance of more serious symptoms if they get COVID-19. If any of these apply to you, or if you live with someone with any of these conditions, you can still attend school. Talk to your health care provider about the risk and steps that you should take to lower the risk to yourself and those who you live with.

Sickness At School Or At Home

What is a “health-check”? When and how do we do them?

A “health check” helps to keep track of our health and to monitor development of any symptoms of COVID-19.

School staff should learn about common COVID-19 symptoms and support students’ understanding of them.

Staff should assess themselves daily for symptoms and check with students if they are feeling unwell.

Encourage parents and caregivers to assess their children daily for symptoms before they get to school.

Use the self-assessment tool at bc.thrive.health to assess symptoms.

Can asymptomatic students and staff go to school if someone else in their household is sick?

Asymptomatic students and staff can still go to school if someone else in their household is sick unless someone from public health has stated otherwise. If someone has been diagnosed with COVID-19, public health will ask their household contacts to stay home and self-isolate.

Anyone who feels sick should consult the self-assessment tool, call 8-1-1, or consult their health care provider. Children do not need to stay home from school while another family member is awaiting COVID-19 test results.

What should staff and students do if they get sick while at home?

Use the self-assessment tool at bc.thrive.health or call 8-1-1 to assess symptoms and determine if testing is required.

Those diagnosed with COVID-19 must be excluded from work and stay home as advised by public health. This exclusion is a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms, until symptoms improve, and the person no longer has a fever.

Parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they are assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19.

Schools do not need to notify students, parents, caregivers and staff if someone is diagnosed with COVID-19. Information about any potential or confirmed cases should be treated as confidential. All necessary notifications will be done by public health.

Who must stay at home even if they are not sick?

If someone has travelled outside of Canada, they must self-isolate for 14 days upon return. Returning travellers who develop symptoms of COVID-19 during this time period should go for testing but will still be required to complete their 14 days of self-isolation if they test negative. Those who test positive will be advised on further isolation by public health. If someone was told by public health or a health care provider that they are a close contact of a COVID-19 case, self-isolation is required for 14 days from the day of last contact.

What should happen if staff or students become sick while at school?

Staff should follow the plan created and approved by the Ministry of Health, [found here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf) in Appendix B. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf>)

Should students or staff with seasonal allergies stay home?

Students and staff with seasonal allergies don’t need to stay home. If the allergy symptoms are the same as they usually are during this time of year (e.g. itchy eyes, runny nose) and can be relieved with antihistamine or allergy medication, then no specific action is needed. If students or staff are unsure if the symptoms are related to allergies, they should stay at home and contact their health care provider, use the self-assessment tool at bc.thrive.health or call 8-1-1 to assess symptoms and determine if testing is required.

Physical Distancing

How do we practice physical distancing while at school?

Regular school activities are not restricted by the Provincial Health Officer’s Order for Mass Gatherings prohibiting gatherings of 50 people or more. However, large assemblies of staff and students where physical distancing is not possible should still be avoided. Staying 2 metres apart is not always feasible and is not expected at all times in schools. Encourage children to avoid physical contact. This is more important than keeping 2 metres apart all the time. Adults should still keep 2 metres apart from each other and students. In instances where staff may not be able to keep a 2 metre distance from students due to diverse needs, they should focus on keeping as much distance as possible and minimizing physical contact. Schools should focus on how students and staff can move around safely. You do not need to follow every example given but should consider broadly what your school can do. Here are a few general principles to consider:

Limit access to facilities	Stagger breaks and arrivals	Spend time outdoors	Limit physical contact
Limit access to buildings to staff and students only.	Stagger break times, class changes, arrivals and departures to minimize contact.	Sports, exercise and other lessons should be outdoors when possible.	Encourage students to keep their hands to themselves. Use verbal reminders, lesson plans and signs.
Control access to common areas like libraries, staff break rooms and elevators.	Provide timed arrival and departure directions to students and parents.	Encourage students to spend time together outside.	Encourage students and staff to keep 2 metres apart when possible.
Put up directional signs to keep traffic flowing in hallways.	Ensure entrances and exits are clearly marked.	Close contact sports should be avoided right now.	This may include spacing desks apart or smaller learning groups.
Avoid assemblies and large gatherings, use virtual options.	Limit the number of teachers that change their classroom or learning space throughout the day.		Limit the number of staff who interact with students, and limit any unnecessary mixing between classes
If possible, ensure separate washrooms for staff and students.			

Is it safe for students to play together on the playground?

Playgrounds are a safe environment for students to play together. Focus more on minimizing physical contact between each other rather than staying 2 metres apart. No cleaning or disinfection is required for playground structures. All students should practice hand hygiene before and after play.

How are students and staff expected to get to and from school?

Students and staff should walk, ride their bikes or drive to school when possible. Students and staff using public transit or school buses should be encouraged to practice hand hygiene before and after their commute, cough or sneeze into a tissue or their elbow and avoid touching their face. Staff and older children can wear a non-medical mask if a 2 metre distance from others cannot be maintained.

If staff or students are carpooling with people outside of their households, they should try to carpool with the same people each day.

Hand Hygiene And Respiratory Etiquette

What type of soap should be used for hand washing?

Liquid or foam soap is preferred for hand washing. Antibacterial soap is not required. Students and staff should be provided time to wash their hands with soap and water before going outside and upon returning e.g. for recess, physical education or lunch breaks. If sinks are not available (e.g., children and staff are outside), supervise the use of a [Health Canada approved alcohol-based hand sanitizer](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/hand-sanitizer.html) (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/hand-sanitizer.html>). If hands are visibly dirty, clean first before using hand sanitizer. Read labels carefully as [certain products cannot be used on infants, children or by pregnant or breastfeeding staff](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/legislation-guidelines/covid19-technical-grade-ethanol-hand-sanitizer.html). (<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/natural-non-prescription/legislation-guidelines/covid19-technical-grade-ethanol-hand-sanitizer.html>) All children under the age of six should be supervised when using hand sanitizer. Use enough hand sanitizer to cover the front and back of a child's hands and between their fingers. Ensure that the hand sanitizer has dried completely before children resume regular activities and prevent children from putting wet hands in eyes or mouth. If a child accidentally consumes any amount of hand sanitizer, call the BC Poison Control Centre: 1-800-567-8911.

Do we need to use warm water to wash hands?

No, you can use any temperature of water to wash your hands. Cold water and warm water are equally effective at cleaning hands as long as soap is used.

Can we wash our hands with tap water if there is a boil water advisory?

Yes, it's safe to wash your hands with soap and tap water if you are living in a community with a Boil Water Advisory (BWA) or a Do Not Consume (DNC) advisory. However, if you are living under a Do Not Use (DNU) advisory you should wash your hands with bottled water.

When should hand hygiene be practiced?

Encourage hand washing often. See [Appendix C on the Ministry of Health school guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf) for suggestions on when to wash hands. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf>) Promote proper and frequent handwashing through signs, announcements, in-class lessons and scheduling time for hand hygiene. All sinks should be supplied with liquid or foam soap. If sinks are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. If hands are visibly soiled, wipe your hands before using hand sanitizer, or avoid touching your face or any food or beverage until you can access soap and water.

Why are masks not recommended for children?

The [COVID-19 guidelines](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf) for schools provide a safe setting for both staff and students. Therefore, masks are not generally recommended nor necessary. However, some staff and older children may choose to wear non-medical masks. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-guidance-k-12-schools.pdf>)

For young children, masks are not recommended. Masks can be irritating and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes. If an older child wants to wear a mask, [show them how to do so safely and properly](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf).

Remind children that other children and adults have reasons for wearing or not wearing masks, so it is important to be kind and respectful to others. (http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Professionals-Site/Documents/COVID19_SurgicalMaskPoster.pdf)

School staff should monitor and address any discrimination or bullying associated with mask wearing, whether it is experienced by those who do or do not wear masks.

Why do staff members not need to wear masks?

Non-medical masks are recommended only when a person is in an uncontrolled environment in the public and cannot maintain 2 metres of physical space from others (e.g. when they are on public transit).

Schools are implementing environmental, administrative and personal infection prevention and control measures to create a controlled environment and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Therefore, use of non-medical masks in this setting is not necessary.

Managing students with complex behaviours, on a delegated care plan or experiencing a health emergency may require staff to be in close physical proximity with the student. No additional personal protective equipment are needed unless advised by public health or workplace policies.

Wearing a mask in a school setting is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.

Cleaning

How often should surfaces be cleaned?

Clean and disinfect high touch surfaces twice daily. This includes doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, water fountains, tables, desks, chairs, keyboards and toys. General cleaning and disinfecting should happen at least once per day. Clean toys in the classroom daily with soap and water and then disinfect with a store-bought product or bleach solution. [Find more information here. \(http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/cleaning-and-disinfecting\)](http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/cleaning-and-disinfecting) If a shared object cannot be disinfected, for example a plush toy, avoid using it for now. Encourage students not to bring any objects from home unless they are necessary (e.g., school supplies, water bottles).

Is it safe to share books and other paper documents?

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 of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

Activities

How can physical activity be done safely?

Sports, exercise and other lessons should be outdoors when possible. Group sports activities should be organized in a thoughtful way, taking into consideration physical distancing. Avoid close contact sports for now. Hand hygiene is encouraged before and after play.

Can students share sports equipment?

Yes, students can share sports equipment. However, students should wash their hands before and after play.

Is it okay to sing in groups?

Singing in groups can be a safe activity if people are able to stand 2 metres apart. Other hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette principles should be practiced.

Mental Health

How can staff support the mental health of students?

COVID-19 affects more than our physical well-being. With so much happening, it's normal to feel worried and overwhelmed. Mental wellness, in particular stress, also impacts our physical well-being and our behaviours which can increase our risk of getting sick. It's important to focus on your own, as well as student and staff, mental well-being. Erase is a Government of BC resource focused on building safe and caring school communities. [Visit their website](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/mental-health) for a list of mental health resources for parents and caregivers, students and staff. (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/mental-health>)

Shared Environment

Can staff share the use of microwaves, refrigerators, photocopiers, coffee pots, etc.?

Yes, staff can share appliances and other objects. Treat things like microwaves as high touch surfaces. Disinfect them at least twice per day. Always practice hand hygiene before and after handling shared objects.

Do we need to increase ventilation in the schools?

There is no need for enhanced ventilation in public buildings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. There is no concern around use of air conditioning and fans. Opening windows for fresh air is encouraged. Consider operating HVAC systems throughout the day and night to keep the air moving. Ensure the systems are maintained for optimal normal function.