

---

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2021EDUC0017-000371  
March 2, 2021

Ministry of Education

### **K-12 schools supported by regional COVID-19 rapid response teams**

VICTORIA – Six regional COVID-19 rapid response teams are now in place to support K-12 schools and school districts with safety plans and exposure assessments.

“Rapid response teams are a critically important addition to the health and safety measures that are keeping schools safe for students and staff,” said Jennifer Whiteside, Minister of Education. “As the pandemic evolves, these teams will help us respond quickly and adapt, where necessary, to ensure best practices are being consistently applied throughout the education sector.”

Rapid response teams have representatives from school and public health staff. The teams will:

- work with school, school district and health authority staff to review significant school exposure events, make recommendations and support schools to enhance their safety plans when needed.
- review school or district COVID-19 safety plans and related policies;
- support schools with their implementation and safety plans, as well as communications to students, staff and families; and
- conduct school safety assessments.

The Province is investing \$900,000 in federal funding to support one team for each health authority and one dedicated to support independent schools, including hiring or redeploying health and safety staff.

Lead school districts include:

- Surrey for the Fraser Health region;
- Nanaimo-Ladysmith for the Island Health region;
- Central Okanagan for the Interior Health region;
- Peace River North for the Northern Health region; and
- Vancouver for the Vancouver Coastal Health region.

In Fraser Health, there is also an existing COVID-19 Intake Hub working closely with school districts in the region to respond to exposures. To date, Surrey has already worked with Fraser Health to complete environmental assessments of three schools with exposure events, and those assessments have been shared with all schools in the district.

To support B.C.’s COVID-19 response for K-12 education, \$288 million in provincial and federal one-timing funding has been allocated to schools and districts, including \$3.5 million to manage COVID-19 exposures in schools.

**Learn More:**

Families and students can find up-to-date information about K-12 schools online:

<https://www.gov.bc.ca/safeschools>

**Contact:**

Ministry of Education  
Government Communications and Public  
Engagement  
250 356-5963

---

Connect with the Province of B.C. at: [news.gov.bc.ca/connect](https://news.gov.bc.ca/connect)