



COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN



SAFETY - OUR PRIORITY

During the 2023-24 school year, we will continue to build on our experiences and the advice of public health experts to determine communicable disease prevention plans. Our shared experience highlights the need to continue to be flexible and responsive to changes in transmission trends, as well as provides the opportunity to incorporate our learnings into approaches for sustainable communicable disease prevention moving forward. COVID-19 will continue to circulate in our population, and as long as cases occur within our communities, students and staff members will continue to be affected. However, [BCCDC](#) notes that transmission within K-12 school settings accounts for a minority of COVID-19 cases, even amongst students and staff. Moreover, with high immunization rates in BC and treatment options for people at higher risk of serious disease, public health advises that COVID-19 can be managed as are other serious respiratory infections in the community. As such, the guidance in this document supports reducing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19 and will be modified as needed. [BCCDC](#) is the primary source of information about COVID-19 in BC.

All members of our School District No. 22 (SD22) community have a shared responsibility for protecting themselves and others from the spread of COVID-19, or any other communicable disease. This Communicable Disease Plan (CDP) is part of SD22's commitment to promote the health and safety of all employees, students, and visitors by providing information that can be used to prevent the contraction and spread of communicable diseases, and to guide appropriate responses to any communicable disease outbreak. A combination of preventative measures will be used to minimize employee, student, and visitor exposure to communicable diseases. All members of the SD22 community are expected to follow this plan in conjunction with the [Provincial COVID-19 Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#). All employees are expected to read, know, and organize their work in accordance with these guidelines, and to review updates when temporary additional measures are in place.



RECOVERY

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted, and continues to impact students, staff and families in many ways, with some longer-term impacts of the pandemic yet to be realized. Communicable disease prevention measures will continue to be aligned with public health guidance to support student and staff wellness. The following principles will continue to guide the K-12 sector throughout the 2023-24 school year:

- Using an inclusive and trauma-informed lens, with a focus on mental health and wellness.
- Focusing supports to address unique student and staff needs, recognizing the pandemic has impacted individuals and communities differently.
- Consulting and working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to address the unique educational and learning needs of their communities.
- Engaging and collaborating with parents/caregivers, staff, unions and community partners to develop local solutions when needed.

As required by [WorkSafeBC](#), schools must ensure the health of their workers by ensuring that steps are taken to reduce the risk to workers from communicable diseases. The Provincial Health Officer or local Medical Health Officers may issue temporary provincial, regional or local recommendations or orders of additional prevention measures during times of increased communicable disease risk.



SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Schools can be supportive environments by:

- Having staff model personal practices & assist younger students as needed;
- Sharing reliable information, including from the BCCDC, Office of the PHO, and local health authorities to school communities;
- Promoting personal practices in the school (e.g., posters); and
- Ensuring individual choices for personal practices (e.g., choosing to wear a mask or face covering) are supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

Public Health & Environmental Practices

VACCINATIONS



BCCDC Guidance: Vaccines are important tools to protect against serious outcomes of many communicable diseases, such as COVID-19 and influenza. Students and staff are encouraged to ensure they are up to date on all recommended vaccines for communicable diseases. Schools are encouraged to share evidence-based information and promote opportunities to be vaccinated in partnership with public health and the local medical health officer. For administrators and staff, more information on vaccination and communicable disease prevention in the workplace is available in the Work Safe B.C. website. Evidence-based immunization information and tools for B.C. Residents are available from BCCDC and ImmunizeBC websites.

The Support Services for Schools Order and the Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools (p.12-13) require boards of education and participating independent school authorities to provide a designated space in each school for public health nurses or other qualified health personnel to carry out their duties (including immunizations).

HEALTH AND SAFETY

School boards must follow WorkSafeBC communicable disease prevention guidance and must provide communication, training and orientation to ensure the health and safety of their workers. WorkSafeBC communicable disease prevention guidance is aligned with the guidance provided by BCCDC.

SD22 site-based Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) committees and staff review ongoing prevention measures. OH&S committees should review plans regularly throughout the year, and identify if there are any gaps in implementation. Measures should be communicated to the school community (e.g., newsletters, posters, etc.) to support awareness and compliance.

Emergency and evacuation planning, and drills should consider the CDP. In the event of an actual emergency, communicable disease prevention measures can be suspended to ensure for a timely, efficient, and safe response.



CLEANING AND DISINFECTION



BCCDC Guidance: Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty. As part of sustainable communicable disease management, schools are encouraged to maintain and incorporate enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, whenever feasible.

General Cleaning:

- Regular practices should include general cleaning of the premises.

Products & Procedures:

- For **cleaning**, use water and detergent (e.g., liquid dishwashing soap), or common, commercially available products, along with good cleaning practices. For hard-to-reach areas, use a brush and rinse thoroughly prior to disinfecting.
- For **disinfection**, use common, commercially available disinfectants. Health Canada provides information about products with evidence for use against specific communicable diseases that may be useful in selecting products.
- Follow these procedures when cleaning and disinfecting:
 - Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects.
 - Items and surfaces that a person has placed in their mouths or that have been in contact with bodily fluids should be cleaned as soon as possible and between uses by different people.
 - A dishwasher can be used to clean and sanitize dishwasher-safe items if the sanitize setting is used with adequately hot water.
 - Individuals responsible for cleaning and disinfecting are expected to review SD22 Safe Work Procedures.

Frequently Touched Surfaces:

- Cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces should occur at least once in a 24-hour period and when visibly dirty.
- Frequently touched surfaces are items touched by larger numbers of students and staff. They can include doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains and toilet handles, as well as shared equipment (e.g., computer keyboards, PE/sports and music equipment), appliances (e.g., microwaves) and service counters (e.g., library circulation desk), and may change from day to day based on utilization.
- 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. Carpets and rugs (e.g., in Kindergarten and StrongStart classes) can also be used.

Cleaning and disinfection activities should focus on spaces that have been utilized by staff or students.

Environmental Practices



CLEANING AND DISINFECTION CONTINUED...

Cleaning & Disinfecting Bodily Fluids:

- Follow these procedures, in conjunction with school/district policies, when cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine):
 - Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.
 - Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
 - Follow regular health and safety procedures and regularly used PPE (e.g., gloves, protective or woven sleeves) for blood and bodily fluids (e.g., toileting, spitting, biting).



GENERAL VENTILATION AND AIR CIRCULATION

BCCDC Guidance: Continue to ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort of workers ([Part 4 of the OHS Regulation](#)), and that they are working properly.

The district regularly maintains HVAC systems for proper operation and considers guidance for school ventilation systems offered by [ASHRAE](#). This includes considering:

- upgrading filters to finer grain filters if possible.
- increasing air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system.
- managing air distribution through building automation control systems.

In the event a school/worksite's ventilation system is temporarily compromised (e.g. partial power outage, ventilation breakdown), the Director of Facilities will be contacted and actions will be taken to ensure the safety of the site.

When using air conditioners and fans in ventilated spaces, air should be moved from high places to lower places instead of blowing air directly from one person's breathing zone to another's. Avoid horizontal cross breezes. Natural ventilation (operable windows, etc.) and portable HEPA filter units can be considered in regularly occupied classrooms that do not have mechanical ventilation systems. Use of portable air conditioners and fans in unventilated spaces with doors and windows closed should be avoided, except when necessary (e.g., during high or excessive heat events).

HAND HYGIENE

BCCDC Guidance: Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water or using an effective hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene and schools should facilitate regular opportunities for students and staff to wash their hands. To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the BCCDC's [hand hygiene poster](#).

Schools should:

- Facilitate regular opportunities for hand hygiene:
 - This can include using portable hand-washing sites and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - Schools should use commercial hand sanitizer products that have met Health Canada's requirements and are authorized for sale in Canada
- Ensure hand hygiene supplies are always well stocked including soap, paper towels (or air drier) and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizer may not be effective at eliminating microbes. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty. If it is not available, use an alcohol-based hand wipe followed by alcohol-based hand rub.



RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

BCCDC Guidance: Parents and staff can teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices among students, including:

- Coughing or sneezing into their elbow or a tissue;
- Throwing away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene;
- Refraining from touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands; and
- Refraining from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, or vaping devices.

Administrative Practices



HEALTH AWARENESS

BCCDC Guidance: School administrators should ensure that staff, other adults entering the school, parents, caregivers, and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. School administrators can support this practice by communicating the importance of not attending school if sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. A health check means a person regularly checking to ensure they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school to prevent spread of communicable diseases within school settings. Schools do not need to monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness.

School administrators should ensure that everyone entering a school is aware and routinely reminded of their responsibility to practice health awareness, including that they should not come to school if they are sick. This can be supported through communications (e.g., emails/letters to parents and staff), orientation activities (e.g., meetings, videos) and other reminders (e.g., signage on doors).

ILLNESS PRACTICES/WHAT TO DO WHEN SICK

Staff, students, or other persons in the school setting who are exhibiting symptoms of illness, such as respiratory illness, should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities or otherwise advised by a healthcare provider. Those experiencing certain illnesses, such as gastrointestinal illness caused by norovirus, may be advised to stay home for longer.

Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough to return to regular activities. If you are unsure or concerned about your symptoms, connect with your health care provider or call 8-1-1.

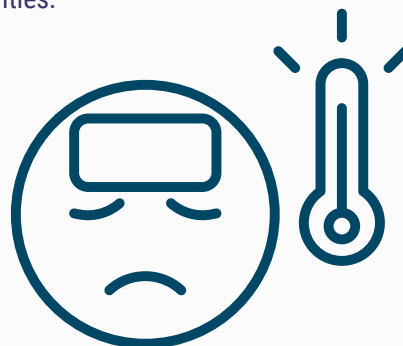
Schools should not require a health care provider note (e.g., a doctor's note) to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.

WHAT TO DO WHEN SICK AT SCHOOL/WORK

BCCDC guidance: If a person develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they should be supported to go home until their symptoms have improved or otherwise advised by a healthcare provider. Appropriate infection control precautions should be taken while the person is preparing to leave the school premises, including use of appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. They may use a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms.

School administrators should also establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work.

- Continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one (for both the person who is sick and for those who may be assisting them).
- Make arrangements for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible (e.g., contact student's parent/caregiver for pick-up).
- Schools should have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably for pick-up and are separated from others. (*Younger children must be supervised when separated. Supervising staff can wear a non-medical mask, and should 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 person's bodily fluids may have been in contact with while they were ill (e.g., their desk) 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.
- Request that the individual stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.



Administrative Practices

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES

BCCDC Guidance: Staff and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct or delegated care, or with disabilities and diverse abilities who are in close proximity to a child should follow routine infection control practices and care plans for the child, if applicable.

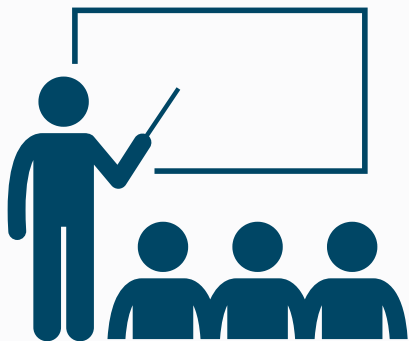
Schools should implement communicable disease prevention measures that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities.

In-class instruction may not be suitable for some children (or families) with a severe immune compromise or medical complexity, which should be determined on a case-by-case basis with a medical care provider. Schools should follow regular practices for those needing alternative learning arrangements due to immune compromise or medical complexity to ensure access to learning and supports.

Those providing health services that require being in close proximity to a student should follow the student's individual care plan (if one is in place) and their standard risk assessment methods to determine what PPE is needed for communicable disease prevention (e.g., gloves for toileting). Schools should continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.

SPACE ARRANGEMENT

BCCDC Guidance: In learning environments, schools can use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.



BUSES



BCCDC Guidance: For school buses, schools should implement the prevention measures included in the BCCDC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools, where applicable.

Buses used for transporting students should have communicable disease prevention measures in place in line with those in place in the school, and/or as applicable.

VISITOR ACCESS/COMMUNITY USE

BCCDC guidance: Schools can follow normal practices for welcoming visitors and the community use of schools. Visitors, including community groups using the school, should follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this document.

GATHERINGS & EVENTS

School extracurricular and social gatherings and events (including those occurring within and between schools), regardless of location, can occur in line with the BCCDC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K12 Schools. School gatherings and events should have communicable disease prevention measures in place in line with those in place in the school.

CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Schools should implement communicable disease prevention practices (e.g., cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to the activity.

FIELD TRIPS/ TRADES IN TRAINING/ WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

Students enrolled in individual training/work experience programs should follow the communicable disease prevention plan required by the workplace/facility or the field trip venue. Classes (or other similar groupings of students) participating in training/work experience programs or field trips should follow the more stringent measures (if applicable) between the school and the workplace/facility/field trip destination's communicable disease prevention plans.

Personal Practices & Admin Protocols

HEALTH AWARENESS

Everyone at school should practice health awareness (including staying home when sick), hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.



MASKS & FACE COVERINGS

BCCDC Guidance: The decision to wear a mask beyond when it is recommended by public health is a personal one, based on individual preference. Some students and staff may choose to continue to wear a non-medical mask or face covering throughout the day or for certain activities. The choice of staff and students to choose whether they practice additional personal prevention measures should be respected. Information on non-medical masks is available from the [BCCDC](#).

Masks are one layer of protection used to prevent the spread of communicable disease. To be most effective, wearing a mask should be combined with other important protective measures such as getting vaccinated, staying home when sick, and regularly practicing hand hygiene. Masks are most effective when fitted, worn and handled correctly.

Schools can support those who choose to wear a mask, including:

- Promoting a supportive school environment for mask wearing through mask-specific messaging, including at assemblies, in announcements, signs, and written communications. Include that some people wear masks to reduce risk of communicable disease and it is important to be respectful of other's choices. Include evidence-based, trusted information on masks from BCCDC.
- Continue school-wide efforts to create safe and inclusive learning environments free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. Set, communicate and consistently reinforce clear expectations that bullying and disrespectful behaviour and conduct related to personal mask use is unacceptable. Address behaviour in line with protocols and practices (e.g. student code of conduct).



PERSONAL SPACE

Staff and students should be encouraged to respect others personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person).

FOOD SAFETY

BCCDC Guidance: Schools that provide food services under the [Food Premises Regulation](#) should adhere to the required measures (e.g. a FOODSAFE trained staff member a food safety plan, etc.). For special events or sites requiring food permits, please consult your local health authority environmental health officer. Staff, students, or other persons in the school setting should follow routine food safety practices, including diligent hand hygiene. More information may be found on the [BCCDC Food Safety webpage](#).

Staff and students should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g., food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices). Shared-use items that touch the mouth should be cleaned and disinfected between uses by different individuals (e.g., water bottles, instrument mouth pieces).



ADMINISTRATOR PROTOCOLS

BCCDC Guidance: Most communicable diseases experienced by students and staff within school settings may be managed by the individual/family and through routine preventative measures, such as staying home from school until well enough to participate in regular activities. Resources are available to support management of routine communicable diseases, including [HealthLink BC](#), the BCCDC Guide to [Common Childhood Diseases](#), the [Sneezes and Diseases website](#), and other school health resources hosted on health authority webpages ([Interior Health](#)).

Public health works closely with education partners to support the health and wellbeing of students and staff in school settings. Public health may become directly involved if certain reportable diseases, such as measles, are identified where there are effective interventions available to prevent further spread and protect against severe disease. Additional time-limited public health measures may also be implemented at the discretion of the Medical Health Officer or the Provincial Health Officer in response to broader risk of communicable disease transmission in the community.

School or district administrators can contact public health if they have concerns about communicable disease transmission within the school setting and require additional support.

Safe & Supportive Environments

COMMUNICATIONS AND PROTECTING PERSONAL PRIVACY

Medical Health Officers play the lead role in determining if, when and how to communicate information regarding increased communicable disease activity within a school. 14 Schools are encouraged to routinely communicate to their school community the need to practice health awareness, and to stay home when sick. This should include following public health measures, if in place. To protect personal privacy and to support accuracy, schools should exercise caution in providing communicable disease notifications beyond when they are recommended by public health.



FUNCTIONAL CLOSURES

A functional closure of a school is the temporary closure of a school determined by a school district or independent school authority due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial to ensure the health and safety of students. This would likely be due to a high number of staff or certain employees away who are required for a school to function, and the inability to temporarily replace them. School districts (or independent schools) should notify their Medical Health Officer and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (erase@gov.bc.ca) when they are considering or implementing a functional closure.

PUBLIC HEALTH CLOSURE

A public health closure is the temporary closing of a school ordered by a Medical Health Officer when they determine it is necessary to prevent the excessive transmission of a communicable disease.

TRAVELLING OUTSIDE OF CANADA



The federal government continues to outline requirements for people travelling internationally. Visit the [Government of Canada website](#) for a checklist of requirements and exemptions prior to planning any travel. Educate yourself on whether quarantine periods are required for yourself or your family members.

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

This district plan was developed in alignment with the Ministry of Education and Child Care in collaboration with the BC Centre for Disease Control, Indigenous rightsholders and education partners – including teachers, parents, and school leaders. We will continue to update the plan, and will inform our SD22 community as needed. The most current information will be available on the [SD22 website](#).

QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR SUGGESTIONS



Students, parents, and guardians should direct any questions, concerns, or suggestions to their teachers and/or school administration. Staff are encouraged to speak to their supervisor(s) for further information, or if they have questions, concerns, or suggestions.

RESOURCES, LINKS, & SUPPORTS FOR STAFF

- [BC Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#)
- [SD22 Safety Website - training, safe procedures, forms, manuals](#)
- [SD22 Employee Family Assistance Program](#)
- [BCTF Health & Wellness Program](#)
- [CUPE Joint Early Intervention Services \(JEIS\) Program - contact CUPE for further information](#)
- [BC Public School Employers' Association](#)
- [First Nations Health Authority](#)
- [Medical Health Officer Contact Information\(general inquiries\): Interior Health T: \(250\) 469-7070 \(ext. 12791\)](#)
- [Special Educational Services: A Manual of Policy, Practices and Guidelines](#)
- [Resources for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities and diverse abilities](#)
- [Provincial Outreach Programs are available to support boards/authorities through professional learning, resources, consultation and training during recovery](#)
- [Indigenous Education in British Columbia](#)
- [Indigenous Education Teaching Tools and Resources](#)
- [BC Tripartite Education Agreement \(BCTEA\)](#)
- [Métis Nation BC Chartered Communities](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Communicable disease prevention \(G-P2-21\)](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Communicable disease prevention: A guide for non-healthcare employers](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Communicable disease prevention webpage](#)
- [Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal - webinar](#)
- [Linda O'Neill – Trauma Informed in the Classroom](#)
- [MCFD: Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#)
- [Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#)