



COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines  
for K-12 Settings



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## INTRODUCTION

- All schools are to adhere to the standards, guidelines and protocols from the BC Centre for Disease Control and WorkSafeBC.
- The communicable disease guidelines outlined in this document have been developed to complement guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control (Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools) and WorkSafeBC.
- All boards of education and independent school authorities are required to have communicable disease plans in place that adhere to the guidelines outlined in The Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings .
  - In the case of any variance between the guidelines in The Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings , this document and the guidance in the BCCDC's Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools



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important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure the fire code is adhered to.

### Staff Only Spaces

Experience to date underscores the importance of COVID-19 prevention among adults, as well as students, in the school setting. The guidelines in this document should be used to determine what measures should be in place within staff-only spaces within a school (e.g. break rooms, school office). WorkSafeBC guidance for workplaces should be used to determine what measures should be in place for non-school spaces operated by a school

Examinations or assessments are not considered school gatherings, however they must still be







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.

### Cleaning And 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 procedure and regularly used PPE (e.g., gloves, Kevlar sleeves) for blood and bodily fluids (e.g. toileting, spitting, biting).

### Visitor Access

- 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 to the website.

- Parents/caregivers and other visitors should respect others' personal space while on school grounds, including outside.

### Community Use

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

- Use must occur in line with those

- Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work to be sent home as soon as possible. Refer to the COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff for more information.
  - 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 they don't have one (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 person's 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 is not required in these circumstances.

## 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.

Additional information on self-isolation requirements and support is available from BCCDC.

### 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 other adults can refer to 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 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.













- Schools must ensure that volunteers providing supervision are trained in and strictly

- The B.C. Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in B.C have also developed Guidance for Music Classes in BC During COVID-19. 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.

### Physical And Health Education (Phe)/Outdoor Programs

- 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-inin



## 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:
  - 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.
    - Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity sport activities (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these activities is left to students' personal choice. Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity sport activities outdoors whenever possible.
    - 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

- Diligent student self-assessment of health when transitioning between the secondary school and post-secondary institution.
- Given the unique structure of Trades Training Programs and oversight by the Industry Training Authority (ITA), new information on assessments and programming for these courses is available online.
  - Information for workers is available on the WorkSafeBC Communicable Disease Prevention webpage, including COVID-19 and communicable disease information for workers.

### Theatre, Film, And Dance Programs

- Spread out students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.
- K-12 staff are required to wear masks during these programs when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present.
- Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear masks during these programs when they are indoors and a barrier is not present, except during high-intensity physical activity.
- Shared equipment such as set pieces, props, cameras etc. should be cleaned and disinfected as per cleaning and disinfecting guidelines and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after using frequently touched pieces of equipment.
- The Association of BC Drama Educators (ABCDE) is currently developing additional guidelines for teaching drama during COVID-19. Staff should refer to the ABCDE website for more 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.

# Communicable Disease Plan Orientation Checklist

This checklist is intended to support school districts and independent school authorities in planning



- These guidelines are based on the public health guidance developed by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control.

Discuss the importance of implementing communicable disease prevention measures that promote equity and inclusion, and outline how these principles are reflected in the school/district plan

Review the provincial K-12 guidelines and school/district plan, and describe what a school day will look like with the new guidelines (e.g. interactions between peers and staff, traffic flow throughout the school, transition time, recess/lunch, etc.)

Outline how prevention and exposure control measures are being implemented in schools

- If appropriate, consider involving school staff representatives in the delivery of information pertaining to specific area of expertise

Ensure orientation includes specific communicable disease protocols for itinerant staff and specialists (e.g., teachers teaching on call, counsellors, education assistants, teacher candidates)

Include itinerant staff as well as on call and auxiliary staff in orientation sessions

Implement strategies to ensure staff who work at multiple sites are made aware of communicable disease protocols in each of the sites (e.g., provide a booklet/a video on communicable disease plans for different schools)