



# COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

<b>General Information .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Symptoms of COVID-19 .....	4
Transmission / How it Spreads .....	4
<b>Implementation of Protocols to Reduce the Risks .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures .....	5
<b>Public Health Measures .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Environmental Measures .....</b>	<b>7</b>
General Environmental Measures.....	7
Ventilation and Air Circulation.....	8
Cleaning and Disinfection.....	8
<b>Administrative Measures .....</b>	<b>10</b>
General Administrative Measures.....	10
Illness & Self Assessment .....	11
Student Transportation on Buses .....	12
Food Services .....	13
Visitor Access / Community Use .....	13
Personal Items .....	13
Training and Communication .....	14
Hand Hygiene.....	15
Respiratory Etiquette.....	15
Curriculum Programs and Activities.....	16
<b>Personal Measures.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Non Medical Masks.....</b>	<b>19</b>

# General Information

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A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable disease that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

There are many sources of information about communicable disease. For Boards of Education in British Columbia, we rely on the information and guidance of the following organizations and government departments:

**The Office of the Provincial Health Officer**

**The BC Ministry of Education**

**The BC Ministry of Health**

**The BC Centre for Disease Control WorkSafeBC**

Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in our workplace. It also involves implementing additional measures when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk.

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a certain workplace.

Human Resources will monitor and review communicable disease-related information issued by our regional medical health officer and/or the Provincial Health Officer.

We have taken the following steps in developing a Communicable Disease Prevention Plan (the “Plan”):

- ~ Assess the tasks carried out in the workplace and identify where the risk of transmission may arise while performing those tasks.
- ~ Put controls in place to eliminate or minimize the risk of transmission arising in the workplace.
- ~ Review and revise the Plan in consultation with frontline workers, supervisors, and joint health and safety committees or worker representatives.
- ~ Communicate the Plan to everyone in the workplace.
- ~ Refresh Plan knowledge following significant school breaks.
- ~ Train workers and supervisors to know their responsibilities and rights under the Plan.
- ~ Post the Plan on the district website and on every school website.
- ~ Update and re-post the Plan as experience, new information, and conditions indicate changes are needed.

## Symptoms of COVID-19

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COVID-19 is the primary concern. To assist people in understanding what to do if they have symptoms, there is an App and an [online self-assessment tool](#). The BC CDC has also created a document called "[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)".

## Transmission / How it Spreads

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Respiratory infections such as influenza (flu) and COVID-19 are mainly spread by liquid droplets that come out of the mouth and nose when a person with the virus breathes, coughs, sneezes, talks, or sings. Droplets come in a wide range of sizes, from smaller than the width of a hair to larger than a grain of sand. A few large droplets or many small droplets can contain enough virus to infect another person.

Diseases can spread if droplets with the virus enter the body through the eyes, nose or throat.

The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. The BC Centre for Disease Control is the best source for information about communicable disease.

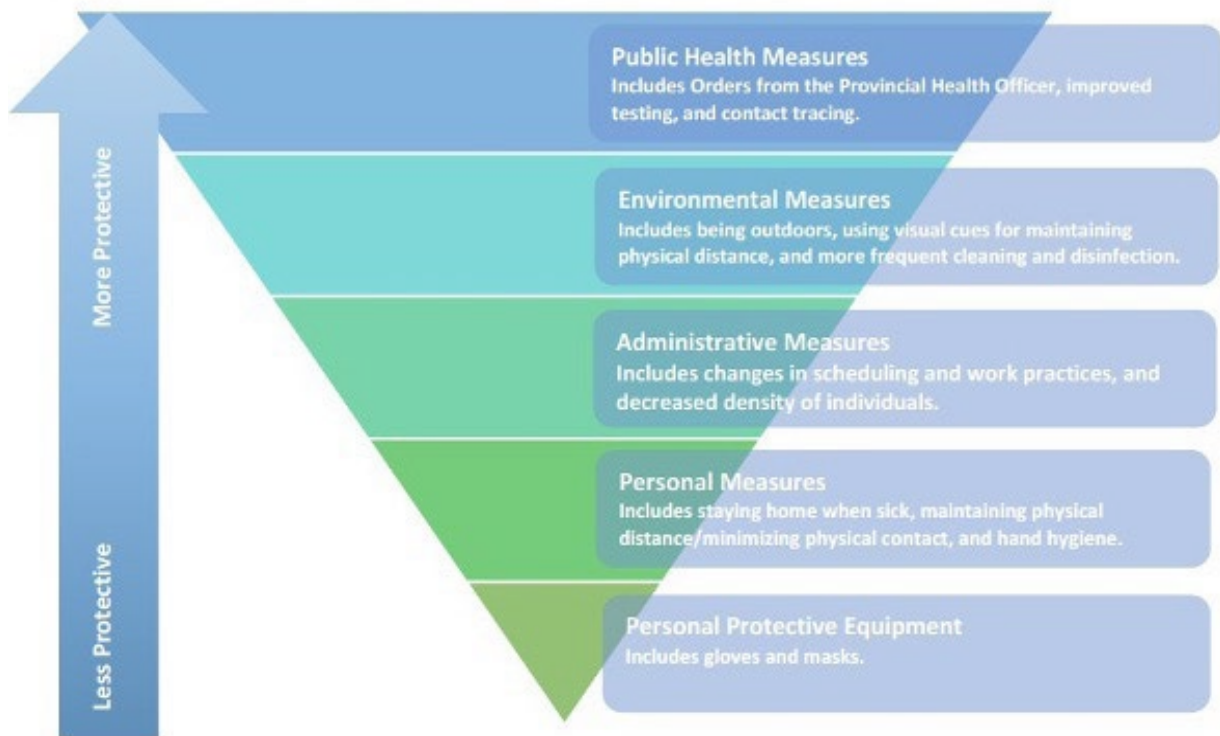
## Implementation of Protocols to Reduce the Risks

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We used the following resources to guide our development and implementation of protocols to reduce the risks in the workplace:

- ~ WorkSafeBC guides and information related to K-12 school and office settings.
- ~ Reviewed risks and solutions with workers, supervisors, and joint health and safety committees
- ~ Reviewed all orders, guidance, and notices issued by the Provincial Health Officer and regional medical health officer relevant to K-12 education
- ~ COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff
- ~ K-12 Education Recovery Plan
- ~ Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools developed by the BC Centre for Disease Control
- ~ Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the BC Centre for Disease Control, Indigenous rights holders and education partners.
- ~ Relevant orders or guidelines issued under the Emergency Program Act

## Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease



To reduce the risk of the virus spreading, we implemented protocols to protect against identified risks. Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Whenever possible, we use the protocol that offers the highest level of protection. We consider controls from additional levels if the first level is not practicable or does not completely control the risk. We incorporate controls from various levels to address the risk at the workplace.

We specifically follow the Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease. Infection and exposure control measures help create safe environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases. 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. This is because schools include a consistent grouping of people: there are robust illness policies for sick students and staff and there is an ability to implement effective personal practices that are followed by most people most of the time.

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures to reduce the transmission of communicable disease 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 is substantially reduced.

# Public Health Measures

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Public Health measures are actions taken across society at the population level to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Provincial restrictions are in place to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Some restrictions are made by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) under the Public Health Act and others are made under the Emergency Program Act (EPA). Most orders can be enforced by police and compliance and enforcement officials.

We will abide by all orders made by the Provincial Health Officer and/or Regional Medical Health Officer as well as any orders made under the Emergency Program Act. We expect all employees to abide by all public health orders.

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools. Everyone eligible is strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated.

Regional Medical Health Officers may order local health and safety measures beyond the provincial guidance at their own discretion based on local epidemiology.

Public health teams actively monitor and trace cases of COVID-19 in schools. We will cooperate with, maintain and provide necessary information to our regional health authority and medical health officer. We acknowledge that public health officials control the definition and distribution of medical information.

Specifically:

- ~ We are complying with all guidelines contained in the BC Centre for Disease Control “Public Health Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings” as amended from time to time.
- ~ We are complying with the “Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings” as amended from time to time.
- ~ We are complying with the standards, guidelines and protocols from WorkSafeBC as amended from time to time.
- ~ We are complying with the K-12 Recovery Plan and the COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff.
- ~ We are using the “Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease” which describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of communicable disease in schools.
- ~ We are implementing a combination of measures at each level to reduce the risk of transmission.

# Environmental Measures

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Environmental measures are changes to the physical environment that reduce the risk of exposure. These include:

- ~ Ventilation and air exchange
- ~ Cleaning & disinfection
- ~ Physical barriers
- ~ Being in outdoor spaces

## General Environmental Measures

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- ~ Schools will consider moving activities outdoors when possible.
- ~ People will be spread out as much as possible. Desks and tables will be arranged to maximize space between students.
- ~ Visual cues for personal physical space and directing traffic flow will be established where necessary.
- ~ Visual reminders for personal space, hygiene, daily health checks and respiratory etiquette will be prevalent.
- ~ Staff only spaces will utilize signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding.
- ~ Physical barriers may be installed in places where physical distancing cannot regularly be practiced and a person is interacting with numerous individuals.

Physical barriers will be constructed and installed at school reception areas and other spaces where necessary.

## Ventilation and Air Circulation

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- ~ We will ensure that heating, ventilation and air condition (HVAC) systems are designed, operated and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers per Part 4 of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation.
- ~ Should an HVAC breakdown occur (including a temporary power outage), Facilities will inspect the premises and advise regarding alternate air circulation measures.
- ~ Schools with recycled/recirculated air systems will upgrade their current filters to a minimum MERV 13 filter or higher.
- ~ Schools with fresh air intake systems will increase their average air exchanges.
- ~ Schools will open windows when possible.
- ~ Classrooms without an HVAC system will have an air purifier unit
- ~ We will avoid horizontal cross breezes. 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.
- ~ Communicable Disease measures will be balanced against the risk of excessive heat events and air quality concerns.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

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- ~ General cleaning and disinfection of all school premises will be in accordance with the BCCDC's "Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings" document.
- ~ Every custodian will have access to a copy of the BCCDC "Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings" document.
- ~ Schools will use commercial disinfectant products listed on Health Canada's hard surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19).
- ~ There will be general cleaning and disinfecting of the premises at least once every 24 hours.
- ~ Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces will occur at least once every 24 hours.
- ~ Visibly dirty surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected.
- ~ Garbage containers will be emptied daily.



## Cleaning and Disinfection Continued

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- ~ Disposable gloves will be worn when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine). Hands will be washed before and after wearing gloves.
- ~ Paper towels and garbage containers will be provided in all washrooms.
- ~ There will be no restrictions on the use of water fountains.
- ~ Re-filling water stations may be used. Students and staff will be encouraged to bring an individual water bottle to school each day for their personal use.
- ~ Items and surfaces that children have 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 children
- ~ Dishwasher safe items will be cleaned and disinfected in a dishwasher with a hot rinse cycle
- ~ When doing laundry in a school setting, laundry should be placed in a laundry basket with a plastic liner; dirty items should not be shaken; wash will be performed with regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90 degrees Celsius).
- ~ 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 and items with plastic covers 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.

# Administrative Measures

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Administrative measures are measures enabled through the implementation of policies, procedures, training and education that reduce the risk of exposure. These include:

- » Respecting personal physical space.
- » Spreading out and using all available space.
- » Students, staff and visitors must not enter the school if they are sick
- » Modified schedules.
- » Health and wellness procedures including transportation; food services; staff visitor access; training & communication; hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

## General Administrative Measures

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- ~ Students, staff, visitors and caregivers will be reminded to conduct daily health checks prior to entering school buildings.
- ~ Students and employees will be encouraged and reminded not to touch their face.
- ~ Pickup and drop off times will be staggered where necessary.
- ~ Recess, lunch and class transition times will be staggered where necessary.
- ~ Students will be directed to enter/exit school buildings at specific locations.
- ~ Students will be taken outside for instruction more frequently.
- ~ Flow of people in common areas will be managed.
- ~ Appropriate hand hygiene practices will be enforced.
- ~ School extracurricular and social gatherings and events will occur in line with relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders.
- ~ Schools will continue to practice various emergency procedures, including six fire evacuation drills required annually by the BC Fire Code.

## Illness & Self-Assessment Policies

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We will remind parents and caregivers to assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.

We will encourage the use of the provincial K-12 Health Check App; review the BC CDC “when to get tested for COVID-19” document; use the BC CDC online Self-Assessment Tool or call 811 if uncertain about whether you should attend school.

If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.

Procedures will be established for students and staff who become sick while at school.

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

We will follow the protocols for managing illness and exposures at school contained in the COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff document.

## Staff Spaces

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- ~ Staff only spaces will use visual cues and signage to eliminate congestion and promote traffic flow in common spaces.
- ~ Staff will spread out in available space and will avoid crowding.
- ~ Staff only gatherings should occur in line with relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders.
- ~ Virtual meetings may be considered where appropriate.
- ~ Schools will have non-medical masks and face shields available for staff and visitors.

## Space Arrangement

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- ~ Students, staff and visitors will be reminded about respecting others personal space.
- ~ Learning cohorts are no longer recommended.
- ~ Schools will return to classroom and learning environments configurations that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches

## Space Arrangement Continued

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- ~ Traffic flow visual aids will be posted to avoid congestion and crowding.
- ~ Occupancy limits will be respected in those spaces with posted restrictions (e.g., gyms).
- ~ We will use all available space.
- ~ People will have enough room to carry out the intended activity without involuntary physical contact with another person.

## Student Transportation

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### BUSES:

- ~ Students should clean their hands before and after taking the bus
- ~ Passengers will be spread out if empty seats are available.
- ~ Regular seating and onloading/offloading practices will resume.
- ~ Bus drivers are required to wear non-medical masks, except while driving
- ~ Windows will be open when weather permits.
- ~ Staff and students in Grades 4-12 are required to wear non-medical masks during school bus travel.
- ~ Masks should be put on before loading.
- ~ We will keep up to date passenger lists to share with public health should contact tracing need to occur.

### CARPOOLING:

Schools will share the following guidance with staff and families regarding carpooling arrangements:

- ~ Spread out vehicle occupants as much as possible.
- ~ Travel with the same people whenever possible.
- ~ Set the vehicle's ventilation to bring in fresh air and do not recirculate the air.
- ~ Open windows when weather permits.
- ~ Clean hands before and after trips.
- ~ Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly.
- ~ For school activities, students, staff and other adults must follow the mask requirements. For personal carpooling, people 9 yrs and older are encouraged to wear masks while carpooling.

## Food Services

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- ~ Schools can continue to provide food services, including for sale as long as food regulations are followed.
- ~ School meal programs will follow regular operating practices.
- ~ Schools can continue to accept food donations to support learning and the delivery of meal programs, breakfast clubs and other food initiatives.
- ~ Schools will continue to emphasize that food and beverages should not be shared.

## Visitor Access/Community Use

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- ~ Strategies will be implemented to focus on preventing crowding at pick up and drop off times.
- ~ Parents, caregivers, volunteers and other non-staff adults entering the school will be prioritized to those entering to support activities that are of benefit to student learning and wellbeing.
- ~ Parents, caregivers, volunteers and other non-staff adults are encouraged to make appointments to enter the premises.
- ~ All visitors will confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering the premises.
- ~ All visitors will be made aware of the communicable disease protocols prior to entering the school.
- ~ Schools will keep a sign in/sign out list of the date, names and contact information for any visitors who enter the school. Records will be maintained for 45 days.
- ~ After hours community use of facilities is allowed in alignment with other health and safety measures.
- ~ Where possible, building access will be limited to only those areas required for the purpose of the activity.

## Personal Items

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- ~ Staff and students can bring personal items to school.
- ~ Students can use lockers.
- ~ Staff and students will be encouraged not to share items that come in contact with the mouth.
- ~ Schools will manage flow of students around lockers to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

## Training and Communication

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- ~ We have identified rules and guidelines for how workers should conduct themselves.
- ~ We have clearly communicated these rules and guidelines to workers through a combination of training and signage.
- ~ We will clearly and consistently communicate guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer, Regional Medical Health Officer as needed.
- ~ We will provide early and ongoing health and safety orientation for staff, parents/caregivers and students.
- ~ We will ensure employees, families and the school community are well informed of their responsibilities and resources available.
- ~ All employees will be informed of and trained on the health and safety protocols of the school district and the school site(s).
- ~ All employees will attend health and safety updates as they occur.
- ~ Principals and managers have been trained and will ensure all staff understand health and safety protocols.
- ~ Joint H&S committees will meet regularly to discuss any concerns and to resolve any issues.
- ~ The Joint H&S committees will identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe and will advise on effective systems for responding to those situations.
- ~ We have a plan in place to monitor risks. We will make changes to our policies and procedures as necessary.
- ~ All employees will be advised of communicable disease plans.
- ~ New staff will be advised of and trained on all health and safety protocols and the communicable disease plan.
- ~ Principals and managers will seek feedback from the joint H&S committee about the effectiveness of protocols and procedures.
- ~ Principals and managers will regularly inspect the workplace to ensure adequate safety.
- ~ Records will be kept of training and reports of exposure.
- ~ We have a training plan to ensure everyone is trained in workplace policies and procedures.
- ~ All workers have received information about staying home when sick.
- ~ Workers know who to go to with health and safety concerns.
- ~ When resolving safety issues, we will involve joint health and safety committees or worker health and safety representatives.
- ~ We have a training plan for staff taking on new roles or responsibilities.
- ~ We have a training plan around changes to our business, such as new equipment, processes or products.

## Hand Hygiene

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- ~ We will post the WorkSafeBC and the BC CDC hand washing posters for reference and to promote the importance of regular handwashing.
- ~ We will encourage hand hygiene.
- ~ We will place hand washing stations in various locations including school entrances, hallways and classrooms to encourage appropriate hand hygiene throughout the day.
- ~ Where sinks are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations will be available.
- ~ Employees will assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- ~ We will ensure hand washing supplies are well stocked at all times.
- ~ Additional hand hygiene opportunities will be incorporated into the daily schedule.
- ~ Everyone will be reminded to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- ~ Hand hygiene will be practiced before and after handling shared devices.
- ~ We will follow the guidance of the Ministry of Health and the BC CDC document “When students and staff should practice hand hygiene”.

## Respiratory Etiquette

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- ~ Employees and students will be directed to cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve or a tissue.
- ~ Tissues will be disposed of immediately and hand hygiene performed.
- ~ Employees and students will be directed to refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

## Curriculum, Programs and Activities

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~ Specific guidelines are available in the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings.

~ All guidelines relating to curriculum programs and activities will be followed



# Personal Measures

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Personal measures are actions individuals can take to protect themselves and others. These measures include:

- » Stay home if sick
- » Daily Health Check
- » Hand hygiene
- » Respiratory Etiquette
- » Non-Medical Masks

## Illness & Attendance

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If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.

- ~ We will remind parents and caregivers to assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school
- ~ Procedures will be established for students and staff who become sick while at school
- ~ Students, staff and other adults must stay home if they are required to self-isolate.
- ~ When staff, student or other adults can return to school depends on the type of symptoms experienced and the advice and direction provided by the health authorities.
- ~ We will follow the protocols for managing illness and exposures at school contained in the COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff document.
- ~ Principals will ensure parents and employees are aware of the need to self- assess daily.
- ~ We will encourage the use of the provincial K-12 Health Check App; review the BC CDC “when to get tested for COVID-19” document; use the BC CDC online Self-Assessment Tool or call 811 if uncertain about whether you should attend school
- ~ Students or staff may attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza or COVID-19 like symptoms provided the student/staff is asymptomatic.
- ~ We will follow the Ministry of Health and BC CDC document “What to do if a student or staff member develops symptoms”
- ~ Students and staff who experience seasonal allergies or other COVID-19 like symptoms that are related to an existing condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal.

## Hand Hygiene

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- ~ We will post the WorkSafeBC and the BC CDC hand washing posters for reference and to promote the importance of regular handwashing.
- ~ We will encourage hand hygiene.
- ~ We will place hand washing stations in various locations including school entrances, hallways and classrooms to encourage appropriate hand hygiene throughout the day.
- ~ Where sinks are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer stations will be available.
- ~ We will ensure hand washing supplies are well stocked at all times.
- ~ Additional hand hygiene opportunities will be incorporated into the daily schedule.
- ~ Everyone will be reminded to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- ~ Hand hygiene will be practiced before and after handling shared devices.
- ~ We will follow the guidance of the Ministry of Health and the BC CDC document “When students and staff should practice hand hygiene”.

## Respiratory Etiquette

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- ~ Employees and students will be directed to cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve or a tissue.
- ~ Tissues will be disposed of immediately and hand hygiene performed.
- ~ Employees and students will be directed to refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

# Non-Medical Masks

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- ~ Masks should not be used in place of physical distancing or any other measures.
- ~ Those wearing masks must still respect personal physical space whenever possible. There must be no crowding or congregating of people, even if masks are worn.
- ~ Schools will have non-medical masks available for staff and students, including anyone who becomes sick while at school.
- ~ All staff, visitors and all students in Grades 4-12 must wear a mask indoors at school and on school buses except if:

- » a person cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons
- » a person is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person
- » the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it

the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g., playing a wind instrument, engaging in high-intensity physical activity, etc.)

- ~ a person is eating or drinking
- » a person is behind a barrier; or
- » while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movement is important.

~ There must be no crowding, gathering or congregating of people from different cohorts, even if non-medical masks are worn.

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

- ~ K-3 students are encouraged to wear a mask indoors and on buses but are not required to do so.
- ~ K-3 students' mask use will be based on their personal or family choice and their choices will be respected.

Staff and visitors at non-school sites should wear masks in indoor common/shared spaces if they are not fully vaccinated.