

STAGE 2: RETURN TO SCHOOL

2021

COVID-19 Protocols for School Operations



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SD5 Southeast Kootenay
3/31/2021

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General Information

As information on COVID-19 illness is evolving, up-to-date information on symptoms and prevention can be found on the [Canada.ca](#), [BCCDC](#) and [WHO Novel Coronavirus](#) websites. This document is a living document with the most current version to be found on the School District 5 (SD5) website, refer to [SD5 Website](#). This website also has the link to additional links and resources.

School supports students in developing their potential and acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities they need for lifelong success. In-person learning, as a part of a student's education, provides the opportunity for peer engagement, which supports social and emotional development as well as overall wellness. It also provides many students access to programs and services that are integral to their overall health and well-being. Ensuring implementation and adherence to health and safety plans is important to keep in-person learning available.

Based on guidance from the Provincial Health Officer and experience to date within B.C. and other jurisdictions that schools continue to be low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission, even with increased risk of COVID-19 in some communities, K-12 students can participate in full-time, in-class instruction in accordance with current public health guidelines for schools.

Key Principles:

- All schools are to adhere to the standards, guidelines and protocols from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and WorkSafeBC.
- The health and safety guidelines in this document have been developed to complement the BCCDC and WorkSafeBC guidance.
- All school districts and independent school authorities are required to have COVID-19 safety plans in place that adhere to the guidance of the [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#) and address the health and safety guidelines outlined below.
 - In the case of any variance between these two guidance documents, schools and school districts should follow the health and safety guidelines outlined in this document.
 - Schools and school districts are expected to update their health and safety plans in alignment with updates to the guidelines outlined in this document, and to post their updated plans on their school/school district website.
- Schools should implement psychological safety measures and trauma-informed practice alongside physical health and safety measures.
- Effective and ongoing communication with school leaders, community partners, parents, caregivers, students, unions and employees is an essential aspect of successfully implementing these guidelines.

COVID-19 Safety Plan Reviews

School medical officers noted that most school exposures in fall 2020 did not result in transmission within the school. However, some school exposures did result in additional cases, including clusters and a limited number of outbreaks. While each case was unique, a common recommended action from school medical officers was to review existing COVID-19 safety plans to ensure required measures were in place and were being consistently implemented. A review of the COVID-19 safety plan to ensure it adequately protects workers from transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace is required in the Provincial Health Officer's December 16, 2020 [Workplace Safety order](#).

With this in mind, school and district administrators must regularly review COVID-19 safety plans, and should do so with their Site Committees and Joint Health and Safety Committees and address areas where there are identified gaps in implementation. BCCDC has developed a [COVID-19 School Health & Safety Checklist](#) that can support these safety plan reviews. In addition, school medical officers have recommended the following key areas of focus for schools based on reviews of school exposures to date:

1. Prevent crowding and gathering; pay particular attention to the start and end of the day, and stagger recess, lunch and transition times for students and staff whenever possible.
2. Avoid close face-to-face contact whenever possible.
3. Assign staff to a specific learning group whenever possible.
4. Ensure that the use of masks does not reduce or replace practicing physical distancing between learning groups and other prevention measures, for both students and staff.
5. Ensure prevention measures are in place in staff only areas, including break and meeting rooms.
6. Implement music classes according to the [British Columbia Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia](#) Guidance for Music Classes.
7. High intensity physical activity should occur outside whenever possible.

The September start-up will be supported by the four foundational principles established at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. Maintain a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.
2. Provide the services needed to support children of our essential workers.
3. Support vulnerable students who may need special assistance.
4. Provide continuity of educational opportunities for all students.

STAGE 1	STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4	STAGE 5
Learning Group Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary: N/A Middle: N/A Secondary: N/A 	Learning Group Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary: 60 Middle: 60 Secondary: 120 	Learning Group Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary: 30 Middle: 30 Secondary: 60 	Learning Group Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary: 30 Middle: 30 Secondary: 30 	Learning Group Size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elementary: 0 Middle: 0 Secondary: 0
DENSITY TARGETS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	DENSITY TARGETS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	DENSITY TARGETS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% for all schools 	DENSITY TARGETS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% for all schools 	DENSITY TARGETS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0% for all schools
IN-CLASS INSTRUCTION: Full-time all students, all grades	IN-CLASS INSTRUCTION: Full-time instruction for all students for the maximum instructional time possible within cohort limits. Self-directed learning supplements in-class instruction, if required.	IN-CLASS INSTRUCTION: Full-time instruction for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children of essential service workers students with disabilities/diverse abilities students who require additional supports In-class instruction for all other students for the maximum time possible within cohort limits. Self-directed and remote learning supplements in-class instruction.	IN-CLASS INSTRUCTION: Full-time instruction for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> children of essential service workers students with disabilities/diverse abilities students who require additional supports Remote learning for all other students	IN-CLASS INSTRUCTION: Suspend in-class for all students

Note: as Stage 1 is a return to regular operating procedures, and Stage 5 means that all in-class instruction is suspended, the following health and safety guidelines apply to Stages 2 to 4, unless specified otherwise.

Protocol If a Student/Staff Develops Symptoms of Illness at School

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.

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.

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.

COVID-19 Preventative Measures

Measures applicable to Staff, students and visitors:

- **Students and staff should stay at home** when new symptoms of illness develop. The key symptoms to watch for are fever or chills, cough, loss of sense of smell or taste, difficult breathing, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue or tiredness, headache, body ache, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
 - If you are displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, refer to HealthLink BC at 811
 - Refer to the BC CDC document "[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)" for further direction if you are displaying the abovementioned symptoms

If a **COVID-19 test is not recommended** by the health assessment, the person can return to school when symptoms have improved and they feel well enough. Testing may not be recommended if the assessment determines that the symptoms are due to another cause (i.e. not COVID-19).

Other Considerations for Managing Illness at Schools

- Establish procedures for those who become sick at school to go home as soon as possible.
 - Some students may not be able to be picked up immediately. As such, consider having a space available where the student or staff member can wait comfortably, which is separated from others. Provide supervision for younger children.
- Establish procedures that allow for students and staff to return to school with mild symptoms of illness remaining, in line with the guidance in this document.
 - This is to ensure staff and students are not kept out of school longer than necessary.
- **Do not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practices.**

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. They do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and should not be required to provide a health-care provider note. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms they should seek assessment by a health-care provider.

Additional Preventative Measures

- Parents/guardians will be required to confirm they understand the requirement to self-assess their child and return the form **prior** to the child attending the school, and to keep them home from school if they are sick or if they have been directed to self-isolate by their local health authority.
- School administrators must:
 - Ensure school staff and other adults entering the school are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for illness prior to entering the school.
 - Stay home and self-isolate if they are sick **OR** travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak by their local health authority (see Staying Home, Self-Isolation and Symptoms in this document).
 - Clearly communicate with parents and caregivers about their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school, and to keep them home from school if they are sick or if they have been directed to self-isolate by their local health authority.
 - 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, COVID19, or other respiratory disease.
 - Establish procedures for those who become sick while at school to be sent home as soon as possible.
 - Some students may not be able to be picked up immediately. As such, consider having a space available where the student or staff member can wait comfortably that is separated from others and provide them with a non-medical mask if they don't have one.

- Schools must provide supervision for younger children. Supervising staff must wear a non-medical mask and face shield, avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible, and practice diligent hand hygiene.
 - Establish procedures that allow for students and staff to return to school/work in line with the guidance in the Staying Home, Self-Isolation and Symptoms section.
 - This is to ensure students and staff who are not sick are not kept out of school/away from work longer than necessary.
 - Schools and districts should not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm the status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodations as per usual practice.
- There is no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health-care professionals.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food.
- No sharing of food.
- If you have to cough or sneeze, try to do it into your elbow or a tissue, and then throw out the tissue if used and wash your hands afterwards.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

An information sheet on what to do if a student or staff member becomes ill at school is included as Appendix C.

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.

- In **Stage 2**, members of the same learning group must minimize physical contact.
- In **Stages 3 and 4**, staff, as well as middle and secondary school students, will have to maintain physical distance at all times (even if they are part of the same learning group).

The composition of learning groups should remain consistent for all activities that occur in schools (i.e., students and staff cannot be part of more than one learning group at the same time). Students and staff from different learning groups can interact with one another while practicing physical distancing (see Interacting with Learning Groups section for more information).

Learning group composition can be changed at the start of a new term (e.g., quarter, semester). Outside of these transition points, composition should only be changed as minimally as possible except where required to support optimal school functioning. This may include learning, operational or student health and safety considerations. No additional safety protocols are required following a change in learning group composition.

School administrators should keep up-to-date lists of all members of a learning group, and others who work with that learning group (e.g., itinerant teachers, TTOCs), and their contact information to support swift communication from the school and to share with public health to support contact tracing, if needed.

Consistent seating arrangements are encouraged where practical. This can further reduce the number of close, prolonged face-to-face interactions a person has, and assist public health should contact tracing need to occur.

Learning Groups are recommended by the Provincial Health Officer as an effective way to limit the number of interactions between people in schools and subsequently reduce potential exposures to COVID-19.

Learning group size limits were established by provincial medical health officers based on a number of considerations including:

- Compared to some other community settings, schools are considered “controlled environments” in that they have a comprehensive set of safety measures in place, a consistent and limited group of people accessing the building, and the majority of those people are children who are at lower risk for transmitting COVID-19. The combination of these features reduces the risk of bringing more children and youth together in schools.
- The significant academic, social and emotional benefits of providing more students with more in-class learning time in a closer to normal learning environment – minimizing learning gaps, increasing peer interaction and support, decreasing feelings of isolation.
- The typical format of instruction in B.C. (e.g. one teacher with a consistent group of students in elementary, multiple teachers and inconsistent groupings of students in secondary).
- The low community prevalence of COVID-19 currently in B.C., particularly amongst school-aged children. Provincial contact tracing and testing capacity.

Learning groups are smaller for elementary students recognizing that younger children are less able to consistently implement personal measures such as hand hygiene, reducing physical contact and recognizing and articulating symptoms of illness.

Learning groups are larger for secondary students due to the increased ability of students in that setting to be able to consistently practice personal measures, like physical distancing and hand hygiene, and recognize and articulate symptoms of illness. Due to the typical format of instruction of multiple teachers working with different groupings of students across a large number of curricular areas, learning groups are also larger at the secondary level to enable flexibility in meeting students’ learning needs.

Elementary and middle schools are likely able to implement learning groups without reducing the number of individuals typically within the school. Secondary schools may need to reduce the number of individuals typically within the school at the same time to operate within learning group size limits. This may be necessary due to the larger number of people and the increased frequency of classroom exchanges that typically occur within secondary schools.

Interacting with Learning Groups

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 while continuing to support learning and a positive, healthy and safe environment. Staff outside of a learning group must practice physical distancing (2m) when interacting with the learning group. For example, an itinerant educator (e.g. a teacher teaching on call, an Indigenous support worker, a teacher candidate, a district specialist) can teach/support multiple learning groups must practice physical distance from students and other staff and avoid close face-to-face contact.

Unless staff members belong to the same learning group, they should maintain physical distance (2m) from one another at all times. Masks are not a replacement for physical distancing between staff from 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 although physical distancing should be encouraged;
 - maintain physical distance (1-2m) 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.

Elementary-aged students are less able to consistently maintain physical distance. Outdoors is a lower risk environment than indoors.

Middle/secondary students

- When interacting with students and staff outside of their learning group, students should maintain physical distance (1-2m).
- Middle and secondary school students capable of consistently maintaining physical distance, when it is required, should be expected to do so. 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.

Multi-Learning Group Instruction

Students from different learning groups can be in the same space at the same time if physical distancing can be maintained (as per the requirements outlined above), and there is adequate space available to prevent crowding of those from within the same learning group. Masks are not a replacement for physical distancing between students from different learning groups in the same learning space.

Multi-Learning Group Services

Students from different learning groups may be required to be together to receive beneficial supports, programs or services (e.g. meal programs, after school clubs, etc.). Within these supports or services it is expected that learning groups are maintained, and physical distancing is practiced between learning groups, as much as is practical to do so while still ensuring the support, program or service continues.

For information on mask requirements for K-12 staff and middle and secondary school students, see the Personal Protective Equipment section.

Itinerant Staff and Specialists

Schools should minimize the number of staff who interact with learning groups they are not a part of as much as possible while continuing to support learning and a positive, healthy and safe environment.

As such, school districts and schools should seek to assign staff to a specific learning group wherever possible, 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 not assigned to a learning group must practice physical distancing when interacting with the learning group. For example, a student services 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, other measures must be explored, such as reconfiguring rooms, securing an alternate space to allow for physical distancing, installing a physical barrier made of transparent materials, or providing virtual services where possible. If none of the strategies outlined above are viable options, staff should practice physical distancing as much as possible while providing services. In addition, all K-12 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 schools – see the Personal Protective Equipment section for more information.

Even with the requirement for K-12 staff to wear non-medical masks in schools, the school district has ensured that other preventative measures (e.g., assigning staff to a learning group, maintaining physical distance outside of a learning group, reconfiguring space, installing barriers, etc.) have been fully explored.

Physical Distancing

Physical distancing refers to a range of measures aimed at reducing close contact with others. Physical distancing is used as a prevention measure because COVID-19 tends to spread through prolonged, close (face-to-face) contact.

- Within learning groups, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available.
 - Young children may not be able to consistently reduce physical contact.
- Outside of learning groups, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact and close, prolonged face-to-face interactions, spreading out as much as possible within the space available, and ensuring there is 2 meters of space available between people from different learning groups.
- For situations where members of different learning groups interact:
 - If people will be in the same space for an extended period of time (>15 minutes), the space should be sufficiently large, and or should have limits on the number of people so that 2 metres of space is available between people from different learning groups.
 - If people will be in the same space for transition purposes (e.g. changing between classes), and other measures are in place (e.g. markings on the floor, staggered transition times), there should be enough space to ensure no physical contact but 2 metre physical distancing is not required.
- Within and outside of learning groups, there should be no crowding.
- Staff and other adults should seek to reduce the number of close, face-to-face interactions with each other at all times, even while wearing a non-medical mask. This includes during break times and in meetings.

Physical distancing requirements vary between stages 2, 3 and 4 (refer to [Physical Distancing](#)):

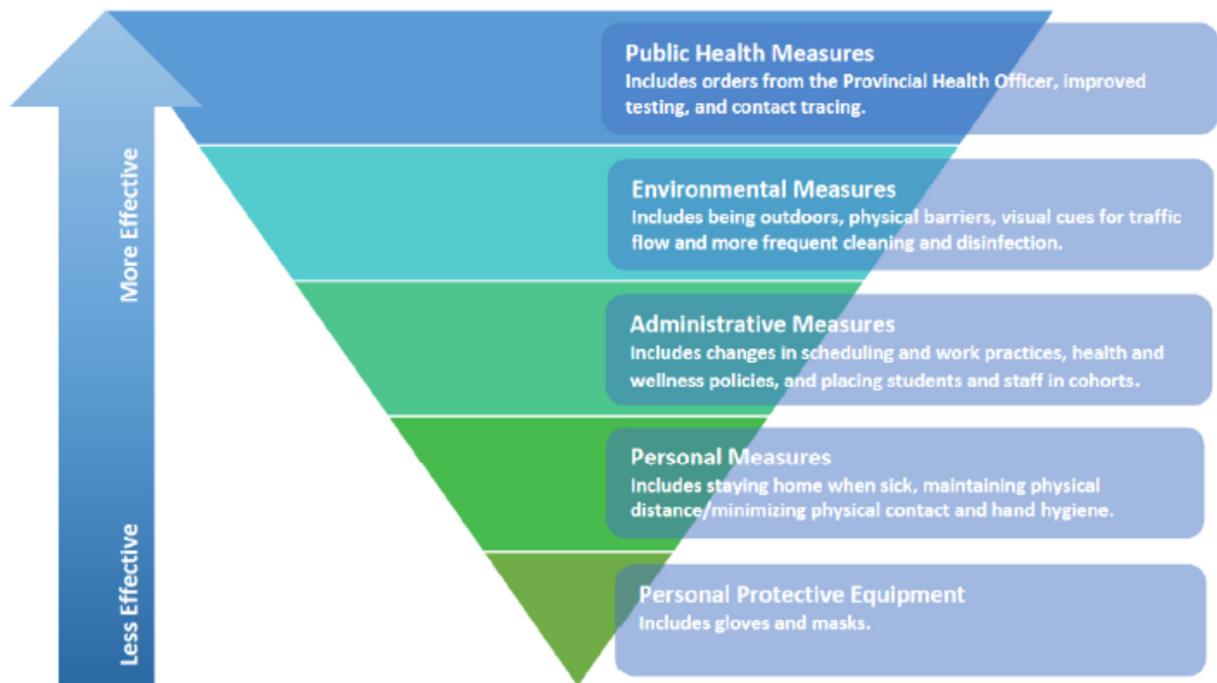
STAGE 2	STAGE 3	STAGE 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Physical distancing (2m) for K-12 staff and for middle and secondary school students when interacting outside of their learning groups▪ Physical distancing (2m) for elementary students when interacting outside of their learning groups while indoors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Physical distancing (2m) for K-12 staff, middle and secondary school students at all times.▪ Physical distancing (2m) for elementary students when interacting outside of their learning groups while indoors.	

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 settings such as schools where there is a relatively consistent grouping of people and multiple measures of various effectiveness can be routinely and consistently implemented, including:

- Robust illness policies for students and staff.
- Reinforcement and adoption of 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.).
- Various 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 COVID19 is substantially reduced.



Supportive School Environments

Schools can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours.
- Sharing reliable information, including from the BCCDC and the Office of the PHO, to parents, families and caregivers.
- Promoting required safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids like floor markings and signage.

In line with the K-12 Education Restart Plan's goal of maximizing in-class instruction for all students within the current health and safety guidelines for schools, staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventative practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature ¹.

1 - This includes where a student, staff or other adult (including visitors) cannot comply with a specific safety measure due to health or behavioural reasons – in these circumstances, schools/districts should work with these individuals (and their parent/caregivers, if applicable to a student) to explore other environmental and administrative measures to ensure safety and the safety of others.

Environmental Measures

1. Ventilation and Air Exchange

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute to the spread of COVID-19.

For activities that take place indoors, application of the basic principles of good indoor air quality should continue, including supplying outdoor air to replenish indoor air by removing and diluting contaminants that naturally occur in indoor settings. All mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems should be checked to ensure they are working properly. Where possible, schools can open windows if weather permits.

For more information, see WorkSafeBC guidance on [general ventilation and air circulation](#).

2. Cleaning and Disinfection

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Schools should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document.

Follow these procedures when cleaning and disinfecting:

- Remove or limit the use of:
 - frequently touched items that are not easily cleaned (e.g., fabric or soft items, plush toys)

- shared equipment, as much as is practical to do so (e.g., instead, try to assemble individualized/small group kits that can be assigned to students, if possible to do so)
- If shared equipment/items have to be used, they should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document.
- Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects.
- 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 can be cleaned and disinfected in a dishwasher with a hot rinse cycle.

This includes:

- 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 common, commercially-available detergents and disinfectant products and closely follow the instructions on the label.
 - See Health Canada's list of hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19) for specific brands and disinfectant products.
- Limit 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.

The same cleaning and disinfecting frequency guidelines outlined above apply when different learning groups use the same space (e.g., classroom, gym, arts room, home economics or science lab, etc.), or when the composition of a learning group changes at the end of a school term.

No additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures are required when different learning groups use the same space or equipment, or when the composition of a learning group changes at the end of a school term, beyond the cleaning and disinfecting procedures that are normally implemented, and the guidelines outlined above.

The recommended cleaning and disinfecting frequency for K-12 schools and other community settings outlined above was determined by infection prevention and control experts at the BC Ministry of Health, BCCDC and the Provincial Health Services Authority.

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. DVD) 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.

Frequently Touched Surfaces

Frequently touched surfaces include:

- Items used by multiple students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs manipulatives and toys.
 - Students and staff should be encouraged to bring an individual, filled water-bottle or other beverage container to school each day for their personal use to support hydration needs.
 - Re-filling water stations can be used to re-fill personal containers (these should not include washroom sinks or other water sources not typically used for drinking water).
 - Water fountains where a person drinks directly from the spout should be used minimally, and only if not other means of water access are available. Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after use.
 - **Access to water and to washrooms should not be restricted.**
- Shared equipment (e.g. computer keyboards and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for science labs, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing machines and sewing equipment for home economic programs, PE/sports equipment, music equipment, etc.)
- Appliances (staff and students can share the use of appliances and other objects, but treat items like microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers or laminators as frequently touched surfaces)
- Service counters (e.g., office service window, library circulation desk)

Limit frequently-touched items that are not easily cleaned to those that support learning, health and development.

- Some frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g. fabrics) or at all (e.g. sand, foam, playdough, etc). These items can continue to be used, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.

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. DVD) 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.

3. Laundry

Follow these procedures when doing laundry (Home Economics, Physical and Health Education, Life Skills Programs, etc.):

- Laundry should be placed in a laundry basket with a plastic liner.
- Do not shake dirty items
- Wearing gloves is optional. If choosing to wear gloves, ensure hand hygiene is performed before and after use. No other PPE is required.
- Clean hands with soap and water immediately after removing gloves.
- Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C).

4. Traffic Flow

Use floor markings and posters 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 ensure the fire code is adhered to.

5. Physical Barriers

Barriers can be installed in places where physical distance cannot regularly be maintained and a person is interacting with numerous individuals outside of a learning group. This may include the front reception desk where visitors check in or in the cafeteria where food is distributed.

Administrative Measures

Reducing the number of in-person, close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions an individual has in a day with different people helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This can be accomplished in K-12 school settings through two different but complementary approaches: learning groups and physical distancing.

- A learning group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term.
- Physical distancing is maintaining a distance of one-two metres between two or more people.

6. Other Strategies

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.
- Regularly remind students about keeping their hands to themselves. Use visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- 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). Seating arrangements where students directly face one another should be avoided where possible, particularly for middle and secondary schools.
 - Use consistent or assigned seating arrangements where practical.
 - Store excess equipment (e.g. equipment that might not be of use during the pandemic) in order to open more space in schools.
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
- Focus on entry and exit areas, and other places where people may gather or crowd.
- Where possible, stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Take students outside more often. Organize learning activities outside including snack time, place-based learning and unstructured time.
 - Organize learning activities and breaks outside including snack time, place-based learning and unstructured time.
 - Take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage greater space between students and staff as much as is practical to do so.
 - For elementary students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
 - Offer manipulatives and items that encourage individual play, and that can be easily cleaned and reduce hand-to-hand-contact and cross-contamination.
 - Prioritize the acquisition of adequate amounts of high-touch materials, such as pencils or art supplies, in order to minimize sharing between children.
 - For middle and secondary students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require close face-to-face contact.

- Note: for guidelines specific to courses/subject areas that tend to involve a significant number of group activities (e.g. culinary programs), see the section on Curricular, Programs and Activities.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.
- Use floor markings and posters 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 ensure the fire code is adhered to.
- Ensure communication of physical distancing guidelines is relayed in multiple formats for ease of understanding (visual supports and representation, prompts, video modelling, signage, videos using sign language, etc.).
- Consider installing barriers made of transparent material in places where physical distance cannot be regularly maintained, and a person is interacting with numerous individuals outside of a learning group. This may include at a front reception desk where visitors check in, a library check out desk, or where food is distributed in a cafeteria. See guidance from WorkSafe BC on designing effective barriers for more information.
- 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 (e.g. teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.).
 - All visitors should confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.
 - Schools should keep a list of the date, names and contact information for all visitors who enter the school.

7. Staff Only Spaces

Experience to date underscores the importance of COVID-19 prevention among adults, as well as students, in the school setting. Schools and school districts must ensure physical distancing is practiced within staff only spaces, including during break times, in addition to mask use. To support this, schools can implement the following strategies:

- Utilize floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding (e.g. in the break room, by the photocopier, etc.).
- Hold meetings virtual whenever possible.
- Ensure staff practice physical distancing (2m) during face-to-face meetings. Staff are required to wear masks when indoors – see the Personal Protective Equipment section for more information.

[WorkSafeBC guidance for offices](#) lists measures that should be considered and implemented as applicable to the workplace for staff in office environments (both inside and outside of 'bricks and mortar' schools).

8. Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities including sports, arts or special interest clubs can occur if physical distance can be maintained between members of different learning groups and reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same learning group.

Inter-school events including competitions, tournaments and festivals, should not occur at this time.

9. Student Transportation on Buses

Buses used for transporting students should be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided in the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document. Additional guidance is available from Transport Canada.

Bus drivers should clean their hands often, including before and after completing trips. They are encouraged to regularly use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol during trips.

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) on school buses except while driving.

- Schools will have non-medical masks and face shields available for staff.
- See the Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities section for more information on safety measures when staff are required to be in physical contact with students.

Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. **If a child is sick, they must not take the bus or go to school.**

Students should 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.

Where possible, bus line-up areas should be set up to prevent crowding, and allow for physical distancing of 1-2m (e.g., tape markings on pavement, etc.) where required.

- Schools should provide support for students who are not able to physically distance.

Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear non-medical masks or face coverings when they are on the bus. Students in Grades K to 3 are encouraged to wear a non-medical mask or face covering on school buses but are not required to do so – mask wearing remains a personal or family/caregiver choice for these students, and their choices must be respected. For more information, see the Personal Protective Equipment section.

- Non-medical masks or face coverings should be put on before loading.
- Open windows when weather permits.

To reduce the number of close, in-person interactions, the following strategies are recommended:

- Use consistent and assigned seating arrangements.
 - Prioritize students sharing a seat with a member of their household or learning group.
 - 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.).
- If space is available, students should each have their own seat.
 - They should be seated beside the window.

Additional measures can be taken, including:

- Encouraging private vehicle use and active transportation (e.g. biking, walking, etc.) by students and staff where possible to decrease transportation density.
- Bus drivers will wear face shields and masks when loading and unloading the bus. The driver's face shield will be removed while the bus is moving.
- See the Field Trips section for more guidance about safety measures for field trips.
- Schools/school districts should keep up-to-date passenger lists to share with public health should contact tracing need to occur.

10. Food Services

Schools can continue to include food preparation as part of learning and provide food services, including for sale and meal programs.

- If food is prepared as part of learning and is consumed by the student(s) who prepared it, no additional measures beyond those articulated in this document and normal food safety measures and requirements need to be implemented (e.g. FOODSAFE trained staff, a food safety plan, etc.).
- If food is prepared within or outside a school for consumption by people other than those that prepared it (including for sale), it is expected 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.).
- Schools should not allow homemade food items to be made available to other students at this time (e.g. birthday treats, bake sale items)
- Schools should continue to emphasize that food and beverages should not be shared.

Hand Washing Protocols

Refer to standard BCCDC procedures in Appendix D.

Children and employees must wash their hands:

- When they arrive at school and before they go home
- Before and after any transitions within the school setting (e.g. to another classroom, indoor-outdoor transitions, moving to on-site childcare, etc.)
- Before eating and drinking (or handling food)
- After using the toilet
- After sneezing or coughing into hands (refer to Sick Child procedures)
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- After cleaning tasks (employees)

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness (antibacterial soap is not required for COVID-19). Follow these guidelines to ensure effective and hygiene in schools:

- Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds (temperature does not change the effectiveness of washing hands with plain soap and water).
- Facilitate regular opportunities for staff and students to practice hand hygiene:
 - Use portable hand-washing sites and/or alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol, where sinks are not available.
 - Schools should use commercial hand sanitizer products that have met [Health Canada's requirements and are authorized for sale in Canada](#).
 - Hand-washing should be encouraged upon school entry and before/after breaks and eating, using washroom and using gym/playground equipment.
- Promote the importance of diligent hand hygiene to staff and students regularly.
- Use posters and other methods of promotion (Appendix D).
- Remind staff and students to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- 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.
- Staff should assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- Students may bring their own sanitized or plain soap if they are on the list authorized by Health Canada or have a medical condition that requires specialized soap. See the list of products which have met [Health Canada's requirements and are authorized for sale in Canada](#).
- If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub 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 wipe followed by alcohol-based hand rub.

Respiratory Etiquette Students and staff should:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue. Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, or vaping devices.

Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices among students.

Water Stations and Fountains

Students and staff should be encouraged to bring an individual, filled water-bottle or other beverage container to school each day for their personal use to support hydration needs.

Re-filling water stations can be used to re-fill personal containers.

Water fountains where a person drinks directly from the spout should be used minimally, and only if no other means of water access are available. Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after use.

Personal Items and School Supplies

Students and staff can continue to bring personal items and school supplies to school for their own use. This includes reusable food containers for bringing drinks, snacks and meals.

Items brought regularly to and from school should be limited to those that can be easily cleaned (e.g. reusable food containers) and/or are considered to be low risk (e.g. clothing, paper, etc.).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Although personal protective equipment (including masks) is the lowest level on the hierarchy of Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures, it can provide an additional layer of protection when more effective measures are feasible. Non-medical masks and face coverings (hereafter referred collectively as “masks”) have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. They provide some protection to the wearer and to those around them.

Those wearing masks must still maintain physical distancing whenever possible. There must be no crowding or congregating of people, even if masks are worn.

Masks should not be used in place of the other safety measures detailed in this document. For example, masks are not a replacement for the need for physical distancing for in-class instruction delivered to students from more than one learning group.

K-12 Staff:

All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses – both within and outside their learning group.

K-12 Students:

All students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses – both within and outside their learning group.

Students in Grades K to 3 are encouraged to wear a mask indoors in schools and on school buses, but are not required to do so – mask wearing remains a personal or family/caregiver choice for these students, and their choices must be respected.

Additional guidance for student mask use during specific activities in schools is detailed within this document.

Staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in the use of masks, and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature.

Schools and districts will have non-medical masks available for staff and students, including anyone who becomes sick while at school.

The use of masks should not reduce or replace other more effective infection prevention and exposure control measures in place, such as:

- Ensuring students and staff stay home when they are sick or required to self-isolate, including ensuring everyone entering the school performs a daily health check;
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection;
- Placing students and staff into consistent groupings of people (learning groups);
- Adapting learning environments to maximize the use of space;
- Ensuring physical distance can be maintained between learning groups; and
- Frequent hand hygiene

These measures provide multiple layers of protection that reduce the risk of transmission.

EXCEPTIONS FOR STAFF, STUDENTS AND VISITORS:

K-12 Staff:

The guidance outlined above regarding mask requirements does not apply to staff, students and visitors in the following circumstances:

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

- If 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.);
- If the person is eating or drinking;
- If 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/movements is important.

Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm if staff, students or visitors cannot wear a mask.

No student should be prevented from attending or fully participating at school if they do not wear a mask. See the Supportive School Environments section for more information.

Students with Medical Complexity, Immune Suppression and/or Receiving Delegated Care

Supporting students with complex behaviours, medical complexities or receiving delegated care may require those providing health services (e.g. staff providing delegated care or other health-care providers) to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a medically complex or immune suppressed student.

- People providing these services in schools must wear a mask (medical or non-medical) when providing services and the service cannot be provided from behind a physical barrier. Additional PPE over and above that needed for routine practices and the use of a medical or non-medical mask is not necessary.
- Those providing health services in schools may be receiving different guidance related to PPE from their regulatory college or employer. Health service providers are encouraged to work with their employer to confirm what PPE is recommended for the services they provide in school settings.
- Parents and caregivers of children who are considered at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 are encouraged to consult with their healthcare provider to determine their child's level of risk.

Visitors

All visitors (individuals who are not typically members of the school) must wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school. See the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) section for more information, including exceptions to mask requirements for visitors.

Students and staff should be supported to know how to properly put on, wear, take off and store non-medical masks and other face coverings. Related information is available on the [BCCDC Website](#) and the [Government of Canada Website](#).

Medical-grade masks are not required within the school settings for general use.

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.

Non-Medical Masks

Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering within schools is a personal choice for students and adults. Non-medical masks or face coverings may be useful when physical distance cannot be consistently maintained and the person is interacting with people outside of their learning group for extended periods of time (e.g. students on a school bus, etc.). It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.

Those that choose to wear non-medical masks must still seek to maintain physical distance from people outside of their learning group. There must be no crowding, gathering or congregating of people from different learning groups, even if non-medical masks are worn.

Schools should consider requesting students and staff have a non-medical mask or face covering available at school so it is accessible should they become ill while at school.

More information about COVID-related mask use is available on the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

Students with Disabilities/Diverse-Abilities and Students Who Require Additional Supports

For some medically fragile kids are at higher risk during the pandemic and restart. Check BC CDC website for information <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/priority-populations>

It is anticipated that most children requiring in-person instruction in K-12 school settings will be capable of following the District Health and Safety procedures outlined.

Some students will require more personal assistance and care. These student may require hands-on support.

Some Additional Points to Remember in Situations Where You Interact with Students with Complex Needs

Universal Precautions

There are number of universal precautions (see Appendix G) we have in place around the regular personal care we provide students before our current pandemic. Please be vigilant in using universal precautions.

Please use your Mandt Training

- Keep Your Radar On.

- Use Crisis Cycle knowledge and remember inverted Maslow.
- Use Graded and Gradual Hierarchy of Interventions.

The Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Gloves are not needed, beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work.
- Gloves must be used when dealing with all bodily fluids.

Behaviour Support Plans and Staff Response Plans

- Children should be screened case by case to determine levels of support required to safely bring students into the school environment and any support plans will be provided to the School Principal.
- Staff working with children that have Behaviour Support Plans and/or Staff Safety Plans in place should review these plans prior to working with the child.
- Managing students with complex behaviours or experiencing a health emergency may require staff to be in close physical proximity with a student.

Physical Distancing Recommendations

- Maintain physical distancing of 1-2 metres between adults in the building.
- Minimize physical contact - Remind children, "Hands to Yourself!"
- Provide additional EA support 1-1 or 2-1
- Avoiding close greetings like hugs or handshakes; remind children to keep hands to themselves
- Help younger children learn about physical distancing by creating games.
- Use social stories where appropriate
- Use visuals for communication
- Older children can be provided age appropriate reading material and encouraged to self-regulate.

Recommendations on Spitting

- Although this behaviour is challenging, if the student is asymptomatic and healthy, the risk of transmission is low, especially if the behaviour is paired with handwashing and cleaning
- Wipe down any area with saliva with approved sanitizer or disinfectant wipes
- If in contact with saliva, wash hands and/or affected areas; report to supervisor

Recommendations on Biting

- If in contact with saliva, wash hands and/or affected areas; report to supervisor

Recommendations on Toileting or Diapering

- Wear gloves
- Wash hands before and after toileting
- Safe diapering (see Appendix B)

Children requiring a Nursing Support Services Care Plans

- NSSC nurses will review care plans, train staff on new delegated procedures Parents must carry out medical services for their child, until staff are trained in the proper procedure.
- As NSSC are outside on all learning groups PPE or physical barriers must be used.

Recommendations on Toys and School Supplies

- Keep enough toys out to encourage play within the learning group.
- Try to limit toys and other items to those that can be easily cleaned.
- Sharing of school supplies will not be allowed.
- There is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students due to concerns about virus transmission.
- Laminated or other hard service items should be cleaned once daily if used by multiple individuals during the day.
- Coordinate with school administrator on cleaning process for items which are required to be cleaned (designated areas, bins, etc).

Recommendations on Keeping Parents/Caregivers Informed

- Keep parents and caregivers informed about what you are doing at your school to take extra precautions, be responsive to children. Be clear about our policy that children need to stay home if they are sick.

Guidelines for Staff Working with Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities where Physical Contact may be Required

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 working with a student indoors, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, 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). Additional personal protective equipment 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).

When working with students where facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, options include having the staff member wear a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth. More information on masks and face coverings is available at the [BCCDC website](#).

- Students in Grades 4 to 12 are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering when receiving services indoors and a barrier is not present.
- For students in Grades K to 3, the student or parent/caregiver should determine whether or not the student should also be wearing any PPE when receiving services in close physical proximity.

In addition to a non-medical masks, those providing health or education services that require being in close proximity to a student should follow their standard risk assessment methods to determine if additional PPE is required, in accordance with routine practices.

For more information, including exceptions to mask requirements for staff and students, see the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) section.

Needing Assistance?

If you are having difficulty implementing any of the recommended strategies, please contact the District Principal of Student Services or the Student Services Coordinators

Additional Recommendations

Entering/Leaving the Building

- Maintain safe physical distancing guidelines of **one-two metres** between people when entering and leaving the building.
- Do not enter or leave the building in groups and avoid crowding.
- Each school administrator will identify entrances and exits to be used by staff and students.
- School will develop entry and departure protocols taken into account, capacity, flow of people and physical distancing measures.
- Wash your hands after you enter the building and disinfect your workspace as needed.

School Hours/Access

- Schools doors will be locked during the day to control public access.
- Volunteers or parents/guardians are encouraged to call or email school Administrators rather than visit in-person. Appointments are required for all visitors.
- The Administrator will determine the workload allocations and school hours of operations.
- A Daytime Custodian will provide assistance with cleaning and disinfecting during the hours outside of regular custodial services.
- The employee is responsible for notifying the custodial staff of areas where their services are required (as identified in the subsequent procedures).
- SD5 Maintenance or Operations staff must contact the Administrator of the school to coordinate; make every effort to access the school when children are not present; thoroughly sanitize hands prior to entering the school; and, notify custodial staff to ensure cleaning is completed after exiting. Mask protocol must be adhered and it is assumed these employees are out of learning group.

Photocopier or Supply Room

- If you need to use the photocopier, wash your hands before you begin.
- Disinfect the photocopier (or notify custodial staff) before and after use.
- Disinfect any shared surfaces or equipment at the photocopy area/room such as staplers, hole punches, etc. that you used (or notify custodial staff).

- Only **one** person allowed at the photocopier, in the photocopy room and in the supply room at a time.
- When you are finished at the photocopier or in the supply room, wash your hands again before you go back to your office or workspace.

Bathrooms

- Follow the plan for bathroom use established by your Administrators. This plan will include which staff will use which bathrooms (both staff and student bathrooms may be used by staff).
- Make sure to wash your hands before you leave the bathroom.
- Follow COVID-19 handwashing guidelines as posted.
- Administrators and JOHSC will develop site specific plans taking into account flow of people, people in the building and physical distancing measures.

Staffroom and Breaks

- Wash your hands before you go into the staffroom.
- School administrators and Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee's (JOHSC) will determine practices for access to the staff-room which will include occupancy limits which will allow for 2m spacing when employees are seated.
- If employees or students leave the school during lunch, they should make sure to follow the same protocols for arrival and departure.
- Efforts should be made to bring a lunch/snack that does not require a lot of preparation (to limit microwave use, surface use, utensil use, etc.).
- Disinfect the areas, surfaces, appliances, etc. that you use in the staffroom.
- When you are finished, wash your hands again before you go back to your classroom, office or workspace.
- Do not share food or drink.

Other Shared or Specialty Spaces

- Due to the hazard of common-touch surfaces, shared or specialty spaces are not to be used for their normal purpose.
- Spaces may be used for team meetings or other uses considered acceptable as long as the use complies with physical distancing measures.
- Administrators will develop protocols for use of other shared spaces within their individual buildings (libraries, gyms, shops, etc.) adhering to capacity limitations provided in this document.

Arrival Procedures

Wherever possible schools shall work with parents/guardians and arrange for staggered arrival and pick-up times for parents/ guardians. Physical distancing of 2 meters should be maintained regardless of the number of parents/ guardians arriving.

Parents must remain outside of the facility to drop off their children.

Children must wash their hands when they arrive and before they go home.

Hazardous Materials

All disinfectants, detergents, hand sanitizers must be safely stored out of reach of children.

Soap and water is the preferred method of cleaning a child's hands and hand sanitizers should only be used with children under the direct control of school staff.

All chemicals must be properly labelled in accordance with WHMIS requirements.

School Gatherings and Events

School gatherings should be kept to a minimum and where possible schools should seek virtual alternatives for larger gatherings and assemblies to continue to support these events in a different format. When it is necessary to gather in larger groups, the following guidance should be followed:

- School gatherings should occur within a learning group.
 - Gatherings should not exceed the maximum learning group size in the setting (which includes students and staff who are part of the learning group), plus the minimum number of additional people required (e.g. additional school staff, visitors, etc.) to meet the gathering's purpose and intended outcome. Additional people should be minimized as much as is practical to do so, and they must maintain physical distance.
 - Adequate space should be made available to prevent crowding of those within the learning group.
- Staff meetings, in-service and professional development activities, and other staff-only gatherings should be held virtually wherever possible.
 - Staff should practice physical distancing (2m) for face-to-face interactions, whenever possible.
 - If barriers between participants are not present, participants are required to wear masks.
 - The number of participants gathered, and the length of the gathering should be minimized as much as possible.
- Examinations or assessments are not considered school gatherings, however they must still be delivered in accordance with the health and safety guidelines outlined in this document and should not include non-student and staff spectators (e.g. performance arts concert or play where families are invited to attend).
- In-person inter-school events (including competitions, tournaments and festivals) should not occur at this time. This will be re-evaluated throughout the school year.

- Gatherings or events at a school that are not educational activities or support services (e.g. meal programs), including social gatherings of students and/or staff, must adhere to the [PHO Order for Gathering and Events](#).

Personal 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, reusable food containers).

Items brought regularly to and from school should be limited to those that can be easily cleaned (e.g. reusable food containers) and or are considered to be low risk (e.g. clothing, paper, etc.).

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 possible. If lockers have to be shared, schools must 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

Visitor Access/Community Use

SD5 is currently not providing the facilities for community use. The purpose is to ensure the custodial requirements are being met within the learning environment. More information will follow. The guidelines will follow once the bookings commence.

Stage 2

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 should ensure that visitors are aware of health and safety protocols and requirements prior to entering the school.

- Parents/caregivers and other visitors should wear a mask, maintain physical distance and avoid crowding while on school grounds, including outside.
- Schools must ensure all visitors confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering (e.g., maintaining physical distance, requirement to wear a non-medical mask)

- Schools should keep a list of the date, names and contact information for any visitors who entered the school and confirm the visitor is not ill and is not required to self-isolate before entering.
 - Schools could include, as part of their visitor registration form, a checkbox for the visitor to confirm they have completed their daily health check.
- Schools should keep a list of the date, names and contact information for all visitors and staff who are not typically onsite (e.g. TTOCs, itinerant teachers/specialists, maintenance or IT personnel, district/authority administrators) who entered the school over the past 30 days.
- All visitors must wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school. Exceptions will be made for visitors who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons.
- Adult volunteers can continue to support outdoor supervision/monitoring, provided they follow required health and safety protocols (e.g. maintaining physical distance, wearing a mask when unable to maintain physical distance, etc.).

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

- Must adhere to the [Gatherings and Events Order](#) of the PHO.
- Diligent hand hygiene
- 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.
 - Schools can consider asking community members to bring their own equipment, where appropriate.

Stages 3 & 4

Limit visitor access during school hours. No non-essential community use of school facilities after hours (as determined by the Board of Education or Independent School Authority).

Employee/Student Attendance

To maximize student attendance, repeated and consistent messaging/communication is crucial to allay parent and caregiver fears and to convey that schools are a safe place to be, based on the rigorous health and safety measures in place. For more information, see section on Communications Materials.

Alternative methods of instructional delivery will be jointly determined by boards of education and First Nations for students from First Nations that remain closed and will not be sending students back to school at this time.

Students with Immune Suppression

According to the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control, most children who are immunocompromised can return to in-class instruction when safety measures are in place. Protective self isolation is only recommended for children who are severely immunocompromised, as determined on a case-by-case basis.

School districts and schools should be aware of BCCDC Guidelines for Children with Immune Suppression and BCCDC Guidance for Families of Immunocompromised Children in School and Group Gatherings and share these documents with families of children with immune suppression.

The advice from the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control for parents/caregivers of children with complex medical conditions or underlying risk factors, or parents/caregivers who are immunocompromised themselves, is to consult with their medical health care provider to determine the level of risk regarding their child's return to in-class instruction. Parents/caregivers seeking an alternative to in-class instruction, and who do not wish to register their child in a distributed learning program or homeschooling, will be required to obtain a doctor's note indicating the need for accommodations due to health-related risks. School districts and independent school authorities are expected to work with these families to ensure continuity of learning and supports.

- **If attending in-class instruction is right for the child:** schools and school districts should work with parents or caregivers to develop a plan that provides options for learning to ensure appropriate preventative measures are in place.
- **If attending in-class instruction is not right for the child:** schools and school districts should work with families to develop options to continue their child's education at the school or school district level.

School district questions regarding accommodations for immunocompromised staff can be directed to [BCPSEA](#).

Daily Health Check

A daily health check is a tool to reduce the likelihood of a person with COVID-19 coming to school when they are infectious.

Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.

Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the provincial [K-12 Health Check app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms.

Schools are not required to verify that the student health check has occurred every day or require that parents/caregivers submit a daily health check form.

Staff and other adults are required to complete an active daily health check, in line with the [Provincial Health Officer's Order](#) on Workplace Safety, prior to entering the school.

School and district administrators are required to verify that staff and other adult health checks have been completed before they enter the school.

An entry check poster for worksites, and additional information on health checks for workers available on the [WorkSafeBC website](#).

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

Staying Home, Self Isolation and Symptoms

Stay Home When Required to Self-Isolate

The following students, staff or other adults **must stay home** and [self-isolate](#):

- A person confirmed by the health authority as testing positive for COVID-19; or
- A person confirmed by the health authority as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19; or
- A person who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.

A person who has been tested for COVID-19 **must stay home** while they are waiting for the test result.

Information on self-isolation for international students, and homestay contingency plans for illness, is available in the [COVID-19 Operational Guidelines for K-12](#).

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 on line [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) and if a COVID-19 test is recommended. See Appendix L - COVID-19 Symptoms Testing & Return to School for more information.

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g. seasonal allergies) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as

normal. They do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and should not be required to provide a health-care provider note. If the experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health care provider.

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school. Most illness experienced in B.C. is not COVID-19, even if the symptoms are similar.

Protocols for Managing Illness and Confirmed Cases at School

Refer to the [COVID-19 Protocols for School and District Administrators](#) for more information.

Trauma-Informed Practice and Socio-Emotional Learning

Trauma-informed practice is an informed way of approaching your practice through a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events.

Trauma-informed practice includes:

- Providing inclusive and compassionate learning environments.
- Understanding coping strategies.
- Supporting independence.
- Helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual student needs.

Use of regular needs-based 'check-ins' can assist in gathering important information to inform the level of trauma response and recovery necessary to support the school community. To support educators to develop compassionate learning communities through trauma-informed practice, the Ministry has created [trauma-informed practice resources](#) that are available on the [erase website](#).

The Ministry of Education has developed a [webinar series](#) to support educators as they navigate through times of uncertainty and change. The first webinar, Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal, provides educators with information, ideas and strategies that they can use to create compassionate spaces for students, especially during times when the classroom environment is ever-changing.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) offers a wide range of social emotional learning resources, including [Reunite Renew Thrive: A Social Emotional Learning Roadmap for Reopening Schools](#) that outlines a roadmap of action steps to implement SEL practices throughout the school year, for both educators and administrators.

The North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response has released a resource to assist the education sector in supporting the transition back to school called [Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic: Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact](#).

School district and school staff should practice awareness and sensitivity regarding the complex and devastating history that pandemics have had on many Indigenous communities.

Other Considerations

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. Good indoor air ventilation alone cannot protect people from exposure to COVID-19; however, it may reduce risk when used in addition to other preventative measures.

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).

School districts and independent school authorities should regularly maintain HVAC systems for proper operation and ensure that:

- schools with recycled/recirculated air systems upgrade their current filters to a minimum MERV 13 filter or higher if possible; and
- schools with fresh air intake systems increase their average air exchanges as detailed on the ASHRAE website and the Rocky Point Engineering Ltd website.

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
 - School district and site-based safety plans should include provisions for when a school/worksite's ventilation system is temporarily compromised (e.g. partial power outage, ventilation break down).
- increasing air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system
- where possible, opening windows if weather permits and HVAC system function will not be negatively impacted.

Emergency and Evacuation Drills

Schools should continue to practice emergency (e.g. fire, earthquake, lockdown) and evacuation drills, including the six required annual fire drills as per [BC Fire Code 2.8.3.2](#), and modify current drill procedures to adhere to health and safety guidelines (e.g., providing additional muster spots to prevent crowding/congregating).

- Staff should be notified in advance of emergency/evacuation drills (i.e. no "surprise" drills).

- The BC Fire Code requires schools to conduct "total evacuation fire drills" involving all occupants in the building. Partial evacuations involving smaller groups of students would not comply with the fire drill requirements of the Fire Code.
- Schools must continue to update their fire safety plans on an annual basis, as per the BC Fire Code, to "ensure it takes account of the changes in use and other characteristics of the building" (such as current pandemic protocols). School fire safety plans, including fire drill procedures, should be developed in cooperation with the local fire department and other regulatory authorities.

Schools may also need to consult with their local medical health officer for guidance on physical distancing and PPE, based on their site specific conditions and evacuation procedures. In the event of an actual emergency, emergency procedures must take precedence over COVID-19 preventive measures.

Communication and Training/Orientation

School districts and schools must clearly and consistently communicate guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and resources available for information on COVID-19 as needed. Ensure communication of infection prevention and exposure control measures is relayed in multiple formats for ease of understanding (e.g., visual representation, videos using sign language, etc.)

As well, school districts and schools should consider providing early and ongoing health and safety orientation for staff (including newly hired staff and staff who change worksites), parents/caregivers and students and other adults in the school (e.g. teacher candidates in practicums, volunteers) to ensure all members of the school community are well informed of their responsibilities and resources available. Examples include online information, distribution of orientation and training materials that are clear, concise and easily understood, interactive sessions with Q&A's, material in multiple languages to meet community needs, etc.

WorkSafeBC recommends that schools and school districts:

- 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 COVID19 pandemic and keep records of that training.
 - Document COVID-19-related meetings and post minutes at a central location.
- Keep records of instruction and training provided to workers regarding COVID-19, as well as reports of exposure and first aid records.

As per WorkSafeBC guidance, employers need to involve frontline workers, joint health and safety committees, and supervisors in identifying protocols for their workplace. School districts and schools should ensure they have active Site Committees and Joint Health and Safety Committees that meet regularly, including prior to any transitions between stages, and are included in school district/school planning efforts.

Curriculum, Programs and Activities

All curriculum, programs and activities should operate in alignment with provincial K-12 health and safety guidelines, including school-led activities held off campus (e.g. sports academies, community-based programs/courses). Students and staff are also required to follow the safety protocols required by the off-campus facility. Where there is a conflict, the safety protocols required by the off-campus facility should be followed. Electives (e.g. Fine Arts education, etc.) are important to student health and well-being and staff in these programs should be:

- reassured these programs will continue throughout each stage; and
- be supported in finding creative ways to redesign/deliver courses, if needed.

Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines outlined in this document, and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in music classes and music equipment use.

For guidelines specific to visitor access during school hours (e.g. guest speakers), see the Visitor Access/Community Use section in this document. As visitors are not part of learning groups, they would need to adhere to the physical distancing requirements outlined in the Physical Distancing section of this document.

In-person inter-school events including competitions, tournaments and festivals, should not occur at this time. This will be re-evaluated throughout the school year. Where possible, schools should seek virtual alternatives to continue to support these events in a different format.

For information on mask requirements for K-12 staff and middle and secondary school students, see the Personal Protective Equipment section. Additional guidance for mask use during specific activities in middle and secondary schools is detailed in the sections below.

Adult Education

Adult education programs operated by K-12 schools should follow the guidance outlined in this document, particularly the guidance provided for adults in a school environment. This includes respecting environmental and administrative measures, such as maintaining physical distance (1-2m). Note that learning groups cannot be applied to adult-only settings (an “all adult” learning group is not an acceptable public health measure).

Arts Education

Practice diligent hand hygiene: wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). Students and staff should wash their hands:

- at the beginning and at the end of the class;
- before and after handling shared equipment; and
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Have personal spaces and equipment set up for students, as best as possible.

- Avoid sharing equipment by numbering and assigning each student their own supplies, if possible.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment as per guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.
- When entering classroom spaces, encourage students to use designated areas for leaving personal items, such as in designated desk areas or a marked side of the room.

Demonstrations and instruction: ensure appropriate space is available to allow for all students to view and understand demonstrations.

- If needed, break class into smaller groups to allow appropriate spacing.

Dual Credit

Students may earn “dual credit” towards graduation by enrolling in and successfully completing courses at specific post-secondary institutions.

- For students taking dual credit courses taken in secondary schools, the health and safety guidelines outlined in this document apply.
- For students taking dual credit courses in post-secondary institutions, schools must ensure students are aware of and adhere to the health and safety guidelines set out by post-secondary institutions. Information on health and safety guidelines for post-secondary institutions can be found on the B.C. Government website and in individual institutions.

Extended Day Classes

Extended day classes should occur when:

- Under Stages 2 to 4, physical distance can be maintained between members of different learning groups; and
- Under Stage 2, minimized physical contact is practiced by those within the same learning group.

Field Trips

Stage 2

When planning field trips, staff should follow existing policies and procedures as well as the COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. Additional measures specific to field trips should be taken, including:

- Field trip locations must provide supervisors with their COVID-19 operating plan and ensure it does not conflict with the school’s plan. The field trip supervisor should then share the plan with parents and school administration.
- For transportation, see guidance in the transportation section in this document.
- Use of parent volunteers for driving groups of students is not permitted during stages 2 to 4.
- Schools must ensure that volunteers providing supervision are trained in and strictly adhere to physical distancing and other health and safety guidelines (including wearing masks). Refer to the Appendix J: Prioritizing Health and Safety – Flow Charts section for guidance on health and safety measures if the volunteer is not part of the learning group.
- Ensure field trip numbers align with the PHO guidance and Orders.
- Field trips to outdoor locations are preferable.
- Conduct a risk assessment considering the field trip location - science exploration vs. exploring at the beach.
 - Schools/districts should consider developing a risk assessment specific to field trips under Stage 2, in accordance with their school/district policies and the guidelines outlined in this document.
- If using public transportation for field trips (e.g., SkyTrain, public buses), schools should adhere to local transit authorities guidance (e.g., mandatory mask use for Translink and BC Transit, as well as practicing hand hygiene before and after use).
- No overnight field trips should occur.
- International Field Trips - cancelled until further notice.

Stage 3 & 4 No field trips should occur under Stages 3 and 4.

Food/Culinary Programs

Schools can continue to include food preparation as part of learning programs for students. The following guidelines should be applied:

Food Safety

- In the case of food and culinary programs, where food is prepared as part of learning and is consumed by the students who prepared it, the following health and safety measures should apply:
 - Continue to follow normal food safety measures and requirements
 - Implement the cleaning and disinfecting measures outlined in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of this document
 - Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols section of this document

- FOODSAFE Level 1 covers important food safety and worker safety information including foodborne illness, receiving and storing food, preparing food, serving food, and cleaning and sanitizing. It is a helpful resource for those seeking education and training on food safety practices.

Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols

Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19.) Students and staff should wash their hands:

- at the beginning and at the end of the class
- before and after handling food or before and after eating and drinking
- whenever hands are visibly dirty

Refer to the Cleaning and Disinfecting section for cleaning/disinfecting protocols.

For laundry, follow the instructions provided in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of these guidelines.

Learning Groups

As students tend to prepare food together in culinary programs, use of learning groups is encouraged.

Food Services

Schools can continue to provide food services, including for sale.

Some schools offer food services that are regulated under the [Food Premises Regulation](#). These are typically cafeterias, though may include some meal programs.

- If food service is provided in schools that is regulated under the Food Premises Regulation, no additional measures beyond those articulated in this document and regular requirements as outlined in the regulation need to be implemented (e.g. a FOODSAFE trained staff member, a food safety plan, etc.).
 - Additional considerations that may be relevant when providing food services in schools are detailed in the WorkSafeBC Restaurants, cafes, pubs, and nightclubs: Protocols for returning to operation
 - The September 18th, 2020 Order of the Provincial Health Officer Food and Liquor Serving Premises does not apply to schools. As such, the restriction of six patrons at a table does not apply. However, requirements related to learning groups and physical distancing outlined in these guidelines continue to apply.
 - Schools/school districts should reach out to their local health authority if they are unsure if their food services are regulated.
 - [Food Safety Legislation](#) and the [Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools](#) continue to apply as relevant.

For food contact surfaces, schools should ensure any sanitizers or disinfectants used are approved for use in a food service application and are appropriate for use against COVID-19. These may be different than the products noted in this document for general cleaning and disinfection. Additional information is available on the [BCCDC Website](#).

Schools can continue to accept food donations to support learning and the delivery of meal programs, breakfast clubs and other food access initiatives.

Schools should not allow homemade food items to be made available to other students at this time (e.g., birthday treats, bake sale items).

Schools should continue to emphasize that food and beverages should not be shared.

Refer to Appendix D - Supplementary Guidance for School Meal Programs in the BCCDC Public Health Guidance or K-12 School Settings for guidance on the delivery of school programs, breakfast clubs and other food access initiatives that are not regulated under the Food Premises Regulation.

Fundraisers

Schools can continue to offer fundraisers that can be implemented in line with the health and safety guidelines outlined in this document. If the fundraisers involve the sale of food items, they should also align with the [Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools](#).

Textiles Programs

Practice diligent hand hygiene: wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). Students and staff should wash their hands:

- at the beginning and at the end of the class;
- before and after handling shared tools or equipment; and
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Have personal spaces and tools set up for students, as best as possible.

- Avoid sharing hand tools by numbering and assigning each student their own supplies, if possible.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment as per guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.
- When entering classroom spaces, encourage students to use designated areas for leaving personal items, such as in designated desk areas or a marked side of the room.

Safety demonstrations and instruction: ensure appropriate space is available to allow for all students to view and understand demonstrations.

- If needed, break class into smaller groups to allow appropriate spacing.

For laundry, follow the instructions provided in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.

Kindergarten Entry

Students transitioning into Kindergarten will need additional time to adjust to the new school environment and develop relationships with educators and peers in the context of COVID-19.

- Consider implementing pre-transition strategies to familiarize students with the people, spaces, and expectations as they start school.
 - send home a social story from the perspective of the student that describes what a day may look like, how they may feel, and what their choices are;
 - share a video of the school that outlines the health and safety measures used including signage, washing hands, and class environment;
 - provide an introduction to and a warm welcome from the educators in the building;
 - organize video calls to families from the classroom so children and families can see the space and ask questions.
- Provide clear, simple communications to parents about having to limit the number of adults in the building and the classroom, and the need for adults to maintain physical distance from each other and from children not their own.
- Implement gradual entry of students, commencing no earlier than when all students are welcomed into schools, and may include:
 - Scheduling fewer caregivers into the classroom at a time to account for physical distancing of adults;
 - Outdoor learning or transition activities with a caregiver in attendance.
- Students themselves will be part of a learning group. Ensure enough space for parents/caregivers to maintain physical distance.
- As students transition to full-time, consider frequent communication with families with photos and/or information about classroom activities.
- Provide research to parents, caregivers and staff that demonstrates low transmission rates in young children.
- Kindergarten students are expected to minimize physical contact. Consider how the room is configured and rearrange furniture to encourage small group and individual play.
- Provide clear communication to students about expectations for the classroom materials, play, and physical contact. Gently remind students of the expectations throughout the day and encourage students to kindly support one another.

- Teachers should continue to provide comfort and reassurance in a way that feels comfortable for the teacher and the student. Students can be comforted through different means, including:
 - stories
 - comfort objects
 - drink of water
 - songs
 - soothing words
- Kindergarten classrooms should maintain a focus on play-based learning, while limiting the use of shared materials and following the cleaning and disinfecting protocols outlined in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.

Music Programs

All classes, programs and activities (e.g. Band, Choir) can continue to occur where:

- K-12 staff and students in Grades 4 to 12 must wear masks while indoors. Masks can be temporarily removed while engaging in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument), but must be worn while singing.
- Under Stage 2:
 - physical contact is minimized for those within the same learning group, and students and staff are spaced as far apart as possible;
 - physical distance (1-2m) can be maintained for staff and for middle and secondary school students when interacting outside of their learning groups;
 - physical distance (1-2m) can be maintained for elementary students when interacting outside of their learning groups when indoors.

Under Stages 3 to 4:

- physical distance (1-2m) can be maintained for staff, middle and secondary school students at all times.

Schools could consider installing a barrier made of transparent material in places where physical distance cannot be regularly maintained (e.g., between an itinerant teacher and a learning group). See guidance from WorkSafeBC on designing effective barriers for more information.

No in-person inter-school competitions/performances/events should occur. This will be re-evaluated throughout the school year. Where possible, schools should seek virtual alternatives to continue to support these events in a different format.

Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in music classes and music equipment use.

Music Education should be delivered in line with [Guidance for Music Classes in BC During COVID-19](#) developed by the B.C. Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in B.C. for additional information.

Shared Office Space for Staff

[WorkSafeBC guidance on Offices](#) lists measures that should be considered and implemented as applicable to the workplace for staff in office environments (both inside and outside of “bricks and mortar schools”, including Distributed Learning office, school/school district offices. Note that learning groups cannot be applied to adult-only settings (an “all adult” learning group is not an acceptable public health measure).

Physical and Health Education (PHE)/Outdoor Programs

- Create space between students and staff, and encourage outdoor activities and programs as much as possible.
- K-12 Teachers should plan physical activities that limit the use of shared equipment and:
 - Do not involve prolonged physical contact (i.e. physical contact beyond a brief moment) or crowding. For example, activities such as tag and touch football are low-risk, whereas activities like wrestling or partner dancing should be avoided. Teachers are encouraged to adapt activities wherever possible to reduce physical contact, including within learning groups.
 - Support physical distancing outside of learning groups.
- K-12 staff are required to wear masks during PHE/outdoor program classes when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.
- 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 participating in physical activity and equipment use.
 - Disinfect teaching aids (e.g. clipboards, white boards, pens, plastic bins for transporting materials, etc.).

Refer to Physical and Health Education (PHE) Canada guidelines:

- Include more individual pursuits than traditional team activities such as dance, alternative environment and land-based activities, exercises without equipment, fitness, mindfulness, gymnastics, and target games.

- Explore local parks and green spaces to promote outdoor learning and activity.
- Focus on activities that do not use equipment.
- For students in Grades K to 3, PHE and outdoor programs can proceed in alignment with the guidance above.
- For students in Grades 4 to 12, PHE and outdoor programs can proceed in alignment with the guidance above and the following additional requirements:

HIGH INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- For high intensity stationary physical activities (e.g. exercise bike, weightlifting), people and equipment need to be spaced 2 metres apart if indoors, **including for those within the same learning group**. If 2 metre spacing is not available, and the activity cannot be moved outdoors, then the activity must not take place and a different activity should be selected.
 - Masks cannot replace the need for 2 metres between students and/or fitness equipment during high intensity stationary activities indoors.
- For high intensity physical activities that involve movement (e.g. basketball, soccer), indoors or outdoors:
 - **Students within the same learning group** are not required to maintain physical distancing, but the activity must be delivered in a way that reduces the likelihood of physical contact beyond a brief moment.
 - **Students from different learning groups** are required to maintain physical distancing (2m).
- Wearing masks during high-intensity physical activity (stationary or with movement, indoor or outdoors) is left to students' personal choice.

LOW INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

- For low intensity activities (e.g. yoga, walking), students are required to wear masks when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.

Why are masks not required during high intensity physical activity in middle & secondary schools?

During high intensity physical activity, respiration rates are increased (resulting in a wet mask) and the wearer is more likely to touch their face and adjust the mask frequently. These factors lessen the protective value a mask may offer. In addition, a wet mask is more difficult to breathe through; those wearing masks during high intensity activities should change them as soon as they become wet.

As a general rule, high intensity physical activities involve sustained heavier breathing and elevated heart rates – most people engaged in these activities cannot say more than a few words without having to catch their breath. In contrast, most people engaged in low intensity physical activities can carry on a conversation without having to catch their breath.

Playgrounds

There is no current evidence of COVID-19 transmission in playground environments. Playgrounds are a safe environment. The following measures should be taken when using playgrounds:

- Ensure appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play
- Attempt to minimize direct contact between students
- Sand and water can be used for play if children wash their hands before and after play. COVID-19 does not survive well on surfaces, other than hard surfaces. There is no evidence showing that the virus survives on sand, in water or on playdough.
- More information on playgrounds is available on the BC Centre for Disease Control website.

School Libraries/Learning Commons

School libraries / learning commons facilities should be open and book exchange can continue to occur during stages 1 to 4.

At this time, 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/return of books or paper-based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

Students and staff should practice diligent hand hygiene: wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds (antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). Students and staff should wash their hands:

- before and after handling shared equipment/resources;
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g. books, magazines, worksheets, etc.) and items with plastic covers (e.g. DVDs) are low risk items. Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as normal. There is no need to clean, disinfect or quarantine these items for any period of time.

For information on cleaning, including technological devices, see the guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.

When visiting the library / learning commons, students and staff should remain in their learning group as much as possible and maintain physical distance from members outside of their learning group. For more information on learning groups and maintaining physical distancing, see the Learning Groups and Physical Distancing section.

Students should bring their personal school supplies for classes held within the space. For makerspace and STEM activities, see the STEM Programs section.

Schools should install a barrier made of transparent material at the library check out desk if physical distance cannot be regularly maintained. See guidance from WorkSafeBC on designing effective barriers for more information.

The BC Teacher Librarians Association has developed [Recommendations for Access to Library Learning Commons Resources to Meet COVID-19 Requirements](#).

School Sports

Programs, activities (e.g. intramurals, sports team practices and games) and sports academies can occur if:

- Activities do not involve prolonged physical contact (i.e. physical contact beyond a brief moment). For example, activities such as soccer and touch football are low-risk, whereas activities like wrestling should be avoided;
- Schools are encouraged to adapt activities/sports as needed to reduce physical contact
- No spectators are in attendance - aside from participants, only the minimum number of individuals required to run the activity should be present.
- Masks are worn by K-12 staff and other adults when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.
- For students in Grades K to 3:
 - **Students within the same learning group** are not required to maintain physical distancing, but the activity must be delivered in a way that reduces the likelihood of physical contact beyond a brief moment.
 - **Students from different learning groups** are required to maintain physical distancing (2m) when indoors. When outdoors, activities must be delivered in a way that reduces the likelihood of physical contact beyond a brief moment.
- For students in Grades 4 to 12:

HIGH INTENSITY SPORT ACTIVITIES

- For high intensity stationary activities, students and fitness equipment (e.g. exercise bike, treadmills, weight training equipment) need to be spaced 2 metres apart if indoors, **including for those within the same learning group**. If 2 metre spacing is not available, and the activity cannot be moved outdoors, then the activity must not take place and a different activity should be selected.
 - Masks cannot replace the need for 2 metres between students and/or fitness equipment during high intensity stationary activities indoors.
- For high intensity physical activities that involve movement (e.g. basketball, soccer), indoors or outdoors:
 - **Students within the same learning group** are not required to maintain physical distancing, but the activity must be delivered in a way that reduces the likelihood of physical contact beyond a brief moment.
 - **Students from different learning groups** are required to maintain physical distancing (2m).

- Wearing masks during high-intensity physical activity (stationary or with movement, indoor or outdoors) is left to students' personal choice.

LOW INTENSITY SPORT ACTIVITIES

- For low intensity activities (e.g. stretching, golf), middle and secondary students are required to wear masks when they are indoors, unable to maintain physical distancing (2m), and a barrier is not present.

As a general rule, high intensity physical activities involve sustained heavier breathing and elevated heart rates – most people engaged in these activities cannot say more than a few words without having to catch their breath. In contrast, most people engaged in low intensity physical activities can carry on a conversation without having to catch their breath.

- 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 participating in sport activities and equipment use.
- Disinfect teaching aids (e.g., clipboards, white boards, pens, plastic bins for transporting materials etc.).
- Sport activities should be held outside whenever possible.
- No in-person inter-school competitions/events should occur at this time.
- 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 follow the Ministry of Education guidelines outlined in this document.

STEM Programs

Practice diligent hand hygiene: wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). Students and staff should wash their hands:

- before and after handling shared tools or equipment;
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Have personal spaces and tools set up for students, as best as possible

- Avoid sharing hand tools by numbering and assigning each student their own supplies, if possible.
- When entering classroom spaces, encourage students to use designated areas for leaving personal items, such as in designated desk areas or a marked side of the room.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment as per guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.

Safety demonstrations and instruction: ensure appropriate space is available to allow for all students to view and understand demonstrations.

- If needed, break class into smaller groups to allow appropriate spacing.

Science Labs

Practice diligent hand hygiene: wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19.) Students and staff should wash their hands:

- before and after handling shared tools or equipment;
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Have personal spaces and tools set up for students, as best as possible

- Avoid sharing hand tools by numbering and assigning each student their own supplies, if possible.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment as per guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.

Safety demonstrations and instruction: ensure appropriate space is available to allow for all students to view and understand demonstrations.

- If needed, break class into smaller groups to allow appropriate spacing.

Technology Education (Shop Classes & Trades In Training Programs)

Practice diligent hand hygiene: wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). Students and staff should wash their hands:

- before and after handling shared tools or equipment;
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.
- Have personal spaces and tools set up for students, as best as possible
- Avoid sharing hand tools by numbering and assigning each student their own supplies, if possible.
- Clean and disinfect shared equipment as per guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of these guidelines.
- When entering classroom spaces, encourage students to use designated areas for leaving personal items, such as in designated desk areas or a marked side of the room.
- Safety demonstrations and instruction: ensure appropriate space is available to allow for all students to view and understand demonstrations.
- If needed, break class into smaller groups to allow appropriate spacing.

Ongoing collaboration and communication with post-secondary institutions for Trades in Training or other pre-trades apprenticeship programs is crucial.

- Ensure that staff and students in the K-12 school and the post-secondary institution are aware of health and safety measures in place.

- 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 COVID-19 web page, including:
 - What workers should do
 - Staying safe at work
 - Information specific to various industries

Theatre, Film, and Dance Programs

No in-person inter-school festivals/events should occur. This will be re-evaluated throughout the school year. Where possible, schools should seek virtual alternatives to continue to support these events in a different format.

Dance and drama classes should minimize contact by reorganizing warmups, exercises and performance work into smaller groups allowing for physical distancing to occur as per individual space limitations.

- This could mean that portions of the class act as an audience and audit work.
- This could mean that portions of the class work in alternate areas on their own small group or individual exercises.

Blocking of scenes and dance numbers should be choreographed in ways that limit physical touch and face-to-face interactions, and instead seek creative solutions to dynamic storytelling and expressive movement.

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, 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 in this document and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in drama, film or dance classes.

Costume items should be limited in their shared use at this time. For laundry, follow the instructions provided in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of these guidelines.

Where possible, make use of outdoor and site-specific performance spaces that allow for physical distancing for drama, film and dance, especially if working in theatres, green rooms and studios that have no windows.

Consider alternatives for audience engagement such as online streaming, in class or family-oriented presentations.

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.

Work Experience

The work environment has changed due to the impacts of COVID-19 and employers will need to follow current guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC. Students can still engage in work placements in accordance with the following guidance:

- Schools and school districts must ensure students are covered with the required, valid workplace insurance for placements at standard worksites and follow WorkSafeBC guidelines.
- Information for workers is available on the WorkSafeBC COVID-19 web page, including:
 - What workers should do
 - Staying safe at work
 - Information specific to various industries
- For current and any new placements, standards in the ministry Work Experience Program Guide must be followed. (Note: As part of setup and monitoring, worksite visits can now be conducted virtually if needed.)
- Schools and school districts will assess and determine if it is safe for their students to continue with existing work placements or to begin new placements, considering Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC guidance regarding COVID-19. To ensure awareness and support for placements under these conditions, it is recommended that school districts and schools obtain parent/guardian sign-off for all new and continuing placements during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Students and support workers who accompany special needs students to work sites, life skills course and locations, etc., will adhere to the health and safety guidelines of the workplace including wearing PPE if required.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities and special interest clubs should occur when:

- Under Stages 2 to 4, physical distance can be maintained between members of different learning groups; and
- Under Stage 2, reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same learning group, and adequate space is provided to avoid crowding.

Non-educational activities such as student dances, performances, and in-person celebrations are considered to be events and must adhere to the requirements of the [PHO Gathering and Events Order](#).

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 Checks

Please do not enter the school or district facility if any of the answers below are Yes.

		Daily Health Check		
1.	Symptoms of Illness	Do you have any of the following new key symptoms?	Circle One	
		Fever (above 38 C) or chills	Yes	No
		Cough	Yes	No
		Loss of sense of smell or taste	Yes	No
		Difficulty breathing	Yes	No
		Sore throat	Yes	No
		Loss of appetite	Yes	No
		Extreme fatigue or tiredness	Yes	No
		Headache	Yes	No
		Body aches	Yes	No
		Nausea or vomiting	Yes	No
		Diarrhea	Yes	No
2.	International Travel	Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	Yes	No
3.	Confirmed Contact	Have you been notified by Public Health to isolate or identified as a close contact?	Yes	No

If you are displaying symptoms consistent with COVID-19, refer to HealthLink BC at 811

Refer to the BC CDC Document "[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)" for further direction if you are displaying the abovementioned symptoms

Appendix C: What to do if Students or Staff Members Develop Symptoms

<i>If a Student Develops Any Symptoms of Illness</i>	<i>If a Staff Member Develops Any Symptoms of Illness</i>
<p>Parents or caregivers must keep the student at home</p> <p>IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL:</p> <p>Staff must take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area. 2. Contact the student’s parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible. 3. Where possible, maintain a 2-metre distance from the ill student. If not possible, staff should wear a non-medical mask or face covering if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth. 4. Provide the student with a non-medical mask or tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene. 5. Avoid touching the student’s body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene. 6. Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene. 7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas). <p>Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p>Staff must stay home</p> <p>IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK:</p> <p>Staff should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p>If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others. 2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. 3. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up. 4. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).
<p>The threshold for reporting student and/or staff illness to public health should be determined in consultation with the school medical health officer</p>	
<p>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</p>	

Appendix D: Hand Washing Protocol and When to Perform Hand Hygiene at School



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Hand Hygiene

SOAP OR ALCOHOL-BASED HAND RUB: Which is best?  **Either will clean your hands: use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled.**



Remove hand and wrist jewellery

HOW TO HAND WASH

- 

Wet hands with warm (not hot or cold) running water
- 

Apply liquid or foam soap
- 

Lather soap covering all surfaces of hands for 20-30 seconds
- 

Rinse thoroughly under running water
- 

Pat hands dry thoroughly with paper towel
- 

Use paper towel to turn off the tap

HOW TO USE HAND RUB

- 

Ensure hands are visibly clean (if soiled, follow hand washing steps)
- 

Apply about a loonie-sized amount to your hands
- 

Rub all surfaces of your hand and wrist until completely dry (15-20 seconds)

COVID19_HH_001



 **Ministry of Health**

 **BC Centre for Disease Control**

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.

Appendix D Continued: Hand Washing Protocol and 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 cohorts (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.

Appendix D Continued: Enhanced Cleaning Procedures

Enhanced Cleaning

GUIDE FOR REGULAR CUSTODIANS AND REPLACEMENT CUSTODIAL STAFF

Regular custodians and replacement staff will have regular daily duties with emphasis on all high-touch points, which include the following:

- general cleaning and disinfecting of the premises to occur at least once per day
- High-touch surfaces to be cleaned at least twice per day
- Empty garbage containers daily
- Washrooms to be cleaned at least twice per day
- District approved detergents and sanitizer must be used and stored properly as per the labels



Main entrance doors

- door handles on both sides of door
- push area above door handle on both sides of door (see fig.1)



Exit doors

- handles on both sides of door
- push area above door handle on both sides of door (see fig.1)



Reception

- countertop
- telephones



Classrooms

- door handles and area above door handles on both sides of door (see fig.1)
- light switches
- cabinet handles
- teacher chairs: top back of chair; top and bottom of arm rests (see fig.3)
- classroom chairs and stools: top back of chair; sides of chair/stool (see fig.4)
- desks/tables: top and sides of student desks/tables. Includes 1"-2" of area immediately under the sides (see fig.5), these may be cleaned daily if single use space
- telephones



Washrooms

- door handles
- toilet seat and handle
- lever on paper towel dispenser
- lever on soap dispenser
- faucets
- toilet stall: locking mechanisms
- toilet stall: area around locking mechanisms on both sides (see fig.2)



Handrails

- disinfection of handrails in the stairwell



Exceptions

- Custodial staff do not clean the following:
- shop equipment
 - kitchen equipment
 - computers
 - furniture brought in by teachers

Toys

Toys may be used in classrooms and shall be cleaned daily. Selection of toys should be considered to ensure ability to clean and also capacity within the custodial services in the school.

FIG 1.



Push area above door handle

FIG 2.



Toilet stall: area around locking mechanisms

FIG 3.



Teacher chairs: top back of chair; top and bottom of arm rest

FIG 4.



Classroom chairs: top back of chair; sides of chair

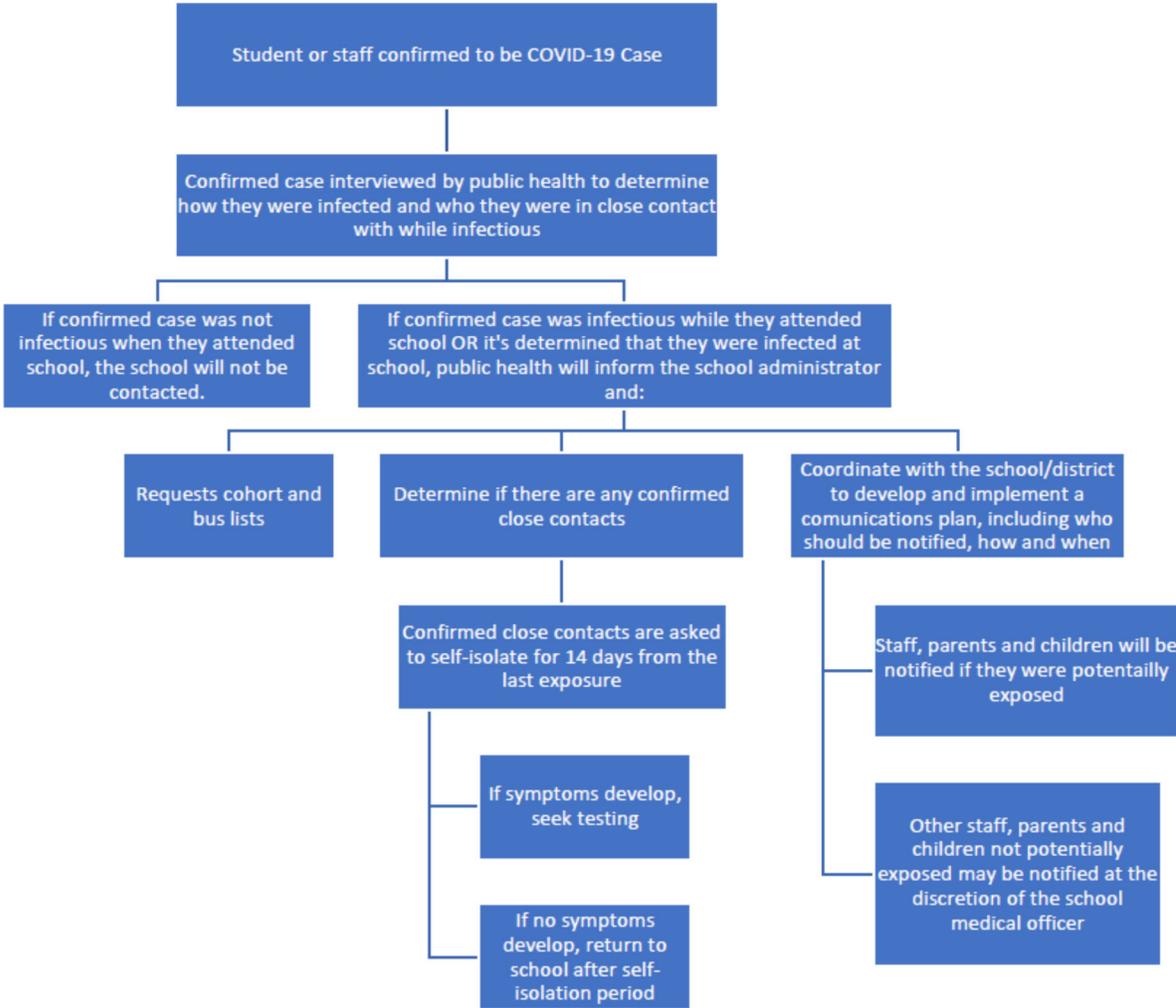
FIG 5.



Top and sides of desk, including 1"-2" area immediately under sides

If you have additional questions about these enhanced cleaning procedures, contact the manager of operations at 250.421.3067

Appendix E: Public Health Actions if a Staff, Student or Other Person Who Has Been in the School is a Confirmed COVID-19 Case



Confirmed close contacts are determined based on the length of time of exposure and nature of the interaction. Only public health can determine who is a close contact.

Appendix F: Supplemental Guidance for School Meal Programs

This guidance is adapted from the [WorkSafe BC Restaurants, cafes, pubs, and nightclubs: Protocols for returning to operation](#) to support the delivery of school meal programs, breakfast clubs and other food access initiatives that are not regulated under the *Food Premises Regulation*.

General Considerations

- Students from different cohorts can access school meal programs at the same time if necessary (e.g. a morning breakfast program offered only to students who may need it). Physical distance between students from different cohorts should be maintained as much as is practical to do so while ensuring the program can be offered.

Food Delivery and Preparation

- Limit the number of staff/volunteers in a food preparation or eating area at any one time to those necessary to ensure the program can be delivered.
- Inform delivery agents and other volunteers of how to adhere to the school's visitor policy, where food should be delivered to, and what hours food can be accepted at.
- Develop and establish hand hygiene procedures for all staff/volunteers. This includes before and after leaving the food preparation area and using equipment.
- Donated food, including Traditional foods, can continue to be accepted in line with regular food safety precautions for accepting food donations.

Cleaning & Disinfecting

- Continue with regular cleaning & disinfecting practices for food services.
- Identify high-touch surfaces to ensure they are cleaned and disinfected in line with the guidance in this document and existing food safety practices.
 - High-touch surfaces may include ingredients and containers, equipment such as switches, dials and handles and shared serving utensils if they are used by multiple people.

Food Distribution to Students

- Students should practice hand hygiene before accessing food.
- Schools can continue to provide self-service stations (e.g., salad bar, self-serve breakfast, etc.).
 - Consider pre-plating or serving food directly if students are unable to consistently implement personal measures (e.g. practice regular hand hygiene, not touch their face, etc.) or to prevent gathering or crowding.
- Post signs to remind students to practice hand hygiene and to maintain space from one another.
- If food is served to students, re-usable plates, utensils and containers can be used, with normal cleaning and disinfecting methods for dishwashing implemented.
- Provided food safety precautions are followed, leftover food can be sent home with students.

Appendix G Universal Precautions

The rules and principles of infection control are the same no matter what infectious agent is the cause for concern.

Components of Universal Precautions include:

- Personal Protective Equipment
 - Wearing gloves, masks, eye protection
 - Gloves must be discarded after each use.
 - Hands must be washed each time gloves are discarded
- Hand washing
- Decontamination
 - Cleaning methods, spill clean up, disinfectant spray
- Waste Disposal
 - Sharps containers, Biohazard bags, double bagging
 - Treat all human blood and potentially infectious body fluids as contagious.
 - Precautions should be taken when handling stool, urine, nasal secretions, and vomit.
- When lifting
 - Use good body mechanics
 - Good posture
 - Use both hands
 - Avoid twisting

Appendix H Safe Diapering

Safe and Healthy Diapering to reduce the spread of germs

Keep a hand on the child for safety at all times!



1. PREPARE

- Cover the diaper changing surface with disposable liner.
- If you will use diaper cream, dispense it onto a tissue now.
- Bring your supplies (e.g., clean diaper, wipes, diaper cream, gloves, plastic or waterproof bag for soiled clothing, extra clothes) to the diapering area.



2. CLEAN CHILD

- Place the child on diapering surface and unfasten diaper.
- Clean the child's diaper area with disposable wipes. Always wipe front to back!
- Keep soiled diaper/clothing away from any surfaces that cannot be easily cleaned. Securely bag soiled clothing.



3. REMOVE TRASH

- Place used wipes in the soiled diaper.
- Discard the soiled diaper and wipes in the trash can.
- Remove and discard gloves, if used.



4. REPLACE DIAPER

- Slide a fresh diaper under the child.
- Apply diaper cream, if needed, with a tissue or a freshly gloved finger.
- Fasten the diaper and dress the child.



5. WASH CHILD'S HANDS

- Use soap and water to wash the child's hands thoroughly.
- Return the child to a supervised area.



6. CLEAN UP

- Remove liner from the changing surface and discard in the trash can.
- Wipe up any visible soil with damp paper towels or a baby wipe.
- Wet the **entire surface** with disinfectant; make sure you read and follow the directions on the disinfecting spray, fluid or wipe. Choose disinfectant appropriate for the surface material.



7. WASH YOUR HANDS

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water.



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
National Center for Emerging and
Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

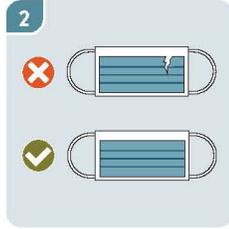
CDC/PH

Appendix I How to Use a Mask

Help prevent the spread of COVID-19: How to use a mask



1 Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before touching the mask. If you don't have soap and water, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



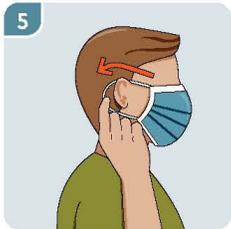
2 Inspect the mask to ensure it's not damaged.



3 Turn the mask so the coloured side is facing outward.



4 Put the mask over your face and if there is a metallic strip, press it to fit the bridge of your nose



5 Put the loops around each of your ears, or tie the top and bottom straps.



6 Make sure your mouth and nose are covered and there are no gaps. Expand the mask by pulling the bottom of it under your chin.



7 Press the metallic strip again so it moulds to the shape of your nose, and wash your hands again.



8 Don't touch the mask while you're wearing it. If you do, wash your hands.



9 Don't wear the mask if it gets wet or dirty. Don't reuse the mask. Follow correct procedure for removing the mask.

Removing the mask



1 Wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



2 Lean forward to remove your mask. Touch only the ear loops or ties, not the front of the mask.



3 Dispose of the mask safely.



4 Wash your hands. If required, follow the procedure for putting on a new mask.

Note: Graphics adapted from BC Centre for Disease Control (BC Ministry of Health), "How to wear a face mask."

Appendix J: Prioritizing Health and Safety – Flow Charts

There is a suite of measures that can be implemented in school settings to prevent the transmission of COVID19. These flow charts have been developed to assist school districts and independent school authorities in navigating the layered approach of environmental and administrative measures available to schools (e.g. organizing students/staff in learning groups, maintaining physical distance, enhancing cleaning and disinfecting protocols, using outdoor space for learning activities, implementing staggered schedules, reinforcing effective personal practices such as diligent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, implementing robust illness policies for students and staff).

School districts and independent school authorities must ensure that all options for the highest level of measures have been explored before moving to the next level. **All decisions should be made to prioritize health and safety and in consideration of the best interest of students.**

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF (INCLUDING ITINERANT STAFF)

Schools should minimize the number of staff who interact with learning groups they are not a part of as much as possible while continuing to support learning and a positive, healthy and safe environment. The following flow chart outlines the considerations to assign staff to a learning group and the steps to take when a staff cannot be assigned to a learning group.

Level 1: Can the staff member be assigned to a learning group?
Consider learning group size limits, nature of staff's role and responsibilities, and student needs.

Level 2: If no, can the staff member fulfill their duties while maintaining physical distancing?
Consider reconfiguring rooms or securing an alternate space.

Level 3: If no, can environmental measures be implemented?
Consider installing a physical barrier made of transparent materials, or having the staff member provide remote/virtual services.

Level 4: If none of the measures outlined above can be implemented, the staff member should maintain as much physical distance as possible. Also, see the Personal Protective Equipment section for information on mask requirements for all K-12 staff.

Appendix J Continued :Instructional Delivery in Secondary Schools

Schools and school districts are required to deliver the full breadth of provincial curriculum as outlined in the Expectations for Each Stage. The following flow chart outlines considerations for schools and school districts when planning instructional delivery to students in secondary schools.

1. Organize students and staff into learning groups, considering the following:

- a. Can “natural learning groups” be identified through analysis of student enrolment data (students taking the same core subjects and/or electives)?
- b. Which courses or programs could be delivered using physical distancing (based on the required learning environment and available space relative to number of students enrolled), and can therefore be excluded from learning group considerations¹?

2. Create timetables including “in-learning group” and “cross-learning group” classes

- a. “In-learning group” class = all students are from the same learning group; students must minimize physical contact.
- b. “Cross-learning group” class = students are from different learning groups; students must maintain physical distance (2m)

Note: See the Personal Protective Equipment section for additional information on mask requirements for middle and secondary students.

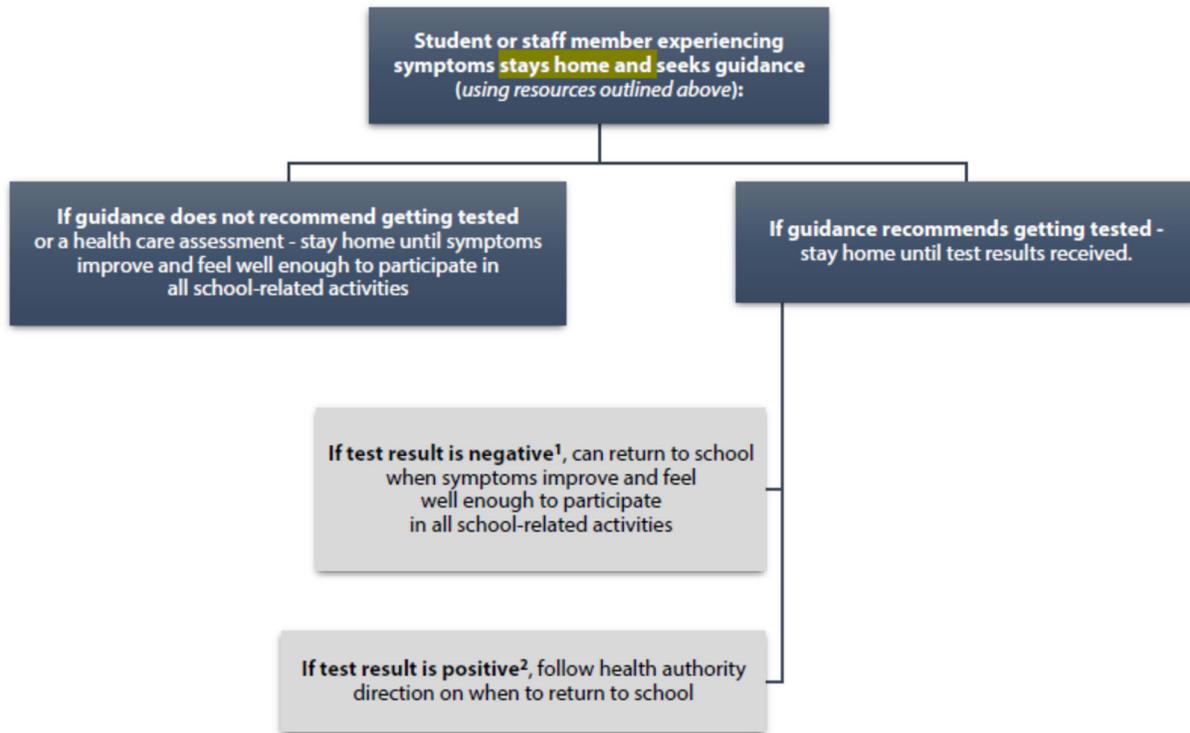
3. Supplement in-class instruction with self-directed or remote learning for those courses/programs that cannot be accommodated via learning group or physical distancing approaches.

Requiring students to wear masks during class is not an acceptable alternative to the use of learning groups or physical distancing.

¹ Within learning groups, minimizing physical contact is the rule. Consider focusing application of learning groups on subject areas that cannot be delivered using physical distancing strategies.

Appendix K: COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing and Return to School

When a student, staff or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced and if a COVID-19 test is recommended. See the [K-12 Health Check app](#) and BCCDC “[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)” resource for specific guidance. Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC online [Self-Assessment Tool](#), or call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.



1. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless the person develops a new illness. [BCCDC](#) has information on receiving negative test results.
2. Public health will contact everyone with a positive test. Visit the [BCCDC website](#) for more information on [positive test results](#).

Appendix L: Health & Safety Orientation Checklist

This checklist is intended to support school districts and independent school authorities in planning ongoing health & safety orientation for staff (including newly hired staff and staff who changed worksites), other adults (including volunteers and teacher candidates in practicums) and students. Orientation sessions should provide a comprehensive overview of the key principles and guidelines outlined in the resources listed below, as well as information on how these principles and guidelines will be implemented at the school level:

- [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)
- [BCCDC's COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)
- [WorkSafeBC's Education \(K-12\): Protocols for returning to operation](#)
- School/district COVID-19 safety plan

Schools and school districts should ensure their Joint Health and Safety Committee is established prior to the orientation session. At the beginning of the school year, schools/school districts are encouraged to hold Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings more frequently to help identify and address any health and safety concerns in a timely manner.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

- Adopt a trauma-informed approach:
 - where possible, have an employee trained in trauma-informed practice deliver some of the orientation
 - conduct needs-based assessments and regular 'check-ins' after the orientation session, and provide contact information to students/staff for requesting additional supports
 - provide information on how to access counselling services during school start up
 - for staff: consider sharing the [Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal](#) webinar link. This free webinar developed by the Ministry of Education is intended to provide teachers, education assistants, and administrators with information, ideas and strategies that they can use to create compassionate spaces for students.
- Highlight the process used to develop the school/district plan (e.g., alignment with provincial direction, engagement at the local level) and the provincial health and safety guidelines:
 - Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in B.C., the latest research, guidance from the Provincial Health Officer, and evidence that children are at a lower risk of developing and transmitting COVID-19, K- 12 students can return to full-time, in-class instruction in accordance with current public health guidelines for schools.
 - The Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings have been developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Indigenous rights holders

- and education partners, including district/school leaders, teachers, support staff, and parents.
- 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 health and safety measures that promote equity and inclusion, and outline how these principles are reflected in the school/district plan
 - Review the health and safety guidelines and school/district plan, and describe what a school day will look like with the new guidelines (interactions between peers and staff, traffic flow throughout the school, transition time, recess/lunch, school schedule, etc.)
 - Outline how comprehensive prevention and exposure control measures are being implemented in schools to ensure student and staff safety (see the "Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures" section and the Prioritizing Health and Safety Flowcharts in the [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12](#) Settings for more information)
 - Discuss measures for extracurricular activities, as well as school-wide activities and events; provide opportunities for staff and students to put forward alternatives to continue to support events in a different format if needed (e.g., virtual events)
 - Review school emergency and evacuation procedures (e.g., fire drill) considering the new health and safety guidelines (e.g. establishing additional muster points to reduce gathering size)
 - Outline individual responsibilities (e.g., daily health check, stay home if sick, etc.) and remind everyone to do their part (e.g., practice diligent hand hygiene on a regular basis, only bring personal items if they are necessary, specific guidelines for visitors, etc.)
 - Outline measures in place to support students and staff who are immunocompromised
 - Implement strategies to ensure staff and students who cannot attend orientation are made aware of health and safety protocols (e.g., provide a booklet/a video on COVID-19 safety plans)
 - Provide enough time and space for staff, students and families to review the school/district safety plan, ask questions, and provide input; provide contact information for any future questions that may arise
 - Describe the process to address concerns and suggestions regarding the COVID-19 safety plan (e.g., suggestions to support continuous improvement)
 - Outline the process in place to assess and revise the school/district safety plan on an ongoing basis as well as how staff, students and families will be made aware of any changes in the plan
 - Communicate proactively and on an ongoing basis about the changes made to policies, practices, and procedures to ensure staff, students and families are informed in a timely manner
 - Provide a list of resources and links for more information (e.g., BCCDC resources - including a poster on [how to wear a mask](#), [resources from the Government of Canada](#) on how to put on, remove, store

and clean a non- medical mask/face covering, guidelines developed by provincial associations, [Ministry-developed trauma- informed practice](#) resources or other resources such as videos from the [BC Health Emergency Services](#))

CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO STAFF

- Walk staff (administrators, teachers, teachers teaching on call, support staff, itinerant staff, etc.) through what the first days of school will look like to welcome students back
 - If appropriate, consider involving school staff representatives in the delivery of information pertaining to specific area of expertise
- Ensure orientation includes specific health and safety protocols for itinerant staff and specialists (e.g., teachers teaching on call, counsellors, education assistants, teacher candidates) including protocols pertaining to site- based scheduling and access to building
- 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 health and safety protocols in each of the sites (e.g., provide a booklet/a video on COVID-19 safety plans for different schools)
- Share procedures and contact information in case of emergencies
- Introduce members of the Joint Health and Safety Committee or any other safety representative (along with their contact information) and outline the committee/representative's role in helping maintain a healthy and safe workplace
- Outline the process to request and conduct a needs assessment pertaining to health and safety (e.g., implementing additional control measures in a specific setting such as a transparent barrier, signage in the school, etc.)

Appendix M: Selected Annotated Bibliography

Alberta Government. (2020, August 20). COVID-19 information: Guidance for school re-entry—Scenario 1—Open Government. <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/covid-19-information-guidance-school-re-entry-scenario-1>

The Alberta 2020-21 School Re-entry Plan is based on three scenarios: 1. Near-normal conditions (with health measures) 2. Partial in-class learning resumes (with additional health measures) 3. In-school classes suspended/cancelled. This document provides guidance to the Alberta school system for scenario 1. The document includes guidance on health and safety measures, how to support student learning growth, planning for elementary, middle and secondary schools, students with special needs, extracurricular activities and transportation.

CDC. (2020, April 30). Communities, schools, workplaces, & events. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/clean-disinfect-hygiene.html>

Reducing the risk of exposure to coronavirus (or SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19) by cleaning and disinfection is an integral part of reopening schools that will require careful planning.

This guidance is intended to aid school administrators as they consider how to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of students, teachers, other school staff, families, and communities and prepare for educating students this fall.

CDC. (2020, August 28). How to clean and disinfect schools to help slow the spread of flu. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>

Cleaning and disinfecting are part of a broad approach to preventing infectious diseases in schools. To help slow the spread of influenza (flu), the first line of defense is getting vaccinated. Other measures include staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and washing hands often. This webpage provides tips on how to slow the spread of flu specifically through cleaning and disinfecting.

CDC. (2020, August 21). Schools and childcare programs. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>

The CDC website provides information on measures schools, childcare programs, and families can take to mitigate risk of COVID-19.

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Disinfection of environments in healthcare and nonhealthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2. ECDC: Stockholm; 2020. https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Environmental-persistence-of-SARS_CoV_2-virusOptions-for-cleaning2020-03-26_0.pdf

This document provides guidance to EU/EEA Member States on environmental cleaning in healthcare and nonhealthcare settings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Harvard Global Health Institute. (2020, July 20). Path to zero & schools: Achieving pandemic resilient teaching and learning spaces. <https://globalhealth.harvard.edu/path-to-zero-schools-achieving-pandemic-resilientteaching-and-learning-spaces/>

This document provides guidance on when it's okay to reopen and how to do it safely in a U.S. context. The briefing explains how risk incidence levels, the creative adaptation of infection control guidelines for healthy buildings, and national investment in pandemic resilient schools can optimize operations, keep people safe, and restore schools as trusted sites of learning during the pandemic.

Johns Hopkins University. (n.d.). Eschool+ initiative—Ensuring ethics and equity in the pandemic response: Tools and resources for K-12 Schools. Retrieved September 1, 2020, from <https://equityschoolplus.jhu.edu/>

John Hopkins' Eschool+ initiative provides a selection of resources to help school reopen safely during the pandemic including a tracker for state and national schools re-opening plans, a whitepaper on the ethics of K-12 school re-opening, a Covid-19 school re-opening checklist, and samples of equity-oriented reopening policies.

Jones, E., Young, A., Clevenger, K., Salimifard, P., Wu, E., Lahaie, Luna M., Lahvis. M., Lang, J., Bliss, M., Azimi, P., Cedeno-Laurent, J., Wilson, C., Allen, J. Healthy Schools: Risk Reduction Strategies for Reopening Schools. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Healthy Buildings program. June, 2020. <https://schools.forhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2020/06/Harvard-Healthy-Buildings-ProgramSchools-For-Health-Reopening-Covid19-June2020.pdf>

Recognizing there is no “zero risk” option, only risk mitigation strategies based on the best available evidence, and that closing schools comes at an immense social and societal cost, the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health has compiled a list of best practices for school systems to consider when re-opening during the pandemic divided into five categories: Healthy classrooms, healthy buildings, healthy policies, healthy schedules and healthy activities.

National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools. (2020). Rapid Evidence Review: What is the specific role of daycares and schools in COVID-19 transmission? <https://www.nccmt.ca/knowledge-repositories/covid-19-rapidevidence-service>.

This rapid review was produced to support public health decision makers' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It seeks to identify, appraise and summarize emerging research evidence to support evidence-informed decision making. This rapid review is based on the most recent research evidence available at the time of release. A previous version was completed on June 26, 2020. This updated version includes evidence available up to July 20, 2020. Key points are that based on evidence to date, young children are not a major source of transmission of Covid-19 and that adults were more likely to transmit the virus to children rather than vice versa.

Public Health Agency of Canada. (2020, August 12). COVID-19 guidance for schools Kindergarten to Grade 12. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/healthprofessionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>

Directed to administrators of schools from kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12) and local public health authorities (PHAs), this guidance provides information for both public and private institutions providing K-12 education programs in the classroom setting. It takes into consideration the diverse needs of population groups based on vulnerability, ethnicity/culture, disability, developmental status, and other socioeconomic and demographic factors. The guidance is not prescriptive in nature, rather, it supports administrators and PHA's to consider potential risks and mitigation strategies associated with the resumption of in-school classes during the COVID19 pandemic.

The Hospital for Sick Children. (2020, July 29). COVID-19: Guidance for School Reopening.

<http://www.sickkids.ca/PDFs/About-SickKids/81407-COVID19-Recommendations-for-School-ReopeningSickKids.pdf>

This living document is meant to provide information to policy-makers by highlighting paediatric-specific considerations based on our collective experience with children and their families/caregivers. The authors agree bringing children and youth back to school for in-person, full-time learning, with appropriate risk-mitigation strategies to ensure everyone's safety, is the ultimate goal. This updated document provides additional considerations for a spectrum of stakeholders as they prepare to return to school. It highlights the need to consider the epidemiology of COVID-19 in decision making and provides recommended health and safety measures, with age and developmental considerations, to support schools in keeping students, staff and their families safe.

World Health Organization (WHO). (2020, May 10). Considerations for school-related public health measures in the context of COVID-19. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/considerations-for-school-relatedpublic-health-measures-in-the-context-of-covid-19>

WHO has issued guidance on adjusting public health and safety measures while managing the risk of resurgence of cases. A series of annexes has been developed to help guide countries through adjusting various public health measures in different contexts. This annex provides considerations for decision-makers and educators on how or when to reopen or close schools in the context of COVID-19. These decisions have important implications for children, parents or caregivers, teachers and other staff, communities, and society at large. This document was drafted based a review of available literature, discussion with experts, regional partners and country examples. See also the Q&A: Schools and Covid-19.