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**SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 73**  
(Kamloops-Thompson)

# **SD73 Safe & Healthy Facilities Communicable Disease Prevention Plan**

August 2021 – Updated September 21, 2021

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## Purpose

The purpose of the SD73 Safe & Healthy Facilities Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is to guide staff and students and provide them with important information about preventing communicable disease including information on:

- being informed about communicable diseases and measures on how to support a safe school environment; and
- understanding roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting safe and healthy schools.

## Responsibilities

### Administrators and Supervisors

Administrators and supervisors have the following responsibilities:

- Follow recommendations outlined by the Ministry of Education and the public health orders and recommendations/directions provided by the Interior Health Authority
- Education of proper hand hygiene
- Education of proper respiratory etiquette
- Increased cleaning and disinfecting when required
- Follow absenteeism guidelines when over 10%

### Employees

Employees are responsible to:

- Follow expectations set out by the District and their Administrator or supervisor
- Practice proper hand washing procedure and proper respiratory etiquette
- Notify their Administrator or supervisor of high absenteeism (over 10%)
- School-based staff are to instruct students with age-appropriate techniques on proper hand washing procedures and respiratory etiquette

## Public Health Directives

The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) is the senior public health official for B.C. and is responsible for monitoring the health of the population across the province as well as providing independent advice to the Ministers and public officials on public health issues. The responsibilities of the PHO are outlined in the [Public Health Act](#) and include the following:

- provide independent advice to the Ministers and public officials on public health issues;
- monitor the health of the population of B.C. and advise on public health issues and on the need for legislation, policies and practices;
- recommend actions to improve the health and wellness of the population of BC;
- deliver reports that are in the public interest on the health of the population and on government's progress in achieving population health targets;

- establish standards of practice for and conduct performance reviews of Medical Health Officers; and
- work with the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and B.C.'s Medical Health Officers across the province to fulfill their legislated mandates on disease control and health protection.

## Ministry of Education

Schools are operating under the guidelines established by the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control to ensure the safety of students and education professionals.

Employers must be prepared to implement or maintain additional measures at times when the risk of communicable disease in their region or workplace is elevated, as advised and directed by Public Health.

**Public Health's specific guidance for a particular communicable disease will be followed where their information differs from this document.**

## WorkSafeBC Directives

WorkSafeBC is a provincial agency dedicated to promoting safe and healthy workplaces across B.C. They partner with workers and employers to prevent work-related injury, disease, and disability. Their services include education, prevention, compensation and support for injured workers, and no-fault insurance to protect employers and workers.

Workers should know and understand their workplace health and safety responsibilities — and those of others. Workers have three key rights:

- the right to know about hazards in the workplace;
- the right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace; and
- the right to refuse unsafe work.

## Recognize Hazards/Assess Risks

Employers must regularly assess all the hazards within their operations, taking appropriate steps to eliminate or control the associated risk. This process is referred to as a risk assessment.

All school districts must think about the risks in their workplace and take steps to control them. Such controls will include adhering to current public health orders, if applicable, public health advice, as well as implementing best practices to reduce the risk to staff and students. When selecting control measures or a combination of, always start at the top of the hierarchy outlined below to control the hazards. Choose a less effective control only when more effective solutions are impracticable and continuously monitor to ensure they are providing the best level of protection.

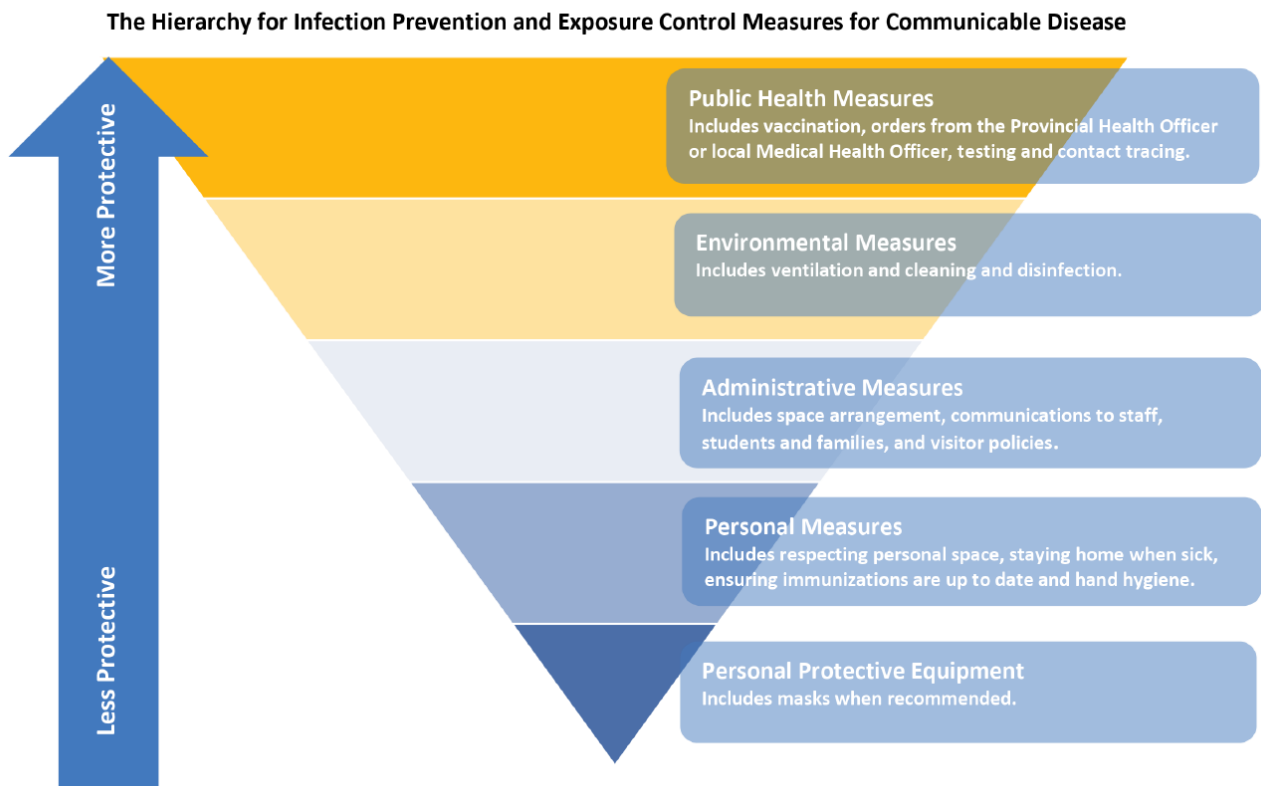
## The Hierarchy of Controls (in order of their effectiveness)

**Elimination or substitution:** Has the employer fully considered eliminating or postponing work tasks that may create a risk of exposure? Are there opportunities to work from home or can work processes be changed to eliminate or reduce contact with others?

**Engineering controls:** Are engineering controls, such as physical barriers, practicable?

**Administrative controls:** Has the employer fully considered how work practices can be altered to minimize exposure, such as physical distancing or enhanced cleaning protocols?

**Personal protective equipment (PPE):** This last form of protection should only be considered after careful consideration of the previous control measures. The use of gloves and face masks may be considered where none of the above controls are possible/effective. If gloves and masks are used, proper usage guidelines should be followed.



## Public Health Measures

Public health measures are identified as procedures and controls, outlined for the public, to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. They include information on vaccinations, gathering and event sizes, procedures around case finding and contact tracing, managing clusters of COVID-19, outbreaks in schools, self-isolation, and quarantine requirements. These public measures are important to understand as they impact school operations.

### Vaccines

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools and communities. Public Health encourages all eligible students and staff to be fully vaccinated to protect themselves and those around them.

School districts are encouraged to share evidence-based information and promote opportunities to be vaccinated in partnership with Public Health. Evidence-based immunization information and tools for B.C residents are available from [BC Centre for Disease Control](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#).

Public Health will continue to collaborate with schools and school districts on sharing public health information with staff, students, and families, including providing direction if and when exposure notifications should be sent.

**Local public health orders may be placed for regions or communities, or for specific businesses or activities, within a health authority region.**

## Environmental Measures

### Ventilation and Air Circulation (HVAC)

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute 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 preventive measures.

School districts are required to ensure heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per the standards and specifications for ongoing comfort of workers (OHS Regulation Part 4).

How do HVAC systems work in SD73?

- During the day, HVAC systems are set to occupancy. This means that the system includes fans which continuously run for movement of air. Occupancy mode will run from 6:00am to 4:00pm.
- Fixed temperatures set in each building.
- Filters are changed on a schedule which occurs three times per year or earlier. This is dependent on previous filter condition or system.

- Outdoor intakes are set at a maximum opening and adjusted according to the outside temperature. Minimum standards ensure outdoor air is brought into the system/building. During this time, set points will be increased to allow additional fresh air into the system where appropriate based on outside air temperature.
- The flushing program will be initiated in all facilities starting at 4:00am and completing at 6:00am. This will be done to allow the highest percentage of outside air into the building to “flush” the building. This will occur Monday to Friday.
- Filters have been upgraded to MERV 13. This was initiated in September 2020 and implemented upon receipt of the product in November 2020.

Communicable disease prevention measures will be balanced against other risks, such as heat or wildfire smoke.

Staff are asked to not open doors and windows. An open door reduces the security of our controlled building(s), which is a security concern. When doors and windows are opened, and the temperature is above or below the system set temperature, this causes the system to either overwork or not call for heat/cooling.

If a portable heater is plugged in near a thermostat, that local area may remain warm but it will cause the system to stop calling for heat which in turn will affect all areas controlled by that specific thermostat.

Leaving windows open after hours may result in damage to the roll shutters when they are closed for the night.

**Ensure air vents and return air vents are clear from materials and ensure they are not blocked or covered.**

**If portable fans are being used, they should be set up to avoid blowing air directly from one person’s breathing zone to other occupants in the room. Avoid horizontal cross breezes. For more information see WorkSafeBC’s guidance on [ventilation and air circulation](#).**

**In the event that the ventilation system is compromised follow directions as laid out in the School District’s [Emergency Procedures Manual](#).**

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

**Cleaning** is the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g. dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses, and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from a cleaning cloth. All visibly soiled surfaces should be cleaned before disinfected.

**Disinfection** is the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects, never on the human body.

Regular, enhanced, and as needed cleaning will be performed by custodial staff:

- Daytime custodians will disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Custodial staff will ensure ongoing inspection and filling of hand washing supplies including alcohol-based sanitizer dispensers in portables.
- Custodial staff will monitor supplies to ensure all necessary cleaning supplies are available.
- Evening custodial staff will thoroughly clean all areas.

Other staff may also clean areas as needed to maintain a clean environment noting the following:

- Cleaning supplies are provided by the school district.
- Do not bring cleaners from home.
- Do not take school materials home to clean.
- If cleaning is required, staff should notify the principal or school office.

Employees using district vehicles must clean and sanitize vehicles after use per the [Safe Work Procedure - Vehicle Sharing](#).

## Cleaning and Disinfecting Frequency

General cleaning of the premises, and cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, must be completed at least once in a 24-hour period. Examples of frequently touched surfaces include:

- Doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles
- 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)

## Specific Cleaning Procedures

### Cleaning Tools/Equipment and Desk/Workstations

Staff are responsible for cleaning their tools/equipment and desk/workstation once per day. Reusable gloves are available for all staff. They can be ordered through custodial supplies.

### De-Cluttering of Classrooms

Classrooms must be decluttered to minimize the number of surface contacts and items that will need to be cleaned and disinfected. Good hygiene practices need to be modelled.



## Physical Barriers

The Provincial Health Officer also recommends that employers maintain some of their existing COVID-19 Safety Plan Protocols, specifically those that did not negatively impact business operations during the transition to communicable disease plans during Step 3 of B.C.'s Restart. These protocols may include barriers already erected in the workplace.

## Administrative Measures

### Physical Distancing and Space Arrangement

Although Public Health no longer recommends learning groups and physical distancing of two meters as communicable disease measures for the K-12 setting, there are a number of strategies that schools can consider to help create space between people and to support staff and students in returning to school using a trauma-informed approach:

- Remind students and staff about respecting others personal space. Use visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- Use available space to spread people out, both in learning environments and for gatherings and events, where possible.
- 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.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, 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.
- In learning environments, schools can return to classroom and learning environments configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches. Use all available space.
- In indoor spaces, people should have enough room to carry out the intended activity without involuntarily physical contact with another person.
- For break and time in indoor settings, there should be enough space available to prevent involuntary physical contact.
- Taking students outside more often is still encouraged – weather permitting due to its overall health benefits.

## Staff Only Spaces

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

WorkSafeBC guidance for workplaces should be used to determine what measures should be in place for non-school spaces operated by the school district (e.g. board/authority offices, maintenance facilities, etc.).

## Personal Items

Staff and students can continue to bring personal items to school, but they should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices, wind instruments).

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. Schools should implement strategies to manage the flow of students around lockers to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

## School Gatherings and Events

School gatherings and events (including inter-school events) can occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial, and federal public health recommendations and orders.

**Current Interior Health Order restricts assemblies to 50 people or two classes whichever is greater.**

At this time (September 2021) we ask and strongly encourage schools and facilities to plan smaller activities and events and provide options for virtual if possible.

Organizers should apply a trauma-informed lens to their planning including consideration of:

- respecting student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space;
- using space available to spread people out as much as possible, respecting room occupancy limits, and ensuring enough space is available to prevent involuntarily physical contact between attendees (i.e. overcrowding); and
- gradual transitions to larger gatherings (e.g. school-wide assemblies), including starting with virtual or smaller in-person options, shorter in-person sessions, etc.

Examination 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.

## Sports, Clubs and Extracurricular Activities

BC School Sports has confirmed that school sports may operate in accordance with local, regional, and provincial health recommendations and orders on gathering and events. Currently there are no provincial-wide restrictions on types of activities, competitions or training a school can do.

All school/curriculum programs and activities should operate in alignment with provincial K-12 health and safety guidelines, including school-led activities held off campus. This also includes sport academies and community-based programs. These programs and activities will follow local, regional and provincial public health recommendations and orders for community gatherings and events.

- Schools will continue to implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices, this includes but not limited to: hand hygiene, cleaning, disinfecting, respiratory etiquette specific to the activity.
- Equipment should be cleaned and disinfected according to disinfecting and cleaning protocols previously mentioned.
- Students will be encouraged to wash their hands before and after using equipment.
- Equipment that touches the mouth, such as instrument pieces, must not be shared unless disinfected in between use.
- Masks are worn by K-12 staff and other adults, and students in grades 4-12 when indoors.
- Students are not required to wear masks during high intensity physical activities.
- Utilize all available space to spread students and staff out as much as possible.
- Sport and extracurricular activities should be held outside whenever possible.

### Spectators

At this time there are regional restrictions in place for the Interior Health Authority, which has placed restrictions on spectators and event sizes. The current Interior Health Order restricts:

- Indoor events to not exceed 50 persons present (spectators).
- Outdoor events to not exceed 100 persons present (spectators).

Schools and/or school districts may prohibit or restrict spectators within their school(s) at their discretion.

### Sports in Secondary Schools

Host schools are considered the event organizer. It is the responsibility of the school district, administrators, and athletic director to ensure the school is adhering to the provincial guidelines and BC School Sports for Secondary Schools.

SD73 will provide each secondary student athlete with a one-color coded spectator pass for entry to school gyms. When needed, this spectator pass will be used throughout the province

for league and exhibition competitions. Three distinct colors will be used to reflect the three seasons of play.

**Staff and students 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.**

## Physical and Health Education/Outdoor Programs

Use available space to spread out staff and students and encourage outdoor activities and programs as much as possible. Interior Health recommends no more than 50 people or two classes whichever is greater, this includes during PE or Health Education.

K-12 staff, and students in grade 4-12, are required to wear masks when indoors.

### High Intensity Physical Activities

- Students are not required to wear masks during high intensity physical activities (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer). Mask use is a personal choice. During high intensity physical activities respiration rates are increased resulting in a wet mask. This lessens the protective value a mask may offer. High intensity physical activities should be moved outside whenever possible.

### Low Intensity Physical Activities

- For low intensity activities (e.g. yoga, walking) students are required to wear a mask when they are indoors.
- Shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected.
- Students should practice proper hand hygiene before and after touching frequently touched pieces of equipment, as well as practicing proper respiratory etiquette.
- Equipment that touches the mouth such as water bottles should not be shared.

### Field Trips

When planning field trips, staff should follow existing policies and procedures as well as the guidance in this document. Additional measures specific to field trips should be taken including:

- For transportation, including school bus transportation, public transit and carpooling, see guidance in the transportation section in this document.
- Schools must ensure that volunteers providing supervision are trained in, and strictly adhere to, required health and safety guidelines. This includes receiving a visitor orientation for communicable disease prevention.
- Alignment with relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and orders, including for international travel.

**At this time (September 2021) no overnight trips are allowed at McQueen Lake.**

For planning purposes, schools should consider guidance provided for overnight camps from BCCDC and the BC Camps Association when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

## **Overnight Stay Expectations**

### **Accommodations:**

- Recommended one person per bed
- Strong recommendation that same athletes room together during the entire season
- Athletes must follow all accommodation policies such as wearing masks in common areas
- Allow parent/guardian to stay with their own student-athlete

### **Team Travel and Vaccine Status:**

Vaccine status cannot determine entry onto a school team.

- Coaches are not allowed to ask for an athlete's vaccine status.
- Third party organizations may require secondary school athletes to be fully vaccinated to enter their establishment. Potential examples are:
  - Restaurants
  - University tournaments
  - Bus companies
  - Other third party organizations that host tournaments

If a team or group is attending an establishment that requires individuals to be fully vaccinated but a participant does not meet the vaccination requirements, the family is responsible to get the participant to and from the venue as well as look after their lodging and food for the duration of the event.

Each team needs to hold a parent meeting to present the SD73 Communicable Disease Prevention Plan, along with practice/game schedules, budgets, and travel expectations for the season. Attendance must be taken.

Coaches and other support staff will be responsible when organizing activities to:

- Model mask wearing where required
- Ensure hand hygiene is practiced
- Head coach will ensure spectator policy is adhered to and follows current health order
- Parent/guardian sign in: each school must provide a spectator sign-in form at the gym entrance for compliance and tracing purposes

## Additional Considerations for Secondary Athletics

- Teams must be allowed to vacate a gym before the next team(s) enter for their game (affects teams with a later scheduled game)
- Indoor games (2-3 teams per site) - third team will remain outside of gym until game play
- Each team (home & away) needs TWO volunteers as a minor official (score table)
- The head coaches are responsible for ensuring the Spectator Rule is in compliance to the current health order
- Coaches and other support staff must wear masks at all time
- Personal space must be adhered to for all time-outs during competition

## Transportation Guidelines

This guideline is in addition to the district's [Maintaining Safe and Healthy School COVID-19 Guideline](#). All staff must review both documents before commencing work.

### Parent and Staff Communication

Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for key symptoms of illness. Continued promotion and education will be provided through communication to all staff and students.

- If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents or caregivers must keep their child at home and review ["When to get tested for COVID-19 guideline"](#)
- If a student displays symptoms while being transported to school the driver will radio dispatch & dispatch will inform the 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.
- Staff will not come to work if they are sick. This will include a review of "When to get tested for COVID-19 guideline".
- Staff will do a self-assessment daily for symptoms, if at any point drivers become symptomatic, they will self-isolate and immediately report to their supervisor.

### Disinfecting

Buses used for transporting students will be cleaned and disinfected according the guidance provided in the [SD73 Cleaning and Disinfectant document](#).

- This will include disinfecting high touch areas or surfaces such as handrails, this will be completed on the bus between runs and following good hand sanitizing practices.
- When cleaning the bus, make sure windows and doors are open.
- Each bus will have cleaning equipment such as gloves and a spray bottle with disinfectant. This will be provided by the school district.
- Ensure products are secure during transport.
- Employees will review safety data sheets before using product.

## Hand Washing

- Drivers must wash their hands immediately upon arrival at their designated start location, and as described in the Maintaining Safe and Healthy Schools COVID-19 Guideline. *Starting location may include a bus garage, home, or other location.*
- Drivers will be provided hand sanitizer for their own use when unable to hand wash with soap and water.

## Ventilation

- Drivers should maximize natural ventilation on the bus by opening or partially opening selected windows, as weather conditions allow, and maintain passenger comfort with additional heat.
- Drivers must select fresh air options to ensure no re-circulation is occurring while the bus is operational.

## Non-Medical Masks

Bus drivers are required to wear a non-medical mask, face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask is to be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses except while driving.

Students in grades 4 to 12 are required to wear non-medical masks or face coverings when they are on the bus. Students in grade K-3 are encouraged to wear non-medical masks or face coverings 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.

Non-medical masks or face coverings should be put on before loading.

The Director of Transportation will keep up to date passenger and seating plans to share with Public Health should contact tracing need to occur. Seating plans will be updated as required by the bus driver.

## Carpooling

Schools should share the following guidance with staff and families regarding carpooling arrangements (personal or school-related):

- Spread out vehicle occupants as much as possible.
- Travel with the same people whenever possible.
- Open windows when weather permits (avoid air circulation options for heating/cooling).
- Clean hands before and after trips.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly.

For carpooling related to school activities, students, staff, and other adults must follow the mask requirements outlined in the Personal Protective Equipment section. For personal carpooling, as per public health recommendations, people nine years of age and older are encouraged to wear masks (masks are not suggested if carpooling with members of the same household).

### **Other Methods of Transportation**

For students, staff, and visitors taking mass transit (e.g. municipal buses, etc.), hand hygiene should be practiced before and after trips. Riders should follow any other safety guidance (including mask guidance) issued by the relevant transit authority.

### **Food Services and Programs**

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.

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.

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.).

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



School meal programs should follow regular operating practices.

[Food Safety Legislation](#) and the [Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools](#) continue to apply as relevant.

## Fundraisers

Schools can continue to offer fundraisers that can be implemented in line with the 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.

## Illness & Self-Assessment Policies and Protocols

### Daily Health Checks

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

#### **Students, staff, and visitors should stay at home if they are sick.**

- Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.
- Staff or visitors will complete a daily health check prior to entering the school and confirm upon arrival.

This will include reviewing the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Difficulty breathing
- Diarrhea
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Extreme fatigue or tiredness
- Body aches
- Loss of appetite
- Headache
- Loss of sense of smell or taste

Students, staff, and visitors must stay home and are not to enter a school or facility if they are ill or indicate yes to any of the following:

- In the last 14 days, returned from travel outside Canada, including the United States, and been directed to quarantine?
- Have been identified by Public Health as a close contact of someone with COVID-19?
- Have you been told to self-isolate by Public Health or a Health Care Professional?

Students, staff, and visitors who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health care provider.

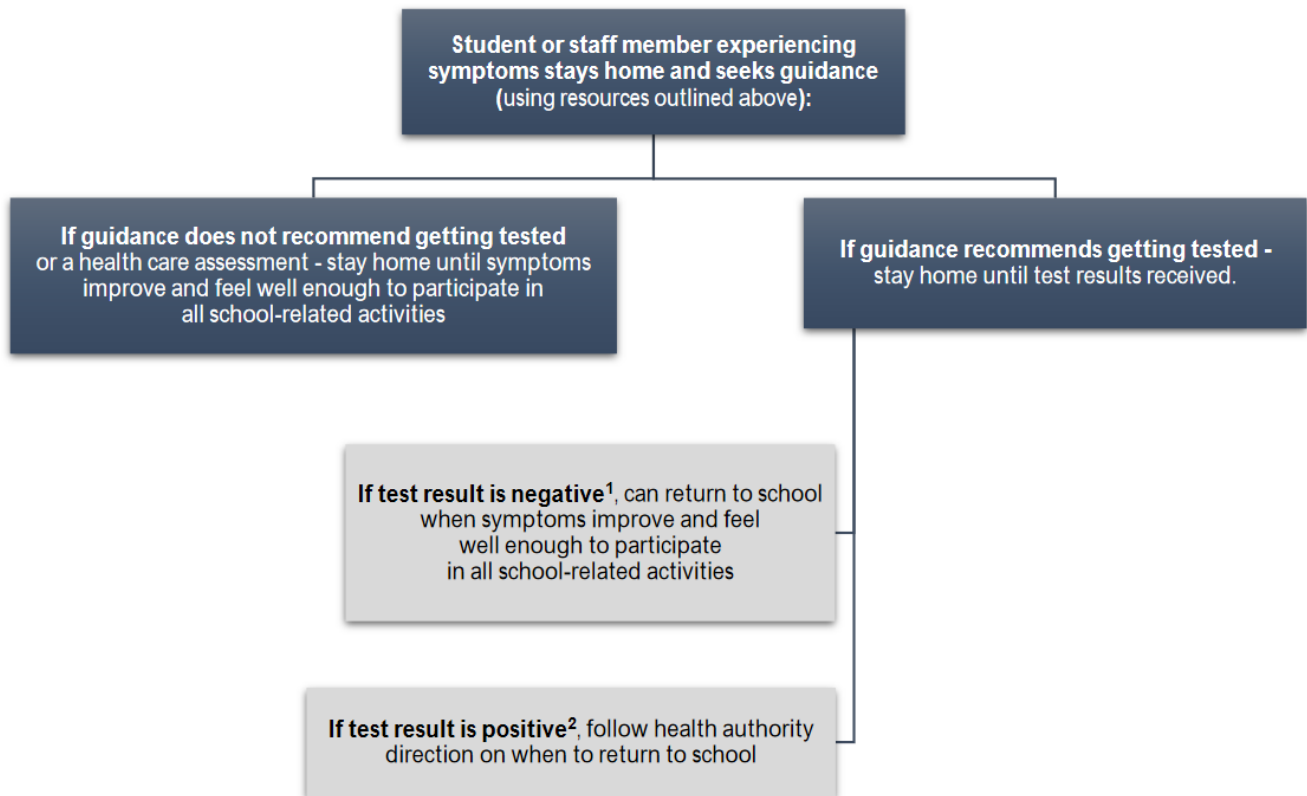
**Daily attendance records should be kept for at least 45 days.**

### Symptoms of Illness and Return to School

The following resources provide guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness.

### COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing & 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](#).

The Ministry of Education's [K-12 Health Check App](#) and the [When to Get Tested for COVID-19 resource](#) can be used to support daily health checks for students.

## Space for Staff or Students Experiencing Symptoms

Some staff or students may not be able to find or receive transportation immediately. As such, schools will have a space available where staff or students can wait comfortably and separated from others (at least 2 meters). Non-medical disposable masks should be offered if the staff or student is not already wearing a mask. This should not occur if gastrointestinal symptoms are reported or if there is a risk of vomiting.

- Supervision will be required for younger students.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of the space after vacated is required.
- Various or multiple spaces can be used in the school to create a space for ill staff or student.
- Options and process for ill staff or student will be established for each school and communicated.
- Immediately report to the administrator when a student has become symptomatic.
- The administrator or office staff will contact the student's parent/guardian to come and pick them up immediately at the designated door/entrance.

## 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 needed for COVID-19).

Temperature does not change the effectiveness of washing hands with plain soap and water.

### How to Wash Hands:

Thoroughly washing your hands with soap and water is the best protection against illness. Follow this instruction for handwashing:

- Wet hands with running water.
- Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.
- Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (sing the ABC's). Rub palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under nails/creating a lather.
- Rinse off all soap with running water.
- Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
- Turn off taps, using the paper towel – if required.
- Discard the used towel in the waste container.

### Students Should Wash Their Hands:

- When they arrive at school and before they go home.
- Before and after any break – example, recess or lunch.
- Before and after eating and drinking – excluding drinking at students' desk or locker.

- Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple classes with shared equipment (e.g. example gym, music room, science lab etc).
- After using the washroom.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibility.

### **Teachers, Administrators, and Support Staff Should Wash Their Hands:**

- When they arrive at school and before they go home.
- Before and after any breaks e.g. lunch.
- Before and after eating and drinking.
- Before handling food or assisting children with eating.
- Before and after giving medication to a student or self.
- After using the washroom.
- After contact with body fluids (i.e. runny noses, spit, blood, vomit).
- After cleaning tasks.
- After removing gloves.
- After handling garbage.
- Whenever hands are visibility dirty.

### **Alternatives:**

- If a sink is not available, use hand sanitizer with 60% alcohol. Please note, this is not as effective as washing hands with soap and water.
- If hands are soiled with visible contamination, they must first be washed with soap and water. The hand-sanitizer may then be used to further reduce the microorganism load on the skin.
- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- If you are unable to perform hand washing as above due to injury or medical skin conditions, please advise your supervisor.

### **Handwashing and Sanitizers**

- When available, students and staff members should use classroom sinks to wash hands regularly with soap.
- Classrooms without sinks must have hand sanitizers available for staff and student use, unless in close proximity to a washroom. Classes with access to sinks should be used utilized first.

Staff or students may bring their own sanitizer of plain soap if they are on the list authorize by Health Canada or have a medical condition that requires specialized soap. (No medical note is required).

### **Do Not Touch Your Face**

- Do not touch your face, eyes, nose, or mouth (especially with unwashed hands).

## Respiratory Etiquette

Respiratory etiquette includes the following components:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough and sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hands.
- Use tissues to contain secretions and dispose of them promptly in a waste container. Wash hands immediately.
- Refrain from touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash hands regularly.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, or vaping devices.

## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

**Face shields** are not a replacement for a mask. Some exceptions exist, per specific plans or safe work procedures (e.g. personal care plans and first aid procedures). 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 masks, except for those communicating using lip-reading, when visual facial cues are essential, or when people may be unable to wear a mask. Clear masks that cover the nose and mouth are another option when visual communication is necessary.

**Gloves** are not being provided for the purpose of COVID-19 protection as per public health advice. There are, however, other practices which routinely require gloves and these practices should continue.

Reusable latex gloves will be made available to any staff member who requests them for the use of disinfecting their personnel workspace or tools.

## Masks

Masks provide additional protection in a multiple layered system of protection to reduce the risk of transmission.

Non-medical 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 should continue to respect others personal space.

Masks should not be used in place of other safety measures detailed in this document.

### K-12 Staff

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

## **K-3 Students**

There are no requirements for students in grades K-3 to wear masks and should be based on their personal or family/caregiver choice. Their choices must be respected. Masks are strongly encouraged.

## **4-12 Students**

All students in grades 4-12 are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses.

## **Exceptions for Staff, Students and Visitors – Non-Medical Masks**

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 behavioral 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 a 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.

## **Student Support**

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

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, 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, seeing 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 mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.

## Arrival and Movement Procedures

### Entering and Exiting

- Access to the school by non-school district personnel is by appointment. All facilities will post contact information on main entrance.
- District maintenance and operations staff must use sign-in procedures when entering the building.
- Signage on designated entrances and exits to provide instructions and public health information.

### Visitors and Access to Schools

Visitors will be prioritized to those supporting activities that benefit student learning and well-being example teacher candidates, public health nurses, meal program volunteers.

- Visitors must follow SD73 Visitor Procedures. This will include confirmation of daily health screening and contact information.
- Visitors must phone office to make an appointment.
- Drop off and pick up of students will be outside only and if available, located at the exterior classroom door. If this is not available, a school plan will be developed to ensure limited number of students are in one area.
- Visitors will be required to wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school. Exceptions can be found in the mask section.
- School volunteers, and contractors must complete orientation.

### 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 unintentional physical contact between students
- Sand and water can be used for play if students wash their hands before and after play.

### School Libraries/Learning Commons

School libraries / learning commons play a critical role in utilizing addition collaborative spaces for students and staff during the school day. At this time, there is no evidence that COVID-19 virus 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.

- Students and staff should wash their hands:
  - before and after handling shared equipment/resources
  - whenever hands are visibly dirty

School libraries/ learning commons facilities should be open and book exchange can continue to occur. There is no need to limit the distribution or sharing/return of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

## **Weight Rooms**

Weight rooms must have established plans in place.

1. Users must wipe down equipment after each use with a disinfectant wipe and allow to air dry before the next usage.
2. Easy access to a handwashing station or hand sanitizer must be provided to ensure users can wash their hands frequently through their workout.
3. Occupancy limits must be posted and adhered to.
4. Clear policies requiring users to wipe down equipment after every use must be established and posted. Adequate supplies and garbage bins for disposing used materials must also be provided.
5. Users must be instructed that they must allow equipment surfaces to air dry naturally before using.
6. Consider the layout of equipment and fitness areas to ensure adequate spacing is available to staff and students.
7. Plans should be reviewed to ensure effectiveness with site safety committee members on an ongoing basis and updated as required.

## **School Rentals/Community Use**

School rentals to outside groups will not be permitted in school district facilities, except for community use of school facilities after hours for essential community services (e.g. immunization programs, before and after school child care, food banks or meal programs for those in need etc.)

School district organized extracurricular activities such as district choir with continue. Community use and rentals will be re-evaluated by the District COVID Response Committee on an ongoing basis.

## **School Programs and Programming Procedures and Requirements**

### **Theatre and Dance Programs**

- Spread out students and staff within available space and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.



- K-12 staff are required to wear masks during these programs when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.
- Grade 4-12 students are required to wear masks during these programs when indoors, except during high intensity physical activity.
- Proper hand hygiene is required before and after using frequently touched items.
- Shared equipment such as set props, cameras etc. should be cleaned and disinfected.

The Association of BC Drama Educators is currently developing additional guidelines for teaching drama during COVID-19.

## Music Education

All classes, programs and activities can continue to occur if:

- K-12 staff, grade 4 - 12 students wear masks while singing indoors. Masks may be temporarily removed while playing a wind instrument or other educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask.
- Shared equipment must be cleaned and disinfected.
- Proper hand hygiene is required before and after using frequently touched items.
- Equipment that touches the mouth such as instrument mouth pieces should not be shared unless cleaned in disinfectant between uses.

The B.C. Music Educator's Associate and the Coalition for Music Education in B.C. have developed guidance [available here](#). In the case of discrepancy in guidance, schools are to follow the [Ministry of Education guidelines](#).

## Trades and Transitions Program

Ongoing collaboration and communication with post-secondary institutions for Trades and Transitions 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 communicable disease prevention measures in place.

Ensure diligent student self-assessment of health when transitioning between the secondary school and post-secondary institution.

## 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.

- For current placements 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 communicable disease prevention plan of the workplace including wearing PPE if required.

## 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. Additional opportunities for kindergarten students to learn and practice respecting personal space, recognizing they are unlikely to be able to do this at all times.

More information is provided in the [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#).

## Strong Start

- Families will be pre-registered into the program, if possible.
- Occupancy limits will be followed for each room to ensure personal space
- Ensure personal space will be facilitated by increasing the space between learning stations.
- As much as possible, children and families will go outside for learning activities, including play and snack time.
- All parents/guardians will review the visitor orientation before coming to a program site.
- A sign-in list, including contact information, will be maintained and shared with site administrators on a daily basis.
- All programs will have a safety plan in place which must be reviewed by site safety committee members.

## Emergency Planning and Drills

Emergency procedures including fire drills are required annually. Fire drills must be held at least three times in the Fall and three times in the Spring. Fire drills will be conducted to be total evacuation fire drills involving all occupants of the building. Staff will be informed of the drill before it occurs.

Emergency procedures may require modification by designating additional muster locations to reduce crowding, making efforts to minimize involuntary physical contact between participants.

All drills must be documented on a fire drill record. This can be found at MYSD73 OH&S and Wellness Forms and Templates – [Fire Drill and Incident Checklist](#).

In the event of an actual emergency, procedure modifications may be suspended to ensure for a timely, efficient, and safe response.

### **Absenteeism Reporting Process**

Schools will continue to follow the current school district policy regarding absenteeism reporting. More information is available [here](#).

### **Reporting to Public Health**

- School leaders must report unusual absenteeism patterns or symptoms in staff or students who recently attended the school.
- School leaders should notify the Manager of Health and Safety when absenteeism rates of students or staff members is greater than would be expected (10%) or severe illness is observed.

### **Training and Education**

All school district personnel are required to:

1. Review this document.
2. Report concerns to your supervisor immediately.
3. Support the site safety committee.
4. Follow the guidelines outlined in this plan.

### **WHMIS**

- Employees working with or using disinfectants, detergents or hand sanitizers must review safety data sheets and ensure products are stored out of the reach of children.
- Safety data sheets for all cleaning products are available through MSDS Online. These sheets and instructions can be accessed on [MYSD73](#). School Health and Safety Committees should have these sheets available for staff members.
- All chemicals must be properly labelled, in accordance with WHMIS requirements.

## Safe Work Procedures

The following can be found at [MYS73](#):

- [Hand Washing](#)
- [Removal of Gloves](#)
- [First Aid COVID-19](#)
- [Vehicle Sharing](#)

## Daily Health Checks Information

- [Students](#)
- [Staff](#)

## Posters

- [Occupancy Poster WorkSafeBC](#)
- [Hand washing Poster](#)
- [Non-Medical Masks Poster](#)
- [UPDATED August 2021 Entrance Sign](#)
- [UPDATED FAQ: Can I Come to Work?](#)

## Additional Resources

- [BC Centre for Disease Control](#)
- [Orders, Notices & Guidance – Provincial health Officer](#)
- [Ministry of Health – August 24, 2021 COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)
- [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- [Return to Sport Website](#)
- [Hand washing Information](#)
- [K-12 Health Check App](#)
- [When to get tested for COVID-19](#)
- [Return to School – Ministry Website](#)
- [K-12 Education Recovery Plan](#)