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Deb Whitten – Interim Superintendent

Thursday, September 2, 2021

Re: Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

Dear Parents/Guardians,

We are very excited to be welcoming students back on Tuesday, September 7th.

Following the comprehensive measures set by the Ministries of Health and Education, the District has updated its health and safety measures to best serve and protect our learning community. The safety of our students, staff and families is our top priority.

We strongly encourage everyone to review our **Communicable Disease Prevention Plan**. Please see attached. If you are seeking additional resources, visit: www.sd61.bc.ca/covid-19

In addition, we would like to remind everyone that daily health checks are a requirement prior to coming to work or school. If you or your child is not feeling well, please stay at home. We all have a responsibility in keeping our schools low risk settings.

In advance, I want to extend my appreciation for your efforts to ensure we have a safe and successful school year.

Wishing you all a safe and happy long weekend,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deb Whitten".

Deb Whitten
Interim Superintendent of Schools

Attach.

The Greater Victoria School District wishes to recognize and acknowledge the Esquimalt and Songhees Nations, on whose traditional territories, we live, we learn, and we do our work.

One *Learning* Community



Communicable Disease *Prevention Plan*

SCHOOL, SITE PROCEDURES

September 2, 2021

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Introduction

All school staff have a shared responsibility in protecting themselves and students from the spread of COVID-19 and other communicable disease. The BCCDC reports that school-aged children have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, including worsened wellbeing, more child stress, less connection to friends, and learning impacts. Getting children to return to closer-to-normal learning, recreational and social activities is an important pandemic recovery action.

With BC's highly immunized population providing greater community protection against COVID-19, our schools can return to closer-to-normal operations balanced with ongoing prevention measures.

All employees are expected to read, know and organize their work in accordance with this **Prevention Plan** and **BC Centre for Disease Control Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools**. The **Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings** has been developed by the Ministry of Education to compliment the BCCDC and WorkSafeBC guidance and provides more details specific to school settings and applications of the health and safety guidelines to curriculum, programs and other educational activities.

Resources: [Worksafe BC Guidance for Workplaces](#)
[BCCDC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)
[Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)



COVID-19 Preventative Measures

1. **GET FULLY VACCINATED** - Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools.
2. **STAY HOME WHEN SICK** - All students, staff, and school visitors must complete the daily health check.
3. **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.
4. **RESPIRATORY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE** - Cover your coughs. Do not touch your face.
5. **MINIMIZE PHYSICAL CONTACT** - No sharing of food, drinks, or personal items. Spread students and staff out to different areas when possible. Take students outside more often. Remind students to respect the personal space of others.
6. **CLEANING AND DISINFECTION** - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces every 24 hours. General cleaning of the school should occur daily.
7. **NON-MEDICAL MASKS** can provide an additional layer of protection when more effective measures are not feasible.

Stay Home When Sick

- **Students, staff or other adults should stay at home when sick**, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction and the spread of COVID-19 in schools.
- Parents and caregivers **must perform the Daily Health Check with their children** and follow the directions as to when to stay home. You can find the [daily health checklist here](#).
 - » **If a child has any key symptoms of illness, they must not go to school.**
- **Staff, volunteers and other adults must perform a daily health check** prior to entering a school. You can find the [daily health checklist here](#).

What to Do If Symptoms Present:

| SYMPTOMS | WHAT TO DO |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever (above 38°C) • Chills • Cough • Loss of sense of smell or taste • Difficulty breathing | <p>1 or more of these symptoms: Get tested and stay home.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sore throat • Loss of appetite • Headache • Body aches • Extreme fatigue or tiredness • Nausea or vomiting • Diarrhea | <p>If you have 1 symptom: Stay home until you feel better.</p> <p>2 or more of these symptoms: Stay home and wait 24 hours to see if you feel better. Get tested if not better after 24 hours.</p> |
| <p>If you are a <i>close contact</i>* of someone who has COVID-19 and have any of the symptoms listed above: Get tested and stay home.</p> | |

* You will be notified by Island Health if you are a close contact. For more information on close contacts, go to: www.bccdc.ca/covid19closecontacts

- The following students, staff or other persons must stay home and self-isolate:
 - » A person confirmed by public health as a case of COVID-19; or
 - » A person confirmed by public health as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak of COVID-19
- If a staff member is concerned they do not have adequate sick leave available for the absence recommended by their health care provider and does not have a short term disability plan (SIP), they should contact their supervisor for approval to work from home or additional paid sick leave.
- If a staff member has been identified as a close contact by Island Health and has been directed to self isolate, they should contact their supervisor about paid self-isolation leave.

Entering / Leaving the Building

- **Do not enter or leave the building in groups.** Avoid crowding and respect the personal space of others.
- Each school will identify the entrances and exits to be used by students and staff.
- Wash your hands after you enter the building and disinfect your workspace as needed.

School Hours / Access

- Only use the designated entrances and exits.
- Schools will be open to staff from 7a.m. to 7p.m., 7 days a week.
- After hours student activities must be scheduled through Facility Rentals.
- Rentals for community events will be compliant with COVID-19 protocols.
- Parents and guardians will be encouraged to use phone or email to meet with staff or make an appointment.
- Volunteers will be limited to essential educational programs such as school meals and sport programs.
- The school will keep a log of all visitors and parents/guardians, including contact information, for 45 days.
- The school will keep a log of all staff that are not assigned to work in the school (e.g., TTOC, Itinerants, Trades), including contact information, for 45 days.

Hand Hygiene

When Staff and Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:

- When they arrive at school.
- Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch, outdoor learning activities, using playground equipment).
- 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 students (e.g., the gym, music room, science lab, etc.).
- After using the toilet.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Additional Staff Hand Hygiene:

- After contact with body fluids (e.g., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).
- After cleaning tasks.
- After removing gloves.
- After handling garbage.

BC Centre For Disease Control:
<http://covid-19.bccdc.ca/>

How to Hand Wash



1 Wash hands with warm (not hot or cold) running water



2 Apply liquid or foam soap



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



4 Rinse thoroughly under running water



5 Pat hands dry thoroughly with paper towel



6 Use paper towel to turn off tap

Cleaning

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises and cleaning/disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces at least **once every 24 hours**.
 - » Frequently touched surfaces include door knobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students.
 - » Shared equipment used by students including computer keyboards and tablets, manipulatives, toys, sports equipment and equipment used in shops, home economics rooms and science labs.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Administrators will work with facilities staff to coordinate student transitions with cleaning schedules.

Exceptions:

- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., children's books or magazines) and items with plastic covers (e.g., DVDs) can be contaminated if handled by a person with COVID-19; however, the risk is low. There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.
- Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often can be used, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.

Daily Sanitizing Routines

- Staff and students to wash hands upon arrival at school.
- Disinfect your work area as needed.
- Disinfect all shared surfaces, furniture, equipment etc. when finished.
- Staff and students should not share food, drinks, or other personal items (e.g., devices, writing implements, etc.).

Physical Distancing and Space Arrangement

In learning environments, schools can return to classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

Administrators should work with school staff on strategies to help create space between people, including:

- *Remind staff and students to respect the personal space of others.*
- *Use all available space to spread staff and students out; students should have enough room to carry out the planned activity without involuntary physical contact with others.*
- *Employ assigned entrances and floor markers to reduce crowding in common areas such as entrances, hallways, around lockers, and indoor break areas.*
- *Take students outside where and when possible.*

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact with Students and Among Students

School Gatherings and Events

School gatherings and events (including inter-school events) should be organized with the following considerations:

- *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 (e.g., overcrowding).*
- *Gradual transitions to larger gatherings (e.g., school-wide assemblies), including starting with virtual or smaller in-person options, shorter in-person sessions, etc.*

Music Education

K-12 staff and students in Grades 4 to 12 must wear masks when indoors and a barrier is not present. 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.

- *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 music equipment use.*
- *Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g., instrument mouth pieces) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.*

Physical Education

- *Spread out students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.*
- *K-12 staff and students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear masks during PHE/outdoor program classes when these classes are held indoors and a barrier is not present.*
- *For low intensity activities (e.g., yoga, walking), K-12 staff and students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear masks when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.*
- *Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity physical activities (e.g., stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these activities is left to students' personal choice. Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity physical activities outdoors whenever possible.*

Additional Resources

- *For more information to support curriculum, programs and activities see pages 23-29 of the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) which can be found on the [District's website](#).*

Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities

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. 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 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.

- 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.

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

According to the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), most children with immune compromise can follow the same precautions for COVID-19 as the general population and can safely attend in-class instruction.

In-class instruction may not be suitable for some children with severe immune compromise or medical complexity, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with a medical health care provider.

What to Do If a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms At School

IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL

Staff must take the following steps:

1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in the designated area.
2. Ask the student to put on their mask. If the student does not have a mask they will be provided with a disposable mask or tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Used tissues will be disposed of as soon as possible and hand hygiene performed.
3. The office will contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
4. Where possible, maintain a 2-metre distance from the ill student. If not possible, staff supervising the student will wear a mask or face covering.
5. Staff must avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If staff do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
6. Once the student is picked up, all staff supervising the student must practice diligent hand hygiene.
7. The custodian must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).

Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.

IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK

Staff must notify the administrator and go home as soon as possible.

If unable to leave immediately:

1. Symptomatic staff must separate themselves into an area away from others, outside if practical.
2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.
3. Use a mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to leave the premises.
4. The custodian must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).



BRITISH
COLUMBIA

**BC COVID-19 Symptom
Self-Assessment Tool**

Non-Medical Masks

All K-12 staff, and students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear a mask while indoors in schools, subject to the following exceptions:

- If a person 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. actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity, etc.).
- If a person is eating or drinking.
- If a person is behind a barrier (e.g., a divider, a cubicle, or in a room by themselves).
- While providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important.

Students in Grades K to 3 are encouraged to wear a mask indoors in schools, 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.

All visitors must wear a non-medical mask when they are in the school.



General Ventilation and Air Circulation

There is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, contributes to the spread of COVID-19. School districts 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.

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 and maximize air exchange where possible.
- Opening windows when possible.
- When using air conditioners and fans in ventilated spaces, air should be moved from high places to lower places instead of blowing air directly from one person's breathing zone to another's. Avoid horizontal cross breezes. Use of portable air conditioners and fans in unventilated spaces with doors and windows closed should be avoided, except when necessary during high or excessive heat events.

Note: Good indoor air ventilation alone cannot protect people from exposure to COVID-19. However, it may reduce the risk when used in addition to other preventive measures.

Staff Meetings and Professional Development Activities

- Staff meetings and professional development activities held in person must respect room occupancy limits and use available space to spread people out.
- Consider use of virtual options and gradual transition to in-person meetings.
- Gatherings must also occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders and any related WorkSafe BC guidance.



Staffroom and Breaks

- **Wash your hands before and after using the staffroom.**
- **Use visual cues (floor markers/posters) to promote physical distancing, and set occupancy limits to avoid involuntary physical contact and to allow for the respect of the personal space of others.**
- *Bring your own lunch. If you have to leave the school during a break, make sure you follow the same protocols that you did when you arrived.*
- *Bring a lunch/snack that does not require a lot of preparation (limit microwave use, surface use, utensil use, etc.).*
- *Disinfect the areas, surfaces, appliances, etc. that you use in the staffroom.*
- *Do not share food or drinks.*

Staff Washrooms

- *Follow the plan for washroom use established by your administrator that includes washroom occupancy limits.*
- *Make sure to wash your hands when you leave the washroom.*
- *Follow COVID-19 hand-washing guidelines as posted.*

Prep/Photocopier/Supply Rooms

- *Wash hands before and after using equipment.*
- *Administrators should work with staff to set occupancy limits to prevent involuntary physical contact and to allow for the respect of the personal space of others.*

Other Shared or Specialty Spaces

- *Administrators will develop protocols for use of other shared spaces within their individual buildings (libraries, gyms, shops, etc.) and post signage.*
- *Protocols for these spaces must be in line with district protocols.*

WorkSafeBC Requirements

If a worker is injured as part of their workplace duties/tasks, follow the established procedures.

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work. If you have reasonable cause to believe that performing a job or task puts you or someone else at risk, you must not perform the job or task. You must immediately notify your supervisor or employer, who will then take the appropriate steps to determine if the work is unsafe and remedy the situation.

For more information about the steps to follow: www.worksafebc.com/en/health-safety/create-manage/rights-responsibilities/refusing-unsafe-work

If workers are expected to follow special safety measures such as deep cleaning, working alone, or working from home, they should know and follow any “Safe Work Procedures” for those tasks. Contact your supervisor/ principal/ vice-principal if you have any questions or concerns about work procedures.

Report all workplace injuries to your supervisor.

Our partners at Morneau Shepell are continuing to work with the District through LifeWorks. They have developed tools to help with:

- [Coping with COVID-19](#)
- [Emotional well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic \(webinar\)](#)

Contact Information

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COVID-19 PROTOCOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Creating a safe and healthy environment for all of our students and staff is our top priority. We all have an important role to play and a responsibility to maintain and ensure safe working conditions in our learning community, for ourselves and for all others involved.

Employer (School District)

- *Select, implement, and document risk assessments and appropriate site-specific control measures.*
- *Ensure that all resources and materials required to implement and maintain the plan are reasonably made available as practical when required.*
- *Ensure that supervisors and workers are informed about the content of safety policies.*
- *Conduct a periodic review the effectiveness of the plan. This includes a review of the available control technologies to ensure that these are selected and used when practical.*
- *Maintain records of training and inspections.*

Supervisors (Principals & Vice Principals)

- *Ensure that workers are knowledgeable regarding the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.*
- *Direct work in a manner that eliminates or minimizes the risk to workers.*
- *Post or relay educational and informational material in an accessible area for workers to review.*

Workers (Teachers, Education Assistants, Support Staff)

- *Know the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.*
- *Participate in COVID-19 related training and instruction.*
- *Follow established work procedures and instructions as directed by the employer or supervisor.*
- *Report any unsafe conditions or acts to the supervisor.*
- *Know how and when to report exposure incidents.*

Facilities Managers

- *Maintain an inventory of PPE for custodians, **cleaning and disinfectant products**, and well-maintained equipment used for cleaning and disinfecting.*
- *Provide adequate instruction to custodians on the hazards associated with cleaning work areas and on the safe work procedures specified in this Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan.*
- *Direct the work in a manner that ensures the risk to trades and custodians is minimized and adequately controlled.*
- *Revise the work schedule to ensure priority intensive cleaning of impacted work area surfaces and touch points.*

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

- *Make recommendations to the employer for the improvement and implementation of the Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan.*
- *Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers, and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations*
- *Consult with workers and the employer on issues related to the Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan.*
- *Make recommendations to the employer on orientation/training on the Communicable Diseases Prevention Plan and to monitor their effectiveness.*
- *Complete a monthly COVID-19 **Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools Health & Safety Checklist** and submit to District Occupational Health and Safety Committee.*