



SD64 COVID-19 Protocols for Returning to Stage 3 Operations

Key Event

On March 17, 2020 the British Columbia government declared a provincial state of emergency to support the province wide response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The education sector is as a key component of British Columbia's Restart Plan Phase 2. School District 64 will begin Stage 3 operations on June 1, 2020 which includes part time in-class learning for all students on a voluntary basis. The return to in-class instruction for all students is based on three key aspects: ensuring all students have access to a safe educational facility, elementary age students have the opportunity to receive 50% of their education in-person, and all students and staff are familiarized with new protocols and working in a Covid-19 identified era.

The Provincial Health Officer has determined that with effective protocols it is safe to reopen schools. The identified risk of COVID-19 is mitigated through protocols put in place by the district under guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer and WorkSafeBC. School District 64 is directing staff to follow these administrative controls developed using BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 Settings and WorkSafe BC's Preventing Exposure to COVID-19 in the Workplace.

Employees are to review operations and take preventative measures to ensure physical distancing and appropriate COVID-19 hygiene measures are followed. These new protocols are intended to reduce the exposure of individuals to the virus and ensure a safe workplace.

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](https://www.canada.ca), [BCCDC](https://www.bccdc.ca) and [WHO Novel Coronavirus](https://www.who.int) websites. School District 64 (Gulf Islands) has a Frequently Asked Questions webpage, please see [SD64 FAQs During COVID-19](#).

Foundational Principles

It is safe to reopen schools and new procedures and policies will be in place to ensure the known risk of COVID-19 in our region can be safely addressed. The Provincial Health Officer made it clear that the K-12 sector would only be opened if they determined it was safe to do so.

Children are Low Risk. COVID-19 virus has a very low infection rate in children and youth. In BC, less than 1% of children and youth tested have been COVID-19 positive. Most children and youth are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection. Many children have asymptomatic disease; however, there is no conclusive evidence that children who are asymptomatic pose a risk to other children or to adults (Ministry of Health/BCCDC, COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings, May 14, 2020 – *Appendix D*).



SD64 Covid-19 Building Requirements & Protocols

Physical distancing (maintaining a distance of 2 metres between two or more people) is the most effective method of preventing the transmission of infection. The school environment will be setup to allow for physical distancing between adults and encourage it between children. The risk of transmission is lower between children and distancing will be encourage through how the environment is setup and the way learning is delivered, however the emphasis will be on minimizing physical contact.

Physical distancing is challenging in a K-12 school setting, particularly with younger students. As such, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels and activities. For example, younger students should be supported to have minimized physical contact with one another, while older students and adults should seek to maintain a safe physical distance whenever possible.

COVID-19 hygiene practices are required for all students and employees. There will be educational emphasis on proper and regular handwashing or sanitation with an alcohol based hand sanitizer, there will be clear and prominent signage on proper hygiene practices, and there will be the equipment to perform this in key areas of every building.

Cleaning protocols will be established to ensure the education environment continues to have enhanced COVID-19 cleaning procedures performed.

Individuals who are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 will not be allowed to attend school or work.

Understanding the Risk

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Workplace COVID-19 protocols are developed and enforced to ensure that the known risk is addressed.

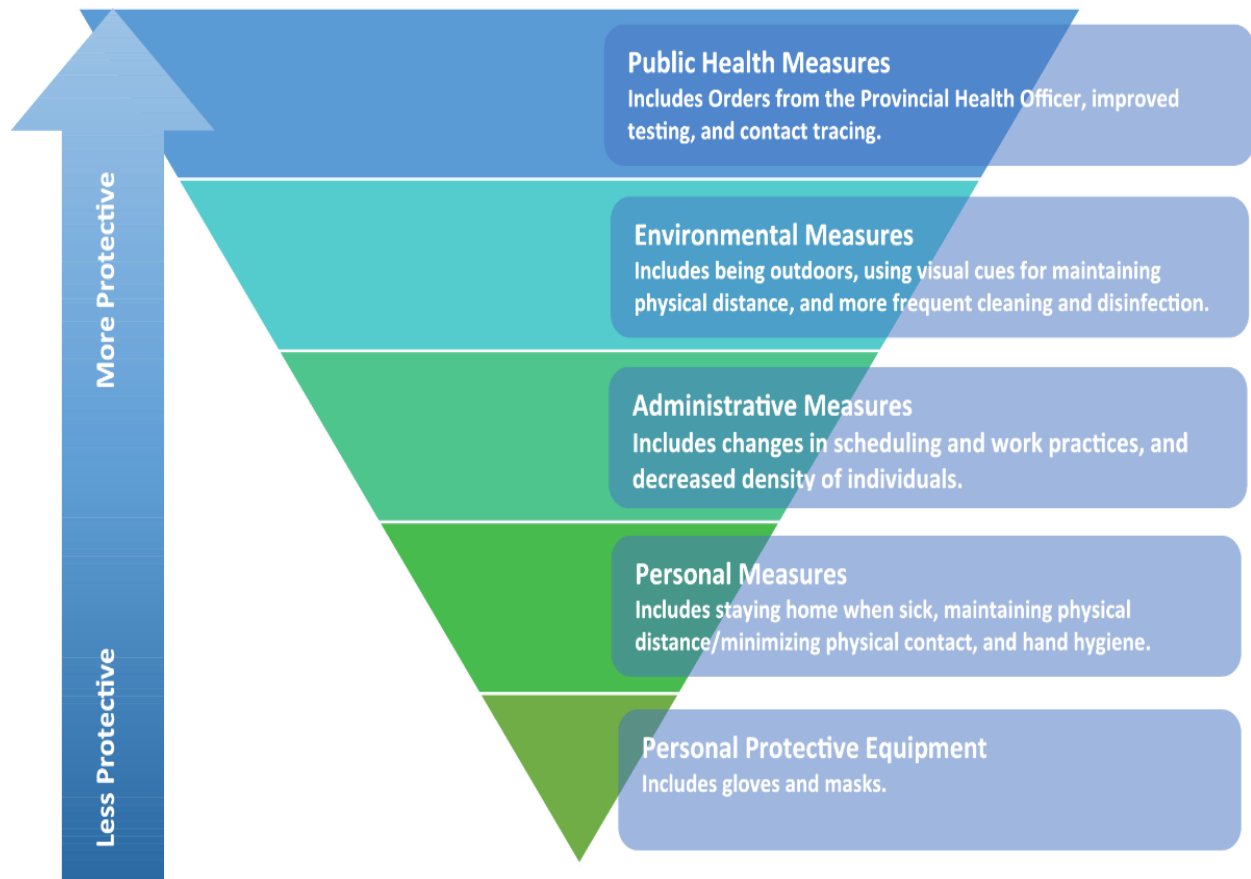
- The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.
- The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

The purpose of the COVID-19 Protocols is to identify the known risk, develop polices and procedures that allow the risk to be mitigated and ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all students and employees.

Workplace COVID-19 Protocol Categories

The Infection and Prevention Exposure Framework, per the Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Setting, outlines the five categories of measures that mitigate the risk of infection and exposure. The three key areas that the district can impact are: Environmental Measures, Administrative Measure, and Personal Measures. The district will develop protocols to ensure the health and safety of students and employees in our facilities.

Infection Prevention and Exposure Measures for Communicable Disease





Environmental Measures:

Cleaning and Disinfection

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Buildings will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document (*Appendix B*).

This includes:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises will occur once a day.
- Frequently-touched shared surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day. (e.g. door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs)
- Washrooms should be cleaned at least twice a day keeping in line with the high touch surface area protocols.
- Each school will establish a seclusion room if a student becomes sick at school. If a student becomes sick at school the protocol for Student Expressing Symptoms of Common Cold, Influenza or COVID-19 will be followed (*Appendix C*).
- At every entrance to a building (or within each classroom) a sink with soap and paper towels or sanitizer will be available. Ideally, the classroom will have a hand washing sink with soap and towel supplies checked twice daily. At a minimum, a conveniently located a pump/squeeze bottle of hand sanitizer located in direct proximity to the commonly used entrance/exit door. Hand sanitizer pump bottles can be refilled.
- Classroom staff are requested to be mindful of de-cluttering classrooms to facilitate effective and efficient cleaning.
- Desktops and counter surfaces must be kept clear to facilitate ongoing disinfection throughout the day and allow for evening cleaning/disinfection.
- 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.
- Limit items that are not easily cleaned (e.g. fabric or soft items).
- 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. See section on Personal Protective Equipment.
- Disable water fountains and encourage students and employees to have their own water bottles, filled at home. Sinks can be used to refill if required.
- 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 of books or paper based educational resources to students.



Building Flow

Buildings should encourage physical distancing between individuals through facilities set-up, visual cues and limiting density with scheduling.

- Limit the public coming into the office. Parents and caregivers and other non-staff adults entering the school should be minimized. They should also be reminded to practice diligent hand hygiene and maintain physical distance when they are in the school.
- Building hours and access will be managed by the principal and records of what areas were accessed and used will be maintained for effective daily disinfecting.
- Reduced access hours at all schools will occur to ensure proper disinfecting can occur in the evening by building service workers.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and bathrooms.
- Visual cues where people congregate to denote 2 meters for physical distancing.
- Spread people out in different areas (consider different classroom and learning environment configurations).
- Assemblies and other school-wide events should be held virtually to avoid large gatherings of people in one space.
- Designate a 2 metre area in front of or behind an administrative area. Consider the use of tape or other floor markers to designate where people can stand and line up (if required).
- Plexiglass may be used to separate administrative workers from the public if two metres of separation cannot be maintained between adults.
- If staff need to travel between worksites, maintain physical distance in vehicles wherever possible. Consider separate vehicles if possible. Larger vehicles may be able to accommodate physical distancing by using a seat configuration that maximizes distance between people.

Student Transportation (Buses and Water Taxis)

Buses used for transporting students should be cleaned and disinfected according the guidance provided in the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document (*Appendix B*).

- Encouraging private (e.g. parents or caregivers) vehicle uses where possible to decrease transportation density (buses only).
- Have students sit in their own seat.
- Students from the same household can share a seat if space is limited.



Administrative Measures:

Administrative measures ensure that the district is managing information and communication effectively, is ensuring that protocols are followed and that supplies, process and polices are in place.

Communication strategies

- The Principal at each site will manage orientation and health and safety protocols developed by the district and local school protocols in line with district directives.
- Onsite health and safety committees are requested to meet weekly instead of monthly during this period (June 2020).
- Upon first return to the workplace, hold a health and safety meeting to review workplace practices relating to COVID-19 and other health and safety matters. Additional communication may be required as new information is made available that may affect work practices.
- Ensure there is effective and well placed signage to communicate key messages to staff and students (eg. Hand hygiene signs, physical distancing posters etc.). Refer to WorkSafeBC's Hygiene Practices signage (*Appendix A*).
- Remind staff that all health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- Ensure that parents and caregivers understand your policy that students must stay home if they are sick.
- Minimize the number of non-essential people coming into the school such as parents and caregivers and contractors.
- Keep parents and caregivers informed about what you are doing in your educational setting regarding taking extra precautions.
- Ensure that workers know how to raise safety concerns. This is through your joint health and safety committee.
- Establishing a central location where new information is posted relating to COVID-19 in your workplace.

Documentation and training

Train your 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.
- Keep records made to work policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep records of that training.
- Document COVID-19 related meetings.

Keep records of instruction and training provided to workers regarding COVID-19, as well as reports of exposure and first aid records.



Personal Measures:

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact

Physical distancing is the most effective measure to reduce the risk of transmission between individuals. The age of individuals will impact their ability to manage their own physical distancing parameters. As a group, children have currently shown to be the lowest risk group for COVID-19 symptoms and transmission. Therefore, we work to minimize physical contact with children. The minimizing comes with environmental and administrative measures and through education of healthy COVID-19 hygiene habits.

Student management and hygiene during COVID-19

Hygiene

- Students should wash their hands regularly. This should include, at minimum:
 - When they arrive at school and before they go home
 - Before eating and drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After sneezing or coughing into hands or tissue
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
 - When moving between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).
- Teachers and Educational Assistants should assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- If a sink is not available use alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Food should not be shared by students.

Physical distancing

- Parents and caregivers should remain outside of the school to drop off their children.
- Avoid close greetings like hugs or handshakes and remind students to keep their hands to themselves when possible.
- Consider using educational videos and online programs as a part of learning so young students can sit independently and distanced from each other.
- Consider teaching classes outside when practical.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff. For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items. For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Organize students into smaller groups that stay together throughout the day.
- Strive to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day.
- Consider different classroom configurations to maintain distance between students or different locations in the school (e.g., different classrooms, gym or library, outside).
- Discourage any food or drink sharing.
- Eliminate group food preparation activities.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch, and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.



SD64 Covid-19 Building Requirements & Protocols

Safety for staff

Physical distancing

- Maintain 2 metre physical distancing whenever possible between workers and students. Consider the use of virtual meetings or other means to reduce the number of staff in a space. Modify work processes and practices to encourage physical distancing between staff and student, and other workers.
- Provide instructions to workers on methods for maintaining physical distance such as not greeting others by hugging or shaking hands.
- If workers need to meet in person, ensure there is a 2 metre space between each worker.
- Manage the flow of people in public spaces such as hallways and on stairs, consider the use of one-way systems.

Hygiene

- Ensure hand washing supplies are available at all times (i.e., soap, paper towels and, if needed, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- Develop and establish handwashing policies and procedures for all staff and others at the school. WorkSafeBC [handwashing signage](#) is provided to communicate good handwashing practices. Post handwashing signs near all sinks. Workers, including teachers, administrators and support workers should wash their hands frequently to reduce the risk of transmission.
- Ensure workers are provided with appropriate supplies and facilities with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the school entrance and other locations as appropriate.
- Promote effective hygiene practices. Refer to WorkSafeBC's Hygiene Practices Signage (*Appendix A*).

Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)

- BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings (*Appendix B*) is that personal protective equipment, such as masks and 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.
- Where PPE has been identified for tasks prior to COVID-19 pandemic, continue to use this PPE when performing these tasks.
- Although the risk of virus transmission from an asymptomatic (no symptoms) person is low.
- First aid attendants may use gloves and surgical masks at their discretion when rendering first aid.
- There is no evidence to support the use of medical grade, cloth, or homemade masks in school settings at this time. Wearing a mask is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.



Safety Responsibilities by Role

Employer

(School District 64)

- Select, implement, and document risk assessments and appropriate site-specific control measures.
- Ensure that all resources (information, authorization administrative changes, technology, training, human resources) and materials (personal protective equipment, equipment, cleaning and disinfecting products and systems) required to implement and maintain 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.
- Re-examine all tasks in the workplace, especially those that require the direct care of students, and ensure that safe work procedures are updated with COVID-19 practices.

Supervisors

(Principals and 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.
- Ensure orientation for returning or new employees into your building related to COVID-19 health and safety and keep records of these events.
- Access and hours to buildings are controlled by administrators of the buildings, ensure records are kept of areas of buildings accessed and that information is communicated to appropriate individuals.
- Developed school site specific protocols for your school that align with district and WSBC health and safety policy and ensure the following are included in their protocols:
 - School Administrators must ensure school staff are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease prior to entering the school.
 - Staff and students who are ill, including children of essential service workers, should not be permitted to attend school. Note: Students and employees should stay home until deemed healthy to return (calling 811, permission from doctor, and/or symptoms of illness resolve).
 - Clearly communicates with parents and caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school.
 - Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school to be sent home as soon as possible. See *Appendix C*.
 - Additional measures and direction on implementing physical distancing (e.g. define the ages/grades of younger students vs. older students; clarify different approaches for minimizing physical contact vs. physical distancing).



SD64 Covid-19 Building Requirements & Protocols

- Clear protocols for employees, students, and others entering and exiting schools as well as school outdoor activities and student pick-up and drop-off.
- Clear protocols for bringing materials (e.g. bags, school supplies) into and out of schools.
- Clear protocols for safe and healthy handling of all food items, such as labelling of beverage and food containers.
- clear communication to students not to contact or share items, and other parameters deemed appropriate.
- Schools should not be used for community related events unless determined essential by the Board.
- Employees and students should not be sharing personal items (e.g. electronic devices, writing instruments, etc.).

Employees

(Teachers, Education Assistants, Support Staff and Outside Contractors)

- 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.

Service Operations Managers

(Director of Facilities and Transportation and Building Services Supervisor)

- Maintaining an inventory of PPE for custodians, cleaning and disinfectant products, and well-maintained equipment used for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Providing adequate instruction to building service workers on the hazards associated with cleaning work areas and on the safe work procedures specified in this exposure control plan.
- Directing the work in a manner that ensures the risk to custodians is minimized and adequately controlled.
- Ensuring records of cleaning and disinfecting at each school sites and periodic site audits of work have occurred.
- Revising the work schedule to ensure priority intensive cleaning of impacted work area surfaces and touch points.



Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

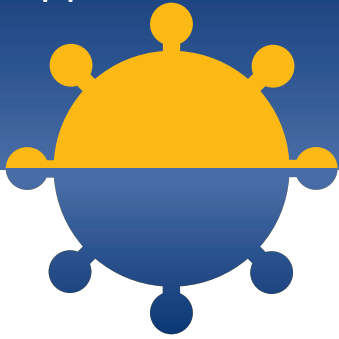
In accordance with the general requirements of Section 36 of the Workers Compensation Act the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee members at each location have a responsibility to thoroughly familiarize themselves with the content and requirements of this document and consult with workers and inspect the workplace to:

- Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations;
- Consider and expeditiously deal with complaints relating to the health and safety of workers;
- Consult with workers and the employer on issues related to occupational health and safety and occupational environment;
- Make recommendations to the employer and the workers for the improvement of the occupational health and safety and occupational environment of workers;
- Make recommendations to the employer on educational programs promoting the health and safety of workers and compliance with the OHS provisions and the regulations and to monitor their effectiveness;
- To advise the employer on programs and policies required under the regulations for the workplace and to monitor their effectiveness;
- To advise the employer on proposed changes to the workplace, including significant proposed changes to equipment and machinery, or the work processes that may affect the health or safety of workers;
- To ensure that accident investigations and regular inspections are carried out as required by the OHS provisions and the regulations;
- To participate in inspections, investigations and inquiries as provided in the OHS provisions and the regulations.



Appendices

- Appendix A: WorkSafeBC's Hygiene Practices Signage
- Appendix B: BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings
- Appendix C: Protocol for Student Expressing Symptoms of Common Cold, Influenza or COVID-19
- Appendix D: BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings UPDATED: May 19, 2020



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

- 

1
Wet 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 the tap

HOW TO USE HAND RUB

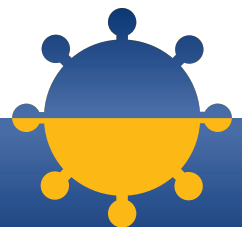
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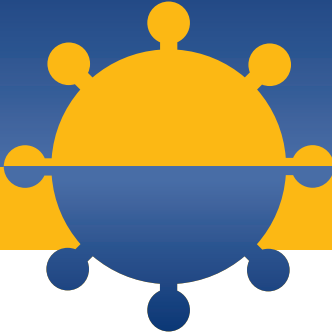
1
Ensure hands are visibly clean (if soiled, follow hand washing steps)
- 

2
Apply about a loonie-sized amount to your hands
- 

3
Rub all surfaces of your hand and wrist until completely dry (15-20 seconds)

COVID19_HH_001





CLEANING AND DISINFECTANTS FOR PUBLIC SETTINGS

Good cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in BC.

This document provides advice to public groups, transit, schools, universities, and other institutions in BC on cleaning for non-health care settings.

Make sure to wash hands with plain soap and water after cleaning or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.



OR



Cleaning: 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 cleaning cloth.

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

All visibly soiled surfaces should be cleaned before disinfection.

Cleaning for the COVID-19 virus is the same as for other common viruses. Cleaning products and disinfectants that are regularly used in households are strong enough to deactivate coronaviruses and prevent their spread.

Recommendations:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces should occur at least once a day.
- Clean and disinfect highly touched surfaces at least twice a day and when visibly dirty (e.g., door knobs, light switches, cupboard handles, grab bars, hand rails, tables, phones, bathrooms, keyboards).
- Remove items that cannot be easily cleaned (e.g., newspapers, magazines, books, toys).

Cleaning

For cleaning, water and detergent (e.g., liquid dishwashing soap), or common household cleaning wipes should be used, along with good physical cleaning practices (i.e., using strong action on surfaces).

Disinfection

For disinfection, common household disinfectants such as ready-to-use disinfecting wipes and pre-made solutions (no dilution needed) can be used. Use the figure and table below for guidance. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions printed on the bottle.

IPC v2.0



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health

CLEANING AND DISINFECTANTS FOR PUBLIC SETTINGS

See Health Canada's **List of hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19)** for specific brands and disinfectant products.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

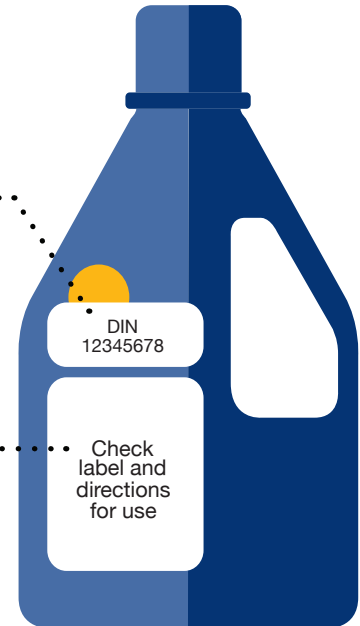
- Ensure disinfectant product has a Drug Identification Number (DIN) on its label.
- Follow product instructions for dilution, contact time and safe use.
- All visibly dirty surfaces should be cleaned BEFORE disinfecting (unless otherwise stated on the product).

Drug Identification Number (DIN):

A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms it is approved for use in Canada.

Agents effective against coronavirus:

- Bleach: sodium hypochlorite (5.25%)
- Hydrogen peroxide (0.5%)
- Alkyl dimethyl ammonium chlorides



List of disinfecting agents and their working concentrations known to be effective against coronaviruses^{1,2}:

Agent and concentration	Uses
1. 1:100 dilution Chlorine: household bleach – sodium hypochlorite (5.25%)* 10 ml bleach to 990 ml water	Used for disinfecting surfaces (e.g., hand railings, grab handles, door knobs, cupboard handles). Make fresh daily and allow surface to air dry naturally.
2. 1:50 dilution Chlorine: household bleach - sodium hypochlorite (5.25%)* 20 ml bleach to 980 ml water	Used for disinfecting surfaces contaminated with bodily fluids and waste like vomit, diarrhea, mucus, or feces (after cleaning with soap and water first). Make fresh daily and allow surface to air dry naturally.
3. Hydrogen Peroxide 0.5%	Used for cleaning and disinfecting surfaces (e.g., counters, hand rails, door knobs).
4. Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QUATs): noted as 'alkyl dimethyl ammonium chlorides' on the product label	Used for disinfecting surfaces (e.g., floors, walls, furnishings).

¹ Dellanno, Christine, Quinn Vega, and Diane Boesenberg. "The antiviral action of common household disinfectants and antiseptics against murine hepatitis virus, a potential surrogate for SARS coronavirus." *American journal of infection control* 37.8 (2009): 649-652.

² Provincial Infection Prevention Control Network of British Columbia. "Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines for Providing Healthcare to Clients Living in the Community." (2014). https://www.picnet.ca/wp-content/uploads/PICNet_Home_and_Community_Care_Guidelines_2014_.pdf

The BC Ministry of Health does not endorse or promote any specific brands of disinfectant products. IPC v2.0





Appendix C: Protocol for Student expressing Symptoms of common cold, influenza or COVID-19

- Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area.
- Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
- Contact 811 or the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
- Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.
- Provide the student with tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene.
- Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Building service workers responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas 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.

Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



HOW YOU CAN SLOW THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

Take care of others by taking care of yourself.

Wash your hands, don't touch your face, and stay home if you are sick.

Stay at Home and Physically Distance

Stay at home whenever you can. Maintain 2 meters distance from those outside of your household.

COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings

UPDATED: May 19, 2020

On the advice of the Provincial Health Officer, in-person instruction in public and independent K-12 schools was suspended effective March 17, 2020 as a precautionary measure in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning March 30, 2020, public and independent K-12 schools were asked to ensure ongoing school care and in-person learning opportunities for children of essential service workers requiring school care, those in remote locations, vulnerable students requiring in person support, and learners with diverse needs. As of May 19, school districts are expected to gradually resume regular operations and return to in-class instruction using a staged approach.

This guidance document is informed by [BC's Restart Plan: Next Steps to Move BC Through the Pandemic](#) and the [BC COVID-19 Go-Forward Management Strategy](#), and is also in keeping with [BC's COVID-19 Go-Forward Management Checklist](#) and information on [WorkSafe BC's COVID-19 Information and Resources](#) and [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#) websites. It provides guidance for educators, administrators and support staff at public, independent and First Nations K-12 schools to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and maintain a safe and healthy environment for students, families and staff. This document identifies key infection prevention and control practices to implement, as well as actions to take if a student or staff member develops [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.

Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in B.C., and the fact that children are at a much lower risk of developing COVID-19, K-12 schools in British Columbia should begin increasing the number of students receiving in-class instruction within the school environment, while supporting the health and safety of children and adults. Schools should adapt as much as possible to implement public health and infection prevention and control measures, including staying home when ill, physical distancing, minimized physical contact, hand hygiene, frequent cleaning and disinfection, as described in this guidance. While remote and online learning options will continue to play a role in the education of our children, it is up to individual schools through their local planning processes to determine the optimal balance between virtual and face-to-face opportunities for students.

For up-to-date information on COVID-19, visit the [BC Centre for Disease Control \(BCCDC\) website](#).

COVID-19 and Children and Youth

- COVID-19 virus has a very low infection rate in children and youth. In BC, less than 1% of children and youth tested have been COVID-19 positive. Most children and youth are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection.
- Children under 1 year of age and those who are immunocompromised or have pre-existing pulmonary conditions are at a higher risk of severe disease (visit the [BCCDC Priority Populations](#) page for further details).



- Children who are considered more vulnerable can receive in-person instruction. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine if their child should attend in-person instruction if they are uncertain.
- Children and youth typically have much milder symptoms of COVID-19 most often presenting with low-grade fever and a dry cough. GI symptoms are more common over the course of disease, while skin changes and lesions, are less common.
- Many children have asymptomatic disease. However, there is no conclusive evidence that children who are asymptomatic pose a risk to other children or to adults.
- Evidence indicates transmission involving children is primarily limited to household settings, and from COVID-19 positive adults to children. Most cases in children have been linked to a symptomatic household member.
- Clusters and outbreaks involving children and youth are unusual and tend only to occur in areas where there are high levels of community spread.
- Children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in schools or in community settings.
- Schools and childcare facility closures have significant negative mental health and socioeconomic impacts on vulnerable children and youth.
- Prevention measures and mitigation strategies involving children and youth must be commensurate with risk.
- Adolescent children should physically distance themselves where possible when outside the family unit or household.
- For younger children maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead.

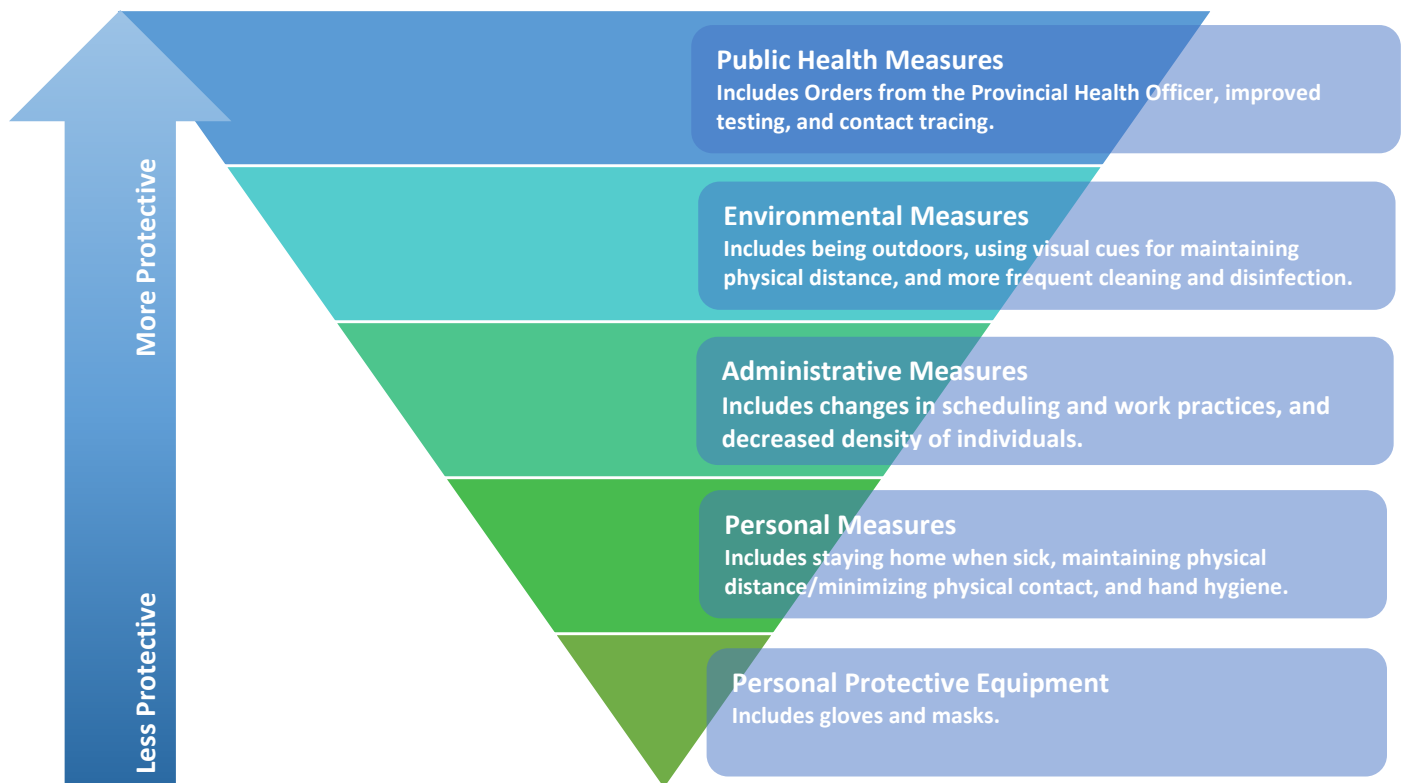
COVID-19 and Adults

- While COVID-19 impacts adults more than children, some adults with specific health circumstances are at an increased risk for more severe outcomes, including individuals:
 - Aged 65 and over,
 - With compromised immune systems, or
 - With underlying medical conditions.
- Most adults infected with COVID-19 will have mild symptoms that do not require care outside of the home.

Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures

Infection prevention and exposure control measures help create a safe environment for students and staff. *Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease* describes measures that can be taken to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. 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 COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

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



Public Health Measures are actions taken across society at the population level to limit the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and reduce the impact of COVID-19. The Provincial Health Officer has implemented public health measures, including: prohibiting mass gatherings, requiring travellers to self-isolate or quarantine upon arrival in B.C., effective case finding and contact tracing, and emphasizing the need for people to stay home when they are sick.

Environmental Measures are changes to your physical environment that reduce the risk of exposure. Examples include being in outdoor spaces, ensuring good ventilation and air exchange, using visual cues for maintaining physical distance, erecting physical barriers where appropriate and frequent cleaning and disinfection.

Administrative Measures are measures enabled through the implementation of policies, procedures, training and education. Examples of these include health and wellness policies, decreased density in classrooms, staggered schedules and using virtual learning opportunities.

Personal Measures are actions individuals can take to protect themselves and others. Examples include maintaining physical distance/minimizing physical contact, washing your hands frequently, coughing into your elbow and staying home from work if you are sick.

Personal Protective Equipment is the last and least effective of the infection prevention and exposure control measure and should only be considered after exploring all other measures. PPE is not effective as a stand-alone preventive measure, should be suited to the task, and must be worn and disposed of properly. Outside of the health care settings, the effectiveness of PPE is generally limited to protecting others should you be infected.

Schools can implement a combination of measures at different levels, as described in this document. This document includes Environmental, Administrative, Personal Measures and the use of PPE. A summary of control measures relevant is included as Appendix A.

Public Health Measures

Mass Gatherings

The Provincial Health Officer's Order for Mass Gatherings continues to prohibit gatherings and events of people in excess of 50 people, however, this Order does not apply to regular school activities. As such, there can be more than 50 students and staff in a school at any given time if they are not all in one area and if they are actively engaged in physical distancing to the greatest extent possible. However, large assemblies of staff and students should not be held.

Case Finding, Contact Tracing and Outbreak Management

Active testing of people with mild COVID-19 like symptoms (case finding) helps us identify cases early in the course of their disease, determine whether others in close contact with them are at risk for infection (contact tracing), and ensure they get appropriate care and follow-up. Enhancing policies regarding reporting employee and student absenteeism to public health can be helpful in early identification of clusters and outbreaks.

Should a COVID-19 positive person be identified by public health staff, significant efforts are undertaken to determine if they are part of a cluster of cases or part of a local outbreak. Specific public health measures are implemented in facilities where an outbreak occurs to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 and keep others safe in a school or workplace.

Self-isolation and Quarantine

Should children, youth and staff have common-cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms they should be encouraged to stay home, be assessed by their health care provider and tested for COVID-19. When someone is symptomatic, they should self-isolate and follow directions provided by their health care provider. Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered a close contact of a confirmed case and are waiting to see if they develop COVID-19 illness.

Quarantine is a term typically reserved for persons who return from travel outside the country are at risk of developing COVID-19

If a person is found to be a confirmed case of COVID-19, public health staff will ensure there is robust contact tracing and management of any clusters or outbreaks. They will also ensure that children, staff and parents have access to health care providers and that appropriate supports are in place.

Environmental Measures

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.

This includes:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises should occur at least **once a day**.
- Frequently-touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least **twice a day**.
 - These include door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, 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.
- Limit items that are not easily cleaned (e.g., fabric or soft items);
- 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.

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 of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

Administrative Measures

Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact

Physical distancing (i.e., maintaining a distance of 2 meters between two or more people) is challenging in a K-12 school setting, particularly with younger students. As such, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels and activities. For example, younger students should be supported to have minimized physical contact with one another, while older students and adults should seek to maintain a safe physical distance whenever possible.

The following physical distancing strategies should be implemented where possible in the K-12 school setting:

- Avoid close greetings (e.g., hugs, handshakes). Regularly remind students about keeping their “hands to yourself”.
- Spread people out into different areas:
 - Consider different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
- Organize students into smaller groups that stay together throughout the day.
- Strive to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day (i.e. minimize the amount of mixing between students and different staff in the setting).
- Stagger pick-up and drop-off times.
- 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.
- Take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside. Group sports activities should be organized in a thoughtful way, taking into consideration personal measures.
- Reassure students and parents that playgrounds are a safe environment, and encourage appropriate hand hygiene practices before, during, after outdoor play.
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff.
 - For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
 - For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways.
- Parents and Caregivers and other non-staff adults entering the school should be minimized as much as is practical to do so. They should also be reminded to practice diligent hand hygiene and maintain physical distance when they are in the school.
- Assemblies and other school-wide events should be held virtually to avoid a large number of people gathered in one space.

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 measures should be taken, including:

- Encouraging private vehicle use where possible to decrease transportation density.
- Consider installing a physical barrier between the driver and passengers (e.g., plexiglass).
- Have students sit in their own seat:
 - Students should be separated side to side and front to back .
 - Students from the same household can share seats if space is limited.

Personal Measures

Stay Home When Sick

- All students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 **OR** travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate, including children of essential service workers who are ill.
- 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.
- Staff must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school.
- School Administrators must ensure school staff are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease prior to entering the school.
- School Administrators must:
 - Clearly communicate with parents and caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school.

- Alternatively, conduct daily checks for respiratory illness at drop-off by asking parents and caregivers to confirm the child does not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease.
- Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school to be sent home as soon as possible.
- Staff and students who are ill, including children of essential service workers, should not be permitted to attend school.
- Those unsure of if they or a student should self-isolate should be directed to use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#).
 - If concerned, they can be advised to contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further input.
 - They can also be advised to contact a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.
- 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.

An info sheet on what to do if a student or staff member becomes ill at work is included as Appendix B.

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Both students and staff can pick up and spread germs easily, from objects, surfaces, food and people. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene. Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

How to practice diligent hand hygiene:

- Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19.
- If sinks are not available (e.g., students and staff are outdoors), use alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol.
- If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty.
- To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the BCCDC's [hand washing poster](#).

Strategies to ensure diligent hand hygiene:

- Encourage hand washing with water and soap upon arrival at school. Place hand washing stations in various locations including school entrances, hallways, and classrooms to encourage appropriate hand hygiene throughout the day.
- Consider alcohol-based hand rub dispensers where sinks are not available, and posters to promote the importance of regular hand washing.
- Regularly remind staff and students about the importance of diligent hand hygiene.
- Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.
- 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.

An info sheet on when students and staff should practice hand hygiene is included as Appendix C.

Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve 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.

Wearing cloth or homemade mask, particularly children, is not recommended. There is limited evidence outside of health care settings and only in uncontrolled situations where physical distancing between adults cannot be maintained for extended periods of time (greater than 15 minutes with a person who has probable or lab confirmed COVID-19). Wearing one is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect.

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

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment, such as masks and 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. They should only be used when all other controls fail.

- Managing students with complex behaviours, on a delegated care plan or experiencing a health emergency may require staff to be in close physical proximity with the student. ***No additional personal protective equipment beyond normal universal precautions are required.***

There is no evidence to support the use of medical grade, cloth, or homemade masks in school settings at this time. Wearing one is a personal choice. It is important to treat people wearing masks with respect. More information about COVID-related mask use is available [here](#).

Supporting School Communities

The BC Centre for Disease Control is the source of information about COVID-19. Resources available there can be used to support learning and to respond to questions you may receive from members of your school community. More information is available [here](#).

Appendix A: Summary of School-Based Control Measures



1. STAY HOME WHEN SICK

All children and staff with common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory diseases must stay home and self-isolate.



2. HAND HYGIENE

Everyone should wash 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 children out to different areas.

Take them outside more often.

Stagger lunch times. Incorporate individual activities.

Remind children, "Hands to Yourself!"



5. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice a day.

General cleaning of the centre should occur at least once a day.

Use common cleaning and disinfectant products.

Appendix B: What to Do if a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms at School

<i>If a Student Develops Symptoms of COVID-19</i>	<i>If a Staff Member Develops Symptoms of COVID-19</i>
<p data-bbox="220 365 776 394">IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:</p> <p data-bbox="144 422 837 558">Parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have resolved.</p> <p data-bbox="211 600 789 630">IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL:</p> <p data-bbox="144 657 578 686">Staff must take the following steps:</p> <ol data-bbox="144 693 846 1434" 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 distance of 2 metres from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.4. Provide the student with 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 used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).8. Contact the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input. <p data-bbox="144 1476 824 1541">Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p data-bbox="927 365 1446 394">IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:</p> <p data-bbox="878 422 1479 558">Staff must be excluded from work and stay home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have resolved.</p> <p data-bbox="927 588 1446 617">IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK:</p> <p data-bbox="878 644 1382 674">Staff should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p data-bbox="878 716 1247 745">If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol data-bbox="878 751 1479 1171" 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).5. If concerned, contact the local public health unit to seek further input.
<p data-bbox="177 1665 1459 1730">If a student or staff member is assessed by their family physician or nurse practitioner and it is determined that they do NOT have COVID-19, they may return to school once symptoms resolve.</p>	

Appendix C: 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 and before they go home.• Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).• Between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).• Before and after eating and drinking.• After using the toilet.• After handling common resources/equipment/supplies or pets.• After sneezing or coughing into hands.• Whenever hands are visibly dirty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When they arrive at school and before they go home.• Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch).• Between different learning environments (e.g. outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).• 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.