



SD 51 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

updated April 16, 2022

INTRODUCTION

School District 51 is following the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) to ensure our schools are safe places for students and staff. The guidelines are built upon the [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) from the BC Centre of Disease Control (BCCDC) and [WorkSafeBC](#) to ensure schools have effective measures in place to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases. In case of any variance between the guidelines from the Ministry of Education and the BCCDC, SD 51 will follow the guidelines of the Ministry.

These guidelines are intended to support K-12 education employees, students, parents, caregivers, administrators, and school community members to:

- Be informed about public health measures and how they support a safe school environment
- Understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting safe and healthy schools

SD 51 strives to have safe and healthy schools that are welcoming for learners and staff and that foster and sustain mental well-being as well. We also want to ensure effective and ongoing communication with school leaders, community partners, parents, caregivers, students, unions, and employees.

SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

SD 51 schools can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours.
- Share reliable information, including from BC Centre for Disease Control and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, to parents, families and caregivers.
- Promoting personal practices in the school.

Schools will use

- An inclusive and trauma-informed lens in developing their communicable disease prevention plans.
- Positive and inclusive approaches to supporting personal practices aligned with existing professional practices to address behaviour. Approaches will not exclude students from participating in school or potentially result in stigma.

Schools will proactively communicate changes to communicable disease prevention plans to their school community when measures are removed or added.

VACCINES

Vaccination protects from serious illness due to COVID-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. BCCDC strongly recommends adults interacting with children to be fully vaccinated. All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including from the Omicron variant. See BCCDC for trusted information on [COVID-19 vaccines](#).

SD 51 will share evidence-based information (e.g., from [BCCDC](#) or [ImmunizeBC](#)) and details on how and where people can be vaccinated with staff, students and families prior to the start of the year. We will also work with Interior Health to explore opportunities to establish school-based COVID-19 vaccination clinics to help increase community uptake.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLANS

Communicable disease prevention focuses on reducing the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, and includes both ongoing measures (e.g., hand hygiene, cleaning) and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health.

Schools and district administrators must regularly review their communicable disease plans and should do so with their Site Committees and Joint Health and Safety Committees, and address where there are identified gaps in implementation. [WorkSafeBC's Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#) outlines a four-step process to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission.

COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING

In conjunction with site joint health and safety committees and/or worker health and safety reps, School District 51 will:

- communicate relevant guidance, recommendations, and orders from public health to its school communities.
- as required by WorkSafe BC, newly hired staff and staff who change worksites will have an orientation and any required training on communicable disease prevention measures for the worksite.
- Inform staff and provide training when communicable disease prevention measures change.

SD 51 will also give orientation opportunities to students and others in school to ensure all members of the school community are aware of their responsibilities.

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION DRILLS

Emergency and evacuation planning and drills should consider communicable disease plans. In the event of an emergency, communicable disease prevention measures will be suspended to ensure a timely, efficient, and safe response.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the transmission of communicable diseases from contaminated objects and surfaces.

- For **cleaning**, use water and detergent or common, commercially-available products, along with good cleaning practices. For hard-to-reach areas, use a brush and rinse thoroughly prior to disinfecting.
- For **disinfection**, use common, commercially-available disinfectants listed on Health Canada's [hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

SD 51 will follow these procedures when cleaning and disinfecting:

- Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects
- Items and surfaces a person has placed in their mouths or have been in contact with bodily fluids will be cleaned as soon as possible and between uses by different people
- Dishwasher-safe items will be cleaned and disinfected in dishwasher with hot rinse cycle

The following frequency guidelines will be followed when cleaning and disinfecting in schools where spaces/equipment are being used by students, staff, or visitors:

- General cleaning of premises, and cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces **at least once in a 24-hour period**
- Clean any surface that is visibly dirty
- Empty garbage containers daily

Frequently touched surfaces are those touched by larger numbers of students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains and toilet handles as well as shared equipment. Toys and manipulatives that cannot be cleaned frequently can still be used as can carpets and rugs.

When cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids, SD 51 staff will follow these procedures:

- Wear disposable gloves
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves
- Follow regular health and safety procedures and regularly used PPE for blood and bodily fluids.

Schools can use regular laundering practices.

GENERAL VENTILATION & AIR CIRCULATION

SD 51 will regularly maintain its HVAC systems for proper operation. We have increased fresh air intake in school by adjusting HVAC systems & are upgrading current filters when possible.

To enhance school ventilation, schools in SD 51 may:

- Increase air exchanges
- Where possible, open windows if weather permits and HVAC system function will not be negatively impacted.

HAND HYGIENE

Rigorous handwashing with plain soap and water or using an effective hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness. Follow these guidelines to ensure effective hand hygiene.

- Give regular opportunities for staff and students to practice hand hygiene
- If sinks not available, have alcohol-based hand sanitizers that have met Health Canada requirements
- Wash hands upon school entry and before/after breaks and eating, using washroom, and using frequently touched shared equipment
- Display hand hygiene posters for students and adults at handwashing sites
- Keep handwashing supplies well-stocked including soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer
- Staff will help younger students as needed
- If hand visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub may not be effective at eliminating microbes
 - Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty
 - If not available, use alcohol-based hand wipe followed by hand rub

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

SPACE ARRANGEMENT

- Schools will use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.
- Staff-only places will use preferred configurations as well.

SCHOOL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

- Schools can resume all types of gatherings and events
- No longer have specific capacity limits
- SD 51 staff will use an inclusive and trauma-informed lens when planning gatherings or events

HEALTH AWARENESS & ILLNESS PRACTICES

- Everyone in school community must regularly check themselves or their child for symptoms of illness
 - If they are sick (including if they are unable to participate fully in regular activities due to symptoms of illness), they cannot come to school
- SD 51 administrators will establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work
 - Have space available if student/staff cannot be picked up immediately
 - Have non-medical masks available for those experiencing respiratory symptoms who choose to wear one
 - Provide supervision for younger children
 - Supervising staff can wear mask if they choose
 - Supervising staff should wear gloves and practice diligent hand hygiene if touching bodily fluids
 - Cleaning and disinfecting practices must occur once student/staff has left
 - Cleaning entire room not required

- SD 51 will not require health-care provider note to confirm health status of any individual beyond those needed to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.

Students, staff, and other adults must follow public health guidance and/or recommendation of their health care provider when sick. Information specific to COVID-19 is available from [BCCDC](#).

PROTOCOLS FOR MANAGING COMMUNICABLE DISEASE ACTIVITY AT SCHOOL

Public health plays a lead role in managing communicable disease activity (including COVID-19) at schools. More information is available in [COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff](#).

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES AND/OR RECEIVING HEALTH SERVICES

EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

- SD 51 health and safety measures will promote inclusion of students with disabilities and/or diverse abilities with supports and services.
- Most students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity are not considered at a greater risk of experiencing severe illness from COVID-19.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF AND/OR THOSE WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES, COMPLEX BEHAVIOURS, MEDICAL COMPLEXITIES OR RECEIVING DELEGATED CARE WHERE PHYSICAL CONTACT MAY BE REQUIRED.

- Those providing health or education services that require being near a student will follow their risk assessment methods to determine what PPE is needed for general communicable disease prevention in accordance with routine practices. Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that usually used in regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting).
- Parents and caregivers of children who are considered at a higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine their child's level of risk.
- Students are not required to wear a mask or face covering when receiving services, though they or their parent/caregiver may choose to.
- Schools will continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.

BUSES

- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected daily.
- Bus drivers will clean hands often, including before and after completing trips.
- Bus drivers, teachers and students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus.

VISITOR ACCESS/COMMUNITY USE

- Schools will ensure visitors are aware of communicable disease prevention plan, including personal practices.
 - Information on communicable disease protocols will be posted by entrance to school, on school's website and included in communications to students and families.

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

- Must occur in line with those activities permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial, and federal public health recommendations and Order.

CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

All curriculum, programs and activities will operate in alignment with provincial K-12 health and safety guidelines, including school-led activities held off campus. SD 51 schools will continue to implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices, such as cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, specific to activity.

FIELD TRIPS

Follow existing policies and procedures as well as guidance in this document. In SD 51, additional measures specific to field trips must be taken, including:

- For overnight camps, guidance from BCCDC and BC Camps Association must be followed when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.
- Schools will avoid venue/locations that place additional requirements that could prevent a person from being able to participate, particularly students.
 - If this is not possible, and the field trip/travel cannot occur otherwise, schools can require participants to confirm they are able to meet the additional requirements (e.g., able to provide proof of vaccination).
- Staff and students will follow the communicable disease prevention plan of places attended on a field trip.
 - If there is a conflict with school's communicable disease prevention plan, the more stringent protocols will be followed.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM AND ENTRY

- Information about communicable disease prevention measures will be communicated to families and students prior to school start.
- Parents/caregivers must follow visitor guidelines outlined in this document.
- Teach students to learn and practice respecting personal space, recognizing they are unlikely to always do this.
- Use gentle reminders and encourage students to kindly support one another.
- Frequently touched items can be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after.
- Carpets and rugs may be used.

MUSIC / PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION / OUTDOOR / FOOD AND CULINARY / THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE / OTHER SHARED EQUIPMENT PROGRAMS

- Shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected as per cleaning and disinfecting guidelines
- Students will practice proper hand hygiene before and after shared equipment use
- Equipment that touches mouth (e.g., instrument mouth pieces, water bottles, utensils) will not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES / LEARNING COMMONS

- Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., children's books or magazines) and items with covers (e.g., DVDs) are low risk items.

- Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as normal.
- There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time.
- For information on cleaning, see guidelines in Cleaning and Disinfecting section.
- BC Teacher Librarian Association has developed [Recommendations for Access to Library Learning Common Resources to Meet COVID-19 Requirements](#). If any discrepancy in guidance, SD 51 will follow Ministry of Education guidelines set out in this document.

TRADES IN TRAINING PROGRAMS / WORK EXPERIENCE

- Students enrolled in individual training/work experience programs will follow the communicable disease prevention plan required at workplace
- Students will follow the more stringent measures between the school's and the workplace's communicable disease prevention plans.

PERSONAL PRACTICES

HEALTH AWARENESS

- Everyone at school will practice health awareness, including staying home when sick.

MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

- The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students, and visitors. This personal choice will be respected and supported.
- SD 51 schools will have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but still want to wear one or become ill at school

HAND HYGIENE

- Staff and students will practice hand hygiene upon school entry and before/after breaks and eating, using the washroom, and using frequently touched shared equipment.

RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

Staff and students will:

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

PERSONAL SPACE

Staff and students will respect others personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person).

SHARING FOOD, BEVERAGES AND OTHER ITEMS THAT TOUCH THE MOUTH

Staff and student will not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g., food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices).

Shared-use items that touch the mouth will be cleaned between use by different individuals.