



# SD 51 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

updated September 6, 2022

School District 51 is following the guidance of the BC Centre for Disease Control as well as the Ministry of Health to reduce the risk of communicable disease. Public health guidance can be found in the following document: [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#).

## 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 the BC Centre for Disease Control, the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and local health authorities, to parents, families, and caregivers.
- Promoting personal practices in the school.
- Ensuring individual choices for personal practices (e.g., choosing to wear a mask or face covering) are supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

## VACCINES

Vaccines are important tools to protect against many serious communicable diseases. 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. All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including from the omicron variant.

It is important to get all recommended vaccine doses to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19. People 6 months and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. More information about COVID-19 vaccines is available from the [BCCDC](#) website. Staff and students are also encouraged to ensure they are up to date on all recommended vaccines for [communicable diseases](#), including COVID-19 vaccines.

SD 51 will share evidence-based information and details on how and where people can be vaccinated. More information on COVID-19 vaccination and the workplace is available on the [WorkSafeBC](#) website. Evidence-based immunization information and tools for BC residents are available from [BCCDC](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#) websites.

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

## ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

### CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the transmission of communicable diseases. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty.

## Products & Procedures

- For cleaning, use water and detergent (e.g., liquid dishwashing soap) 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 mouth 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.

## General Cleaning

Regular practices will include general cleaning of the premises.

## Frequently Touched Surfaces

- Cleaning and distinction of frequently touched surfaces will occur at least once in a 24-hour period and when visibly dirty.
- Frequently touched items 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 as can rugs and carpets.
- Cleaning and disinfection activities will focus on spaces that have been used by staff and/or students.

## Cleaning & Disinfecting Bodily Fluids

- SD 51 staff will follow these procedures when cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine):
  - 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.

## **LAUNDRY**

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 & have upgraded filters where 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. Everyone will practice diligent hand hygiene, and school will facilitate regular opportunities for students and staff to wash their hands.

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 and are authorized for sale in Canada.
  - Alcohol-based hand sanitizers must be a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Ensure hand hygiene supplies are well-stocked including soap, paper towels (or air drier) and alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- 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

## **RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE**

Parents and staff can teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices among students, including:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue. Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, or vaping devices.

# **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

## **HEALTH AWARENESS**

School principals and vice-principals will ensure that staff, other adults entering the school, parents, caregivers, and students are aware they **should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities**. Principals and vice-principals will support this practice by communicating the importance of everyone doing a health check.

A health check means a person regularly checks to ensure they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness (including but not limited to [COVID-19 symptoms](#)) that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school to prevent spread of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, within school settings.

Schools will not monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness.

School principals and vice-principals will ensure everyone entering a school is aware and routinely reminded of their responsibility to practice health awareness, including not coming to school when sick. This will be supported through communications such as emails to parents and staff, signage of doors, or other reminders.

## ILLNESS PRACTICES

### What To Do When Sick

- Staff, students, or other persons exhibiting new symptoms of illness, including symptoms of COVID-19 or gastrointestinal illness, will stay home and follow BCCDC guidance outlined below:
  - If person is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms:
    - Go to [When to Get Tested for COVID-19](#) resource or [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#) for more information on whether to get a test for COVID-19.
    - If unsure or concerned about symptom, contact health care provider, or call 8-1-1.
  - Staff, children, or other persons in the school testing who test positive for COVID-19 should follow guidance on [BCCDC website](#) as to how long to self-isolate. They can return to school when they no longer need to self-isolate as long as symptoms have improved, and they are well enough to participate in regular activities.
  - Schools will **not** require a health care provider note to confirm the health status of any individual beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.
- If person is experiencing other symptoms, isn't recommended to take a COVID-19 test, or tests negative for COVID-19.
  - Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved enough to where they feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication.
  - Students, staff, and other adults will follow public health guidance, BCCDC guidance, and/or the recommendation of their health care provider when they are sick.

### What To Do When Sick at School/Work

- If a staff member, student, or other person develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they should go home until their symptoms improve.
- Appropriate infection control precautions will be taken while the person is preparing to leave the school premises, including using appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. They may use a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms.
- SD 51 administrators will establish procedures for students and/or staff who become sick while at school/work:
  - Continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who may want one (for both the person who is sick and for those who are assisting).
  - Arrange for student/staff to go home as soon as possible.

- Have space available if student/staff cannot be picked up immediately.
- Provide supervision for younger children.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces/equipment which the person's bodily fluids may have been in contact with while they were ill prior to surface/equipment being used by others.
- Ask that individual stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.

## **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, and schools will implement these health and safety measures.
- In-class instruction may not be suitable for some children or families with severe immune compromise or medical complexity, which should be determined on case-by-case basis with a medical care provider.
- Schools will follow regular practices for those needing alternative learning arrangements due to immune compromise or medical complexity to ensure access to learning and supports.

### **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.**

- Staff and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct or delegated care, or with disabilities and diverse abilities who are in close proximity to a student will follow routine infection control practices and care plans for the child, if applicable.
- Those providing health services in schools may receive guidance related to PPE from their regulatory college or employer. Health service providers are encouraged to work with their employer to confirm what PPE is recommended for services they provide in school settings.
- Parents and caregivers of children considered at higher risk of severe illness due to communicable disease (including 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.

### **SPACE ARRANGEMENT**

- Schools will use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches

## **BUSES**

For school buses, schools will follow normal seating and onloading/offloading practices.

- Buses used for transporting students will be cleaned and disinfected in line with the cleaning and disinfection practices outlined above.
- Bus drivers and students are encouraged to practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette as described above.
- 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 follow normal practices for welcoming visitors and the community use of schools.
- Visitors, including community groups using the school, will follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this document.

## **CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

Schools will implement communicable disease prevention practices (e.g., cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to activity.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Schools will follow existing policies and procedures as well as guidance in this document.

- Schools will also consider guidance for overnight camps from [BCCDC](#) and [BC Camps Association](#) when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

### **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM AND ENTRY**

- Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g., fabrics) or at all (e.g., sand, foam, playdough, etc.,) and carpets and rugs can be used.

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

- 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**

- Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as per routine practice.

### **TRADES IN TRAINING PROGRAMS / WORK EXPERIENCE**

- Students enrolled in individual training/work experience programs will follow the communicable disease prevention plan required at workplace/facility.
- Classes (or other similar groupings of students) participating in training/work experience programs together will follow the more stringent measures between the school and the workplace.