



ST. PATRICK'S SCHOOL COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION GUIDELINES

Updated August 2022

OBJECTIVES

All schools are to adhere to the standards, guidelines and protocols from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and WorkSafe BC. Communicable disease prevention focuses on reducing the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases and includes both ongoing measures and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health authorities.

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

- Work and learn in a healthy and safe environment
- Be informed about public health measures
- Understand the roles and responsibilities in promoting public health and safety in the school setting.

St. Patrick's School is committed to the overarching principles as communicated by the BC Ministry of Education and BCCDC for COVID-19. Based on these principles, with respect to health and safety:

- St. Patrick's School will adhere to the standards, guidelines and direction from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and Worksafe BC.
- St. Patrick's School will comply with any additional Ministry of Education and PHO health and safety requirements as and if they are developed within the province's K-12 system.
- Trauma informed practices and mental health measures will be valued and implemented where needed.
- Effective communication with all stakeholders is an essential part of the successful implementation of these guidelines.

Health Awareness

- School administrators will ensure that individuals entering the school are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate in routine activities.
- Health checks continue to be an important aid in ensuring that everyone entering the school building is healthy.

- Health checks mean a person regularly checking to ensure that they or their child are not experiencing symptoms of illness that would limit their ability to fully participate in regular activities before coming to school to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, including COVID 19 within the school settings.

See Appendix A for Daily Health Check or you can also check your symptoms with the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#).

Check What to do When Sick

- Individuals in the school setting who are exhibiting symptoms of illness should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities. If symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health issue (ie-allergies, asthma...), or if they have improved enough to where they feel well enough to return to regular activities without the aid of fever-reducing medication. Testing is always recommended to determine if the individual has COVID 19.

If an individual tests positive for COVID 19, the following applies:

- Vaccinated or under the age of 18 (vaccinated means at least 2 doses of vaccine): Isolate for at least 5 days and until symptoms improve without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
- Unvaccinated over the age of 18: Isolate for at least 10 days and until symptoms improve without the aid of fever-reducing medication.
- If an individual develops symptoms at school, they will be supported to go home until symptoms have improved, or if tested positive for COVID 19, follow the above. Appropriate infections control precautions should be taken including appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. A mask should be given to the individual to help prevent further spread to others caring for them.

Non-medical Masks and Face Coverings

- The decision to wear a mask beyond when it is required by public health is a personal choice based on individual preference. This choice is to be respected.
- Ventilation and Air Exchange
- Open windows when the weather permits if it doesn't impact the functioning of ventilation systems
- Communicable disease prevention measures need to be balanced against other risks, like excessive heat events in warmer months or poor air quality from wildfire smoke. Schools are encouraged to use BCCDC resources, including on Heat Event Response Planning and Wildfire Smoke to support planning. While taking students outside more often is no longer recommended for COVID-19 prevention, it is still encouraged due to its overall health benefits.
- Upgraded filtration including the use of Merv 13 filters where possible
- Use of air cleaning or treatment technologies (ie-surgical air purifiers)

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Frequently-touched surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least 1x/day (within a 24 hour period) and when visibly dirty. These include items touched by larger numbers of people (e.g., door handles, hand rails, tap faucets, shared gym equipment, etc.).
- Materials that are not easily cleaned (e.g., foam, playdough, etc.) or typically cleaned intermittently (e.g., fabrics, soft toys, etc.) can continue to be used. They should be cleaned (if possible) according to regular practices.

Curriculum, Programs and Activities (including Extracurricular Activities)

- Local and international field trips should occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, Provincial, and Federal public health recommendations and Orders for local and/or international travel.

School Meal Programs

- Can continue in line with current public health guidelines

Washroom Use

- All staff and students MUST wash their hands using handwashing guidelines (posters visible in all washrooms). Adults will ensure that younger children wash their hands according to handwashing guidelines.

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.

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 (minimum of 60% alcohol)

Gatherings and Events

- School extracurricular and social gatherings and events (including those within and between schools), regardless of location, can occur in line with the guidance in this document, as well as any applicable local, regional or provincial public health recommendations and orders.

Space Arrangement

- In learning environments, school cans use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches

Communication Plan

- Staff will have an orientation and training session prior to the start of school to review the COVID-19 safety plan as well as the school restart plan.
- Parents will be given the final safety plan by Friday, September 2, 2022
- School staff will review the safety plan and restart plan with all students on the first two days of school.
- Weekly memos will be sent to parents and staff with updates as well as ongoing reminders (daily health screening, ...)
- Safety plans will be posted in the school in a visible place.
- All records of training and orientation will be kept

Positive and Inclusive Approaches

- Encouraging approaches for staff and students to comply with the mandates by using positive and inclusive approaches.

As per the BCCDC and Provincial Health Officer:

Vaccines

- Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools. Everyone eligible is strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated (i.e., receive 2 doses) against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them – including those who are not eligible to be vaccinated. Both doses are needed to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19 and provide longer-lasting protection.
- The vaccines used in B.C. are highly effective against COVID-19, including among variants of concern. Vaccinated people tend to have milder illness if they get infected and are also less likely to spread COVID-19 than unvaccinated people.

People who are not vaccinated are at higher risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Most COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are now among unvaccinated adults, and are predominantly occurring in communities with lower general

vaccination uptake. Children continue to be less likely to get and spread COVID-19 and have a low risk of serious outcomes if they do get COVID-19. It is strongly recommended that adults and children be fully vaccinated including the booster shot when notified.