



Salt Spring Elementary School Communicable Disease Prevention Plan September 2022

As we enter the 2022-23 school year, schools will continue to build on the advice of public health experts to determine communicable disease plans. This prevention plan focuses on reducing the risk of transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, and includes both on-going measures (hand hygiene, cleaning) and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health.

The guidance from the BCCDC indicates that with high immunization rates in BC and treatment options for people at higher risk of serious disease, public health advises that COVID-19 can be managed as are other serious respiratory infections in the community. That means the prevention measures already in place in schools continue to be effective at reducing the risk of COVID-19 spreading. These include everyone eligible getting fully vaccinated, doing a daily health check and staying home when sick and cleaning hands regularly. During increased communicable disease risk, public health may recommend additional prevention measures for schools to implement. Consultation with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples continues to address the unique educational and learning needs of their communities. Inclusive and trauma-informed practice, with a focus on mental health and wellness, is utilized to support school community. Steps are taken to reduce the risk to workers from communicable disease as per WorkSafe BC. The focus of Communicable Disease Prevention Plans is to reduce the risk of transmission of any communicable disease (including Covid-19).

Key Elements of this Plan:

- Everyone staying home when sick and complete daily health checks
- Hand hygiene and respiratory hygiene
- Continue to maintain all mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems for proper operation
- Classroom windows open
- Regular cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces at least once in a 24hr period and when visibly dirty
- Maintaining a fun, safe, welcoming, and engaging learning environment
- Vaccinations are important tools to protect against many serious communicable diseases

Vaccines:

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 in schools and communities. Public health strongly encourages all eligible students and staff to be fully vaccinated to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19. Evidence-based immunization information and tools for BC residents are available from [BCCDC](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#) websites.

Personal Protection Equipment:

Students:

All students in K-12 are no longer required to wear masks in school and on the bus and water taxi. It is now a personal choice to wear a mask. All decisions around mask wearing will be respected. Non-medical masks are available at the main office for those who have forgotten one but wish to wear one.

Staff:

All K-12 staff are no longer required to wear a non-medical mask. It is now a personal choice to wear a mask. All decisions around mask wearing will be respected. Non-medical masks are available at the main office for those who have forgotten one but wish to wear one.

Visitors:

Schools can follow regular practices for welcoming visitors. Visitors should follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this document.

All visitors must do a health check as well as sign in at the office upon arrival.

Space Arrangement:

Schools can use classroom and learning configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

- Personal space should be respected

Hand Hygiene (taught and reinforced):

- Rigorous hand washing with soap is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness
- Diligent handwashing for at least 20 seconds will be taught and reinforced using the hand washing song ([song video link](#))
- Handwashing will be conducted frequently throughout the day:
 - Upon entry to the school
 - Before and after breaks and eating
 - After using the washroom
 - Before and after using frequently touched shared equipment (computers, Centres toys, etc.)
 - Before and after using an indoor learning space that is used by multiple classes with shared equipment (Library, Gymnasium)
 - After sneezing or coughing into hands
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty.
- Soap and water will be used but hand sanitizer will be available where there is no sink
- Soap and water must be used when hands are visibly soiled.

Respiratory Etiquette:

- Cough or sneeze into elbow, sleeve or a tissue.
- Refrain from touching eyes, nose, mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils.

- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

Stay Home When Sick:

- Everyone at school should practice health awareness, including staying home when sick.
- Staff, Parents, Caregivers and other adults visiting the school should check daily for illness and should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. A health check means a person is regularly checking to ensure they (or their child), are not experiencing symptoms of illness (including but not limited to COVID-19) that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school.
- If staff/students or other person develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they will be supported to go home until their symptoms have improved. Appropriate infection control precautions will be taken while they are preparing to leave school including use of appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. They may use a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms. Arrangements will be made for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible. A space will be made available for the person to comfortably wait, separated, and supervised. The surface/equipment which the person's bodily fluid may have been in contact with while they were ill will be cleaned and disinfected prior to being used by others. The individual is requested to stay home until they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.
- Staff, students, others in the school setting who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the guidance on the BCCDC website as to how long they should self-isolate. The [B.C Self Assessment Tool](#) provides information on who should get a COVID-19 test. 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.
- Staff, students, others, can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g seasonal allergies).

Student Transportation:

Buses/Water taxi

- Schools can follow regular onloading/offloading practices.
- Buses will be cleaned as per the cleaning protocols outlined below.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for common cold, influenza, COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. If a child is sick they must not take the bus or go to school.
- Students/drivers should practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Bus/water taxi drivers, students may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus. Personal choice will be respected.

Curriculum, Programs, Activities:

- Communicable disease prevention practices (cleaning, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene) will be implemented specific to the activity.

Music, Physical Health Education, Outdoor, Theatre, Dance/other shared equipment programs:

- Students will be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after shared equipment use. Equipment that touches the mouth (instrument mouth pieces, waterbottles) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected between use.

Cleaning Protocols:

Regular cleaning and disinfecting can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases.

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises to occur once/24 hour period.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces (eg. doorknobs, handrails, etc.) to occur once/24 hour period.
- Visibly dirty surfaces to be cleaned and disinfected.

Ventilation:

- All schools have upgraded the HVAC filters to the MERV 13.
- Where possible, open windows and doors when weather permits; this will not negatively impact the HVAC system.