



BROOKMERE SECONDARY COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINES

COQUITLAM COLLEGE

UPDATED FEBRUARY 2021

Updates include but not exclusive to the following areas:

- Strengthened mask guidelines for students a K-12 staff in schools
- Specific guidance for Physical Education classes
- More detailed protocols regarding staff-only spaces and gatherings
- BCCDC COVID-19 Health & Safety Checklist added as Appendix (at end of this doc)

February 25, 2021

Coquitlam College COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines 2021

Introduction

School supports students in developing their potential and acquiring the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need for lifelong success. In-person learning, as a part of a student peer engagement, which supports social and emotional development as well as overall wellness. It also provides many students access to programs and services that are integral to their overall health and well-being.

Based on guidance from the Provincial Health Officer and experience to date within B.C. and other jurisdictions that schools continue to be low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission, even with increased risk of COVID-19 in some communities, K-12 students can participate in full-time, in-class instruction in accordance with current public health guidelines for schools.

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.

The Ministry of Education has confirmed that K-12 schools will continue the 2020-2021 school year in Stage 2 of B.C.'s Five-Stage Framework, involving the following:

Learning Group Size: 120

Density Targets: Not Applicable

In-class Instruction: Full-time instruction for all students for the maximum instructional time possible within cohort limits; self-directed learning supplements in-class instruction, if required.

Coquitlam College Safety Plan for the Secondary School Setting

Coquitlam College administrators regularly review this COVID-19 safety plan, and address areas where there are identified gaps in implementation. The latest updates occurred in February 2021, including the completion of a COVID-19 School Health & Safety Checklist.

Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures

Coquitlam College follows the infection prevention and exposure control measures which help create safe environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19.

Coquitlam College follows the prescribed hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease, including the implementation of a combination of measures at each of the following levels in an effort to substantially reduce the risk of COVID-19:

1. Public Health Measures including orders from the Provincial Health Officer, improved testing and contact tracing.
2. Environmental Measures, including being outdoors, physical barriers, visual cues for traffic flow and more frequent cleaning and disinfection.
3. Administrative Measure, including changes in scheduling and work practices, health and wellness policies and placing students and staff in cohorts where applicable.
4. Personal Measures, including staying home when sick, maintaining physical distance/minimizing physical contact and hand hygiene.
5. Personal Protective Equipment, including masks and other PPE.

SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

Schools can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours.
- Sharing reliable information, including from the BC Centre for Disease Control and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, to parents, families and caregivers.
- Promoting required safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids like floor markings and signage. In line with the K- -class instruction for all students within current health and safety guidelines for schools, staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventive practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature. This includes where a student, staff, or other adult (including visitors) cannot comply with a specific safety measure due to health or behavioural reasons in these circumstances, schools/districts should work with these individuals (and their parents/caregivers, if applicable to a student) to explore other environmental and administrative measures to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

LEARNING GROUPS AND PHYSICAL DISTANCING

A learning group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout the school quarter, semester or year and who primarily interact with each other. Learning groups were recommended by the Provincial Health Officer to help reduce the transmission of COVID-19.

For example, a learning group could be made up of:

- A single class of students (20-30)
- Multiple classes that sometimes join together for activities like physical education (PE) or music

Health and Safety Guidelines

- A group of secondary school students with the same courses in the same quarter or semester

Learning groups can also include staff, like:

- Teachers

In Stage 2, members of the same learning group must minimize physical contact.

Why Use Learning Groups?

Compared to other public settings, schools have a relatively consistent set of people accessing the building. Learning groups further reduce the number of interactions between students and staff. This helps with contact tracing and limits interruptions to learning if a case of COVID-19 is confirmed in a learning group

Learning group sizes

Learning groups are smallest in elementary and middle schools because it is more challenging for younger students to maintain physical distance.

Students in secondary school are better able to minimize physical contact, practice hand hygiene and recognize if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Secondary: 120

The [PHO order on mass gatherings](#) does not apply to schools, as events are defined in the order as an irregular gathering, like a party or celebration.

Learning group examples

Actual configurations of learning groups will be designed by school districts and independent schools to meet local needs and other considerations in alignment with health and safety measures to protect students and school staff. Coquitlam College's current plan for instruction and physical distancing has been sent to the Independent Schools Branch within the Ministry of Education. No issues have been raised at this point, but each school's Restart Plan is subject to change.

INTERACTING WITH LEARNING GROUPS

Schools should minimize the number of adults (staff and others) who interact with learning groups they are not a part of as much as possible while continuing to support learning and a positive, healthy and safe environment.

Health and Safety Guidelines

During break times (e.g. between classes and lunch), students may want to socialize with peers in different learning groups. There are different considerations for elementary and middle/secondary students when socializing outside of their learning group. Schools should make sure these considerations are clearly communicated and explained to students.

Middle/secondary students:

- When interacting with peers outside of their learning group, students should maintain physical distance (2m).
- Middle and secondary school students capable of consistently maintaining physical distance, when it is required, should be expected to do so. If a student is unable to physically distance, the student should socialize within their learning group or where they can be supported to physically distance.

In situations where staff outside a learning group cannot practice physical distancing, other measures must be explored, such as reconfiguring rooms, securing an alternate space to allow for physical distancing, installing a physical barrier made of transparent materials, or providing virtual services where possible.

When staff are interacting with people outside of their learning group and physical distance cannot be consistently maintained and none of the strategies outlined above are viable options, staff are required to wear a non- medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield). Schools will have non-medical masks available for staff.

- To support physical distancing requirements, the following strategies should be implemented where possible:
- Avoid close greetings (e.g. hugs, handshakes).
- Regularly remind students about keeping their hands to themselves. Use visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.

Create space between students/staff as much as possible:

- Consider different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
- Consider arranging desks/tables so students are not facing each other and using consistent or assigned seating arrangements.
- Consider storing excess equipment (e.g. equipment that might not be of use during the pandemic) in order to open more space in schools.
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible.

Health and Safety Guidelines

For middle and secondary students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.

Note: for guidelines specific to courses/subject areas that tend to involve a significant number of group activities (e.g. culinary programs), see the section on [Curricular, Programs and Activities](#).

- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.
- Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. It is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure the fire code is adhered to.
- Ensure communication of physical distancing guidelines is relayed in multiple formats for ease of understanding (visual supports and representation, prompts, video modelling, signage, videos using sign language, etc.).
- Consider installing barriers made of transparent material in places where physical distance cannot be regularly maintained, and a person is interacting with numerous individuals outside of a learning group. This may include at a front reception desk where visitors check in, a library check out desk, or where food is distributed in a cafeteria.

SCHOOL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

School gatherings should be kept to a minimum and where possible schools should seek virtual alternatives for larger gatherings and assemblies to continue to support these events in a different format. When it is necessary to gather in larger groups, the following guidance should be followed:

School gatherings should occur within a learning group.

Gatherings should not exceed the maximum learning group size in the setting (which includes students and staff who are part of the learning group), plus the minimum number of additional people required (e.g. additional school staff, visitors, etc.) to meet the gathering's purpose and intended outcome. Additional people should be minimized as much as is practical to do so, and they must maintain physical distance

- Staff meetings involving staff from different learning groups should preferably occur through virtual means. Where a virtual alternative is not possible, staff meetings can happen in person if participants maintain physical distance.
- In-person inter-school events (including competitions, tournaments and festivals) should not occur at this time. This will be re-evaluated throughout the school year.

PERSONAL ITEMS

Staff and students can continue to bring personal items to school, but they should be encouraged to only bring items that are necessary (e.g. backpacks, clothing, school supplies, water bottles).

Health and Safety Guidelines

Students can continue to use their lockers, as it is better for personal items to be stored in a locker than to be stored in classrooms or carried throughout the school. If possible, lockers should not be shared. If lockers have to be shared, schools should try to assign shared lockers to students in the same learning group. Schools should implement strategies to manage the flow of students around lockers to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

Staff and students should not share personal items (including electronic devices, writing instruments, etc.) Additional measures should be taken, including:

- Personal items should be labelled with student's name to discourage accidental sharing.

Food and beverages:

- Schools should continue to emphasize that individual food and beverages are not to be shared.
- Schools should not allow homemade food items to be made available to other students at this time (e.g. birthday treats, bake sale items).

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION ON BUSES

The following strategies are recommended for student transportation on buses:

- Buses used for transporting students should be cleaned and disinfected according the guidance provided in [BCCDC's Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#) document. Additional guidance is available from [Transport Canada](#).
- Bus drivers should clean their hands often, including before and after completing trips. They are encouraged to regularly use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol during trips.
- Bus drivers are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses except while driving or able to maintain physical distance (2M). Exceptions will also be made for bus drivers who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons
- Schools will have non-medical masks and face shields available for staff.
- See the [Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities](#) section for more information on safety measures when staff are required to be in physical contact with students with disabilities
- 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. **If a child has any symptoms, they must not take the bus or go to school.**
- Students should clean their hands before they leave home to take the bus, when they leave school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home.

Health and Safety Guidelines

- Where possible, bus line up areas should be set up to prevent crowding, and allow for physical distancing of 2m (e.g., tape markings on pavement, etc.) where required.

Schools should provide support for students who are not able to physically distance.

- Middle and secondary students are required to wear non-medical masks when they are on the bus. Exceptions will be made for students who cannot wear masks for medical reasons. For more information, see the [Personal Protective Equipment](#) section.

To reduce the number of close in-person interactions on school buses, the following strategies are recommended:

- Use consistent or assigned seating arrangements.
- Schools/school districts should keep up-to-date passenger and seating arrangement lists to share with public health should contact tracing need to occur.
- The seating arrangement can be altered whenever necessary to support student health and safety (e.g. accommodating children with a physical disability, responding to behavioural issues, etc.)
- Consider the order students typically onload and offload to support buses being loaded from back to front and offloaded from front to back.
- If space is available, students should each have their own seat (unless sharing with a member of their household) and sit separated side to side and front to back.

Additional measures related to student transportation can be taken, including:

- Consider installing a physical barrier made of transparent materials between the driver and students. For additional information with respect to safety considerations when deciding to install a physical barrier, read the [Joint Guidance Document from Transport Canada and CSA D250 School Bus Technical Committee](#).
- Encouraging private vehicle use and active transportation (e.g. biking, walking, etc.) where possible to decrease transportation density.
- See the [Field Trips](#) section for more guidance about safety measures for field trips.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent 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](#).

DEFINITIONS

Health and Safety Guidelines

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 a cleaning cloth. All visibly soiled surfaces should be cleaned before being disinfected.

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

PRODUCTS & PROCEDURES

For **cleaning**, use water and detergent (e.g. liquid dishwashing soap), or common, commercially available cleaning wipes, along with good physical cleaning practices (i.e. using strong action on surfaces). For hard-to-reach areas, use a brush and rinse thoroughly prior to disinfecting.

For **disinfection**, use common, commercially available disinfectants such as ready-to-use disinfecting wipes and pre-made solutions (no dilution needed). Refer to the [Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings Guidelines](#) for additional information.

For specific brands and disinfectant products, see Health Canada's list of [hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#).

Follow these procedures when cleaning and disinfecting:

Remove or limit the use of:

frequently touched items that are not easily cleaned (e.g., fabric or soft items, plush toys)

shared equipment, as much as is practical to do so (e.g., instead, try to assemble individualized/small group kits that can be assigned to students, if possible to do so)

If shared equipment/items have to be used, they should be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the [BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document](#).

Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects.

Items and surfaces that children have placed in their mouths or that have been in contact with bodily fluids should be cleaned as soon as possible and between uses by different children.

Dishwasher-safe items can be cleaned and disinfected in a dishwasher with a hot rinse cycle.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING FREQUENCY

The following frequency guidelines should be adhered to when cleaning and disinfecting:

General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises at least **once in a 24-hour period**. This includes items that only a single student uses, like an individual desk.

Health and Safety Guidelines

In addition to the cleaning and disinfecting of the premises, cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces at least **twice in 24 hours, including at least once during regular school hours**. (See [Frequently Touched Surfaces](#) section below for examples of frequently touched surfaces.)

Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.

Empty garbage containers daily.

The same cleaning and disinfecting frequency guidelines outlined above apply when different learning groups use the same space (e.g., classroom, gym, arts room, home economics or science lab, etc.), or when the composition of a learning group changes at the end of a school term.

FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES

Frequently touched surfaces include:

Doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, faucet handles, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students, water fountains.

Water fountains can continue to be used, as access to water should not be restricted. Students and staff should be encouraged to use personal water bottles. If using water fountains, students and staff should practice hand hygiene before and after use and should not place their mouth on the fountain. Water fountains should be cleaned as a frequently touched item.

Shared learning items and manipulatives

Shared equipment (e.g. computer keyboards and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for science labs, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing machines and sewing equipment for home economic programs, PE sports equipment, music equipment, etc.)

Appliances (staff and students can share the use of appliances and other objects, but treat items like microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers or laminators as frequently touched surfaces)

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING BODILY FLUIDS

Follow these procedures when cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine):

Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.

Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.

VISITOR ACCESS/COMMUNITY USE – STAGE 2

Visitor access during school hours should be prioritized to those supporting activities that benefit student learning and well-being (e.g. teacher candidates, public health nurses, meal program volunteers, etc.).

Schools should ensure that visitors are aware of health and safety protocols and requirements prior to entering the school.

- Schools are responsible for ensuring that all visitors confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.
- Schools should keep a list of the date, names and contact information for any visitors who entered the school.
- All visitors must wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school. Exceptions will be made for visitors who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons.

Schools could include, as part of their visitor registration form, a checkbox for the visitor to confirm they have completed their daily health check.

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

- Maximum 50 person gatherings, in alignment with the [Gatherings and Events Order](#) of the Provincial Health Officer. Additional information is available from the BC Centre for Disease Control for [gatherings and events](#) in community settings.
- Diligent hand hygiene
- Respiratory etiquette
- Physical distancing among older youth and adults
- Ensuring participants stay home if they are feeling ill
- Where possible, limiting building access to only those areas required for the purpose of the activity
- Spaces and equipment used by community members should be cleaned and disinfected prior to students and staff re-entering the space.

Cleaning for purposes of after school use cannot result in a reduction of cleaning for education purposes.

Schools can consider asking community members to bring their own equipment, where appropriate.

ILLNESS & SELF-ASSESSMENT POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS

School districts and schools have developed local protocols that:

Health and Safety Guidelines

- Ensure school staff and other adults entering the school 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 (e.g. emails/letters to parents and staff, orientation video, signage on doors).
- Clearly communicate 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 Document 4, called Planning for COVID outbreak / response plan referenced at the end of this document and posted at our website

Some students may not be able to be picked up immediately. As such, we have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably that is separated from others and provide them with a non-medical mask if they don't have one, which is our medical room.

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

A daily health check is a tool to reduce the likelihood of a person with COVID-19 coming to school when they are infectious.

- Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.
 - o Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the provincial K-12 Health Check app for daily assessment of symptoms.
 - o Schools are not required to verify that the student health check has occurred every day or require that parents/caregivers submit a daily health check form.
- Staff and other adults are required to complete an active daily health check, in line with the Provincial Health Officer Order on Workplace Safety, prior to entering the school.
 - o School and district administrators are required to verify that staff and other adult health checks have been completed before they enter the school.
 - o An entry check poster for worksites, and additional information on health checks for workers, is available on the WorkSafeBC website.
- If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.

STAYING HOME, SELF-ISOLATION AND SYMPTOMS

Any student, staff or other person within the school who has symptoms of COVID-19 **OR** travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** was identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and [self-isolate](#), including children of essential service workers.

For a list of symptoms of COVID-19, see the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#).

- Any student, staff, or other person within the school who has cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms should seek assessment by a health-care provider and self-isolate while they await the results.

Health and Safety Guidelines

- Those unsure if they or a student should self-isolate or be tested for COVID-19 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. Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza, or COVID19- like symptoms, provided the student/staff is asymptomatic. It is expected the symptomatic household member is seeking assessment by a health-care provider.

- Students and staff who experience seasonal allergies or other COVID-19-like symptoms, which are related to an existing condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any change in symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health care provider.

PROTOCOLS FOR MANAGING ILLNESS AND CONFIRMED CASES AT SCHOOL:

See Appendix A: Protocols for confirmed cases of COVID-19.

See also document entitled Planning for COVID outbreak/response plan.

Links to both documents above are found at the COVID page of the Coquitlam College website where this present document is also located.

If more information is needed regarding suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19, the Principal or Designate will contact the Medical Officer for Fraser Health at 605 930 5404. It is important, however, that each staff member have this contact number in case circumstances dictate that a staff member become involved in a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19.

TRAUMA-INFORMAED PRACTICE AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Trauma-informed practice is an informed way of approaching your practice through a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events.

Trauma-informed practice includes:

- Providing inclusive and compassionate learning environments

Health and Safety Guidelines

- Understanding coping strategies
- Supporting independence
- Helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual student needs

A [needs assessment](#) for students and educators is crucial as part of a trauma-informed transition back into classrooms. Use of needs-based assessments and regular 'check-ins' can assist in gathering important information to inform the level of trauma response and recovery necessary to support the school community.

The North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response has released a resource to assist the education sector in supporting the transition back to school called [Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic: Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact](#). To support educators to develop compassionate learning communities through trauma-informed practice, the Ministry has created [trauma-informed practice resources](#) that are available on the [erase website](#).

School district and school staff should practice awareness and sensitivity regarding the complex and devastating history that pandemics have had on many Indigenous communities.

HAND HYGIENE

Rigorous hand-washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness (antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19).

Follow these guidelines to ensure effective hand hygiene in schools:

- Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds (temperature does not change the effectiveness of washing hands with plain soap and water).
- Facilitate regular opportunities for staff and students to practice hand hygiene:

Use portable hand-washing sites and/or alcohol-based hand rub dispensers, especially where sinks are not available.

Hand-washing should be encouraged upon school entry and before/after breaks and eating, using washroom and using gym/playground equipment.

- Promote the importance of diligent hand hygiene to staff and students regularly. For example, display BCCDC's [hand hygiene poster](#) at handwashing sites.
- Remind staff and students to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

Health and Safety Guidelines

- Ensure hand-washing supplies are always well stocked 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.
- Students may bring their own sanitizer or plain soap if they are on the list authorized by Health Canada or have a medical condition that requires specialized soaps. (See the [List of Hand Sanitizers Authorized by Health Canada](#) for products that have met Health Canada's requirements and are authorized for sale in Canada.)
- If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand rubs can be used to clean hands if they are not visibly soiled. If alcohol-based hand rub is not available, use an alcohol-based hand wipe followed by alcohol-based hand rub.

When Student Should Perform Hand Hygiene:

- When they arrive at school.
- Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).
- Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student's desk or locker).
- Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple cohorts (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.).
- After using the toilet.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

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

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Non-medical masks are required to be used in situations where a person cannot maintain physical distance and is in close proximity to a person outside of their learning group or household. Those wearing masks must still maintain physical distancing whenever possible. There must be no crowding or congregating of people, even if masks are worn.

Masks should not be used in place of the other safety measures detailed in this document. For example, masks are not a replacement for the need for physical distancing.

SECONDARY STUDENTS:

Health and Safety Guidelines

All secondary school students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a nonmedical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their learning group except when:

- sitting in (or standing at) their seat or desk/workstation (including shared tables) in a classroom/learning environment;
 - o While this exception applies regardless of the physical distance between students or their specific seating configuration, schools should configure classrooms and learning environments to maximize distance between students and avoid face-to-face seating arrangements where possible.
- there is a barrier in place;
- eating and drinking; or
- outdoors (where mask use is a personal choice).

All secondary school students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses.

Exceptions will also be made for students who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons

Staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in the use of masks, and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature. See the Supportive School Environments section (above) for more information.

K-12 STAFF:

All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their learning group, except when:

- sitting in (or standing at) their desk/workstation, or while maintaining physical distance (2M), in a classroom/learning environment;
- there is a barrier in place;
- eating and drinking; or
- outdoors (where mask use is a personal choice).

All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses.

In “staff only” spaces, staff are required to wear masks when indoors, unable to maintain physical distance (2M), and a barrier is not present. WorkSafeBC guidance for offices also lists measures that should be considered and implemented as applicable to the workplace for staff in office environments (both inside and outside of the school).

Health and Safety Guidelines

Exceptions will also be made for staff who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons.

The school will have non-medical masks available for staff and students, including anyone who becomes ill while at school.

The use of masks should not reduce or replace other more effective infection prevention and exposure control measures in schools, such as

- Ensuring students and staff stay home when they are sick or required to self-isolate, including ensuring everyone entering the school performs a daily health check;
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfection;
- Placing students and staff into consistent groupings of people (learning groups);
- Adapting learning environments to maximize the use of space;
- Ensuring physical distance can be maintained between learning groups; and
- Frequent hand hygiene

These measures provide multiple layers of protection that reduce the risk of transmission.

VISITORS

All visitors must wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school. Exceptions will be made for visitors who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons.

GENERAL VENTILATION AND AIR CIRCULATION

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, is contributing to the spread of the virus.

School districts and independent school authorities are required to ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers ([Part 4 of the OHS Regulation](#)).

In order to enhance school ventilation, schools should consider:

- moving activities outdoors when possible (for example, lunch, classes, physical activity) and consider moving classrooms outside when space and weather permit
- ensuring that the ventilation system operates properly, including provisions for when a ventilation system is temporarily compromised (ie partial power outage, ventilation break down)
- increasing air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system

Health and Safety Guidelines

- where possible, opening windows if weather permits and HVAC system function will not be negatively impacted.

See the [WorkSafeBC website](#) for more information.

COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING/ORIENTATION

Schools must clearly and consistently communicate guidelines from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and resources available for information on COVID-19 as needed. Ensure communication of infection prevention and exposure control measures is relayed in multiple formats for ease of understanding (e.g., visual representation, videos using sign language, etc.)

As well, school districts and schools should consider providing early and ongoing health and safety orientation for staff, parents/caregivers and students to ensure employees, families and the school community are well informed of their responsibilities and resources available. Examples include online information, distribution of orientation and training materials that are clear, concise and easily understood, interactive sessions with Q&A's, material in multiple languages to meet community needs, etc.

Committees must meet regularly, including prior to any transitions between stages, and are included in school district/school planning efforts.

CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

All curriculum, programs and activities should operate in alignment with provincial K-12 health and safety guidelines, including school-led activities held off campus. Students and staff are also required to follow the safety protocols required by the off-campus facility. Where there is a conflict, the safety protocols required by the off-campus facility should be followed. Electives (e.g. Fine Arts education, etc.) are important to student health and well-being and staff in these programs should be reassured these programs will continue throughout each stage and be supported in finding creative ways to redesign/deliver courses, if needed.

Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per [Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines](#) outlined in this document, and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in music classes and music equipment use.

For guidelines specific to visitor access during school hours (e.g. guest speakers), see the [Visitor Access/Community Use section](#) in this document. As visitors are not part of learning groups, they would need to adhere to the physical distancing requirements outlined in the [Physical Distancing section](#) of this document.

Health and Safety Guidelines

In-person inter-school events including competitions, tournaments and festivals, should not occur at this time. This will be re-evaluated throughout the school year. Where possible, schools should seek virtual alternatives to continue to support these events in a different format.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult education programs operated by K-12 schools should follow the guidance outlined in this document, particularly the guidance provided for adults in a school environment. This includes respecting environmental and administrative measures, such as maintaining physical distance (2m).

FIELD TRIPS

Stage 2

When planning field trips, staff should follow existing policies and procedures as well as the COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. Additional measures specific to field trips should be taken, including:

- Field trip locations must provide supervisors with their COVID-19 operating plan and ensure it does not conflict with the school's plan. The field trip supervisor should then share the plan with parents and school administration.
- For transportation, see guidance in the [transportation section](#) in this document.
- Use of parent volunteers for driving groups of students is not permitted during stages 2 to 4.
- Schools must ensure that volunteers providing supervision are trained in and strictly adhere to physical distancing and other health and safety guidelines.
- Ensure field trip numbers align with the PHO guidance on mass gatherings (i.e. 50 people).
- Field trips to outdoor locations are preferable.
- Conduct a risk assessment considering the field trip location - science exploration vs. exploring at the beach.
- No overnight field trips should occur.
- International Field Trips - cancelled until further notice.

PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION/OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Create space between students and staff, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible. ▪ Teachers should plan physical activities that:

o Do not involve prolonged physical contact (i.e. physical contact beyond a brief moment) or crowding. Teachers are encouraged to adapt activities wherever possible to reduce physical contact, including within learning groups.

Health and Safety Guidelines

o Support physical distancing (2m) outside of learning groups. ▪ Staff are required to wear masks during PHE/outdoor program classes when they are indoors, unable to maintain physical distancing (2m), and a barrier is not present.

Encourage outdoor programs as much as possible.

Teachers should plan physical activities that limit the use of shared equipment and:

Shared equipment can be used provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#) section of this document, and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in physical activity and equipment use.

Disinfect teaching aids (e.g., clipboards, white boards, pens, plastic bins for transporting materials etc.)

Refer to Physical and Health Education (PHE) [Canada guidelines](#):

Include more individual pursuits than traditional team activities such as dance, alternative environment and land-based activities, exercises without equipment, fitness, mindfulness, gymnastics, and target games.

Explore local parks and green spaces to promote outdoor learning and activity. o Focus on activities that do not use equipment.

PHE and outdoor programs can proceed in alignment with the guidance above and the following additional requirements:

HIGH INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

o For high intensity physical activities that involve movement (e.g. basketball, soccer), indoors or outdoors:

▪ Students within the same learning group are not required to maintain physical distancing, but the activity must be delivered in a way that reduces the likelihood of physical contact beyond a brief moment.

▪ Students from different learning groups are required to maintain physical distancing (2M).

o Wearing masks during high-intensity physical activity (stationary or with movement, indoor or outdoors) is left to students personal choice.

LOW INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Health and Safety Guidelines

o For low intensity activities, students are required to wear masks when they are indoors, unable to maintain physical distancing (2m), and a barrier is not present

SCIENCE LABS

Practice diligent hand hygiene: wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. (Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19.)

Students and staff should wash their hands before and after handling shared tools or equipment or whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Have personal spaces and tools set up for students, as best as possible

Avoid sharing hand tools by numbering and assigning each student their own supplies, if possible.

Clean and disinfect shared equipment as per guidelines in the [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#) section.

Safety demonstrations and instruction: ensure appropriate space is available to allow for all students to view and understand demonstrations.

If needed, break class into smaller groups to allow appropriate spacing.

Avoid sharing hand tools by numbering and assigning each student their own supplies, if possible.

When entering classroom spaces, encourage students to use designated areas for leaving personal items, such as in designated desk areas or a marked side of the room.

Clean and disinfect shared equipment as per guidelines in the [Cleaning and Disinfecting](#) section.

Safety demonstrations and instruction: ensure appropriate space is available to allow for all students to view and understand demonstrations.

If needed, break class into smaller groups to allow appropriate spacing.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities and special interest clubs should occur when:

Health and Safety Guidelines

Under Stages 2 to 4, physical distance can be maintained between members of different learning groups; and

Under Stage 2, reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same learning group.

In-person inter-school events including competitions, tournaments and festivals, should not occur at this time. This will be re-evaluated throughout the school year. Where possible, schools should seek virtual alternatives to continue to support these events in a different format.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Protocols for confirmed cases of COVID-19

Document 2:

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE FOR K-12 SCHOOLS
HEALTH & SAFETY CHECKLIST

Appendix C: Daily Health Check

For more information, please see the following:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school>

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/education>

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf>

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19>

