

# School District 81

## Communicable Disease Plan

### September 2021

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable disease that may circulate in a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

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 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. Learning Groups are not necessary.

#### **KEY AREAS OF FOCUS**

- Prevent crowding and gathering; pay particular attention to the start and end of the day, and stagger recess, lunch and transition times for student and staff whenever possible.
- Avoid close face-to-face contact whenever possible.
- Ensure that the use of masks does not reduce or replace practicing physical distancing/personal space, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette and other prevention measures, for both students and staff.
- Ensure prevention measures are in place in staff only areas, including break and meeting rooms.
- Stay home when sick.

#### **SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

Schools can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours.
- Sharing reliable information, including information 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 visual aids like floor markings and signage.
- Adopt a trauma-informed approach. In line with the K-12 Education Restart Plan's goal of maximizing in-class instruction for all students within current health and safety guidelines for schools, staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature. Resources are available for staff on the ERASE website and the Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal webinar link.
- Provide information on how to access counselling services during school start-up.

#### **Public Health Measures**

- Masks are available for students, staff, and visitors. Students in grades 4-12 must wear a mask on the bus and in the school except when eating, drinking, or outdoors. All staff must wear a mask in the

school except when eating, drinking, or outdoors. All visitors must wear a mask when inside the school. Students in grades K to 3 should be encouraged to wear a mask.

- Staff and students should maintain personal space/physical distancing. This should include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available.
- Maintain daily sign-in attendance records for staff, students, and visitors (including teachers on call, itinerant teachers/specialists, district personnel, parents/caregivers, volunteers, and visitors).
- Maintain accurate class and bus lists.
- Consistent seating arrangements are encouraged where practical.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL MEASURES**

### **Cleaning and Disinfection**

Cleaning will be done with disinfectants listed on Health Canada’s list of hard-surface disinfectants for use against communicable diseases.

<b>Items to be cleaned</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises	Nightly	Contracted janitors
Garbage cans emptied	Nightly	Contracted janitors
Doorknobs, light switches, emergency door handles, railings	Twice Daily	Contracted janitors
Surface that is visibly dirty	As needed	Staff members
Bathrooms; toilet handles, faucets,	Twice Daily	Contracted janitors
Tables, desks, chairs	Once Daily	Contracted janitors
FNSS weight room equipment	Once Daily	Maintenance to turn on sanitizing mister.
FNSS weight room equipment	After each class	Teacher/Students

### **Additional Measures taken**

- Water fountains and hydration station will be available to students and staff.
- Toys, manipulatives, and gym equipment can be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.
- Carpets and fabric items can be used if hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette practices are followed.
- Students to wash hands before and after computer use.
- Portable sinks to be available for areas with no sinks.

- Blow dryers in washrooms will be disabled and paper towels available.
- All furnace filters changed quarterly which includes filter change before September.
- All in-town schools have heating/ventilation monitored and adjusted remotely by the Director of Facilities for as much fresh air exchange as possible, depending on the weather through direct digital controls (DDC), providing maximum allowable air exchanges, depending on the outside air temperature. The system is active from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Our classrooms in our school buildings have independent climate control. Therefore, if one furnace goes out only minimal number of classrooms would be affected, not the entire building.
- With the Federal Covid funds provided this year to our district we researched and purchased the latest technology called Global Plasma Solutions (GPS) for all school district buildings. The GPS NBMI (Needlepoint Bipolar Ionization) technology reduces airborne particles through agglomeration. The ions attach to the airborne particles. The particles are subsequently attracted to one another, effectively increasing mass and size that is easily captured by the air filtration system. During the GPS cleaning process, the NPBI technology attacks and kills viruses, mold spores, and bacteria, leaving clean indoor air. In consultation with our HVAC service providers, it was recommended that we maintain the use of 2 inch MERV 8 furnace filters as the MERV 13 would decrease the air flow preventing the effectiveness of the GPS NBMI system.
- Summer projects included upgraded windows in two of our elementary school buildings – in one building the ventilation space was tripled.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES**

### **Physical Distancing/Personal Space and Minimizing Physical Contact**

Please note: The Provincial Health Officer has advised to prioritize Physical Distancing, Hand Hygiene, Respiratory Etiquette and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in stopping the transmission of disease. Non-medical masks are not a replacement for the need for physical distancing.

Personal space is the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person.

The following should be implemented:

- Implement strategies to avoid crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch, and transition times to provide a greater amount of space.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers. Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school.
- Plexiglass barrier and signage in office to allow for safe distance surrounding administrative assistants' desk area.
- Adults should avoid close greetings such as hugs or handshakes
- Explicitly teach and regularly remind students about keeping "hands to yourself"
- Each classroom teacher needs to carefully consider flow and spacing.
- Assigned student seating where practical.
- Instructional Release teachers, Student Services Resource Teachers, and other staff may provide service in classrooms or arrange areas for physical distancing to reduce student movement in hallways.
- Staff who work with different classes/groups and cannot physically distance, will have masks, face shields (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield, and plexiglass barriers.
- Staff who work between sites have been scheduled to reduce movement between sites as much as

possible.

- Schools may continue to lock their doors particularly where visibility of the door is a concern. Visitors are to be encouraged to make appointments. Doorbells will be in place.
- Student Services will continue in all schools for students with diverse learning needs/disabilities including in-class support, Leveled Literacy Intervention, Great Leaps, Youth & Family support, Counseling, and Aboriginal support.
- Band/Music teachers should follow the BC Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education's Guidance for Music Classes in BC During Covid-19. Masks must be worn during singing. Equipment that touches the mouth cannot be shared.
- Bathroom use can be limited to a few students at a time where possible.
- Teachers should send only one student at a time to the washrooms.
- Students will be physically distanced entering and exiting school and in hallways.
- Visitor/staff registration/sign-in is in place for visitors/staff to confirm they are not ill and are not required to self-isolate.
- Parents are asked to drop their children off close to bell times.
- School gatherings can occur following Provincial and Public Health measures, respecting personal space for students and staff comfort levels. Visitors are to be kept at a minimum to decrease crowding.

### **Learning outside**

Teachers are encouraged to plan learning activities outside including snack time, P.E., place-based learning and unstructured time when practical. Take activities that involve movement outside including those for physical health and education outside when practical.

### **Physical Education (PHE)**

Teachers are encouraged to plan physical activities that:

- Do not involve prolonged physical contact (i.e. beyond a brief moment) or crowding. For example, activities such as tag and touch football are low-risk, whereas activities like wrestling or partner dancing should be avoided. Teachers are encouraged to adapt activities wherever possible to reduce physical contact.
- K-12 staff are required to wear masks during PE when they are indoors, unable to maintain physical distancing (2m), and a barrier is not present.
- Students in grades 4 to 12 are required to wear masks during PE when they are indoors, unable to maintain physical distancing (2m), and a barrier is not present.
- Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity physical activities (e.g. weightlifting, basketball, soccer).
- For low intensity activities (e.g. yoga, walking) students are required to wear masks when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.

### **Emergency and Evacuation Drills**

Schools should continue to practice emergency (e.g. fire, earthquake, lockdown) and evacuation drills including the six required annual fire drills as per BC Fire Code 2.8.32, and modify drill procedures to prevent crowding/congregating.

- In the event of an actual emergency, emergency procedures must take precedence over Communicable Disease and COVID- 19 preventative measures.

### **Staff Only Spaces**

- Utilize floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding (e.g. in the break room, by the copier, etc.).
- For gatherings (e.g. meetings etc.) respect room occupancy limits, use available space to spread people out, and consider virtual options.

## **PERSONAL MEASURES**

### **Stay Home When Sick**

- Students, staff, or other adults should stay home when sick. The following resources provide guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness:
  - Parents/caregivers and students can use the K-12 Health Check App.
  - Staff and other adults can refer to BCCD’s “When to get tested for COVID- 19.
  - Staff, students and parent/caregivers can also use the BCCDC online Self-Assessment Tool, call 8-1-1 or their health provider.
- Parents and caregivers should assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school or on the bus. A daily health check form or the provincial health check app may be used.
- School Administrator will ensure school staff is aware of their personal responsibility to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before entering the school. The School Administrator will have sign in verifying that the health check has been performed.
- Staff will assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before entering the school.
- If the staff or student (or their parent) indicates that the symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition and are not unusual for that individual, they may return to school. No assessment or note is required from a health care provider.
- The following students, staff, or other adults must stay home and self-isolate:
  - A person confirmed by the health authority as testing positive for COVID– 19; or
  - A person confirmed by the health authority as a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID- 19; or
  - A person who has traveled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.
- A person who has been tested for COVID- 19 must stay home while they are waiting for the test result.
- When a staff, student or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced and if a COVID- 19 test was recommended as indicated on the K-12 Health Check App and BCCD “When to get tested for COVID- 19 resource, or their health provider.
- If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, the student/staff can return to school when symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough.
- If a COVID-19 test is negative, the student/staff can return to school once symptoms have improved and they feel well enough. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless the person develops a new illness.

- If a COVID-19 test is positive, the student/staff public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school.
- Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves.

### **Hand Hygiene**

- Students will use hand sanitizer or soap and water prior to entering or exiting school.
- Staff will model and teachers will explicitly teach students hand washing procedures based on BCCD'S hand washing poster.
- Posters to promote the importance of appropriate hand hygiene will be displayed at entrance to school, washrooms and in classrooms.
- Classrooms equipped with a sink, soap dispenser and paper towels.
- If hands are visibly soiled, soap and water are the preferred method to use.
- School areas not equipped with sinks or not in an area close to a sink, will have portable sinks with soap and paper towels available or hand sanitizer.
- Students will be directed by teacher or support staff to wash hands as needed throughout the day but specifically: before eating, after eating, after using a tissue, after washroom use and before and after going outside.
- Students will be directed by teacher or support staff to wash hands before and after using in-class centres, math manipulatives, computers and tablets, and gym equipment except if objects are individual-use items.
- Staff will assist students will hand hygiene as needed.

### **Respiratory Etiquette**

Students in Grades 4 to 12 are required to wear non-medical masks when on the bus

Staff working with more than one group or class will have a mask, face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield), or a plexiglass barrier for when they cannot physically distance.

Staff will model and teachers will explicitly teach students to:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue. Throw away tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, and unwashed utensils.
- How to put on and remove and store masks for grades 5 to12 or as necessary as on the [BCCDC](#) website and the [Government of Canada](#) website.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- Non-medical masks should not be used in place of other safety measures. Those wearing masks must still maintain physical distancing whenever possible. There must be no crowding of people even if masks are worn.
- 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 except when:

- there is a barrier in place;
  - eating and drinking; and
  - outdoors.
- All grade 4-12 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) in schools and on the bus except when:
    - there is a barrier in place;
    - eating and drinking; and
    - outdoors.
  - Exceptions will be made for staff who cannot tolerate masks.
  - Exceptions will be made for students who cannot tolerate masks.
  - Students in K-3 are encouraged, not required, to wear a mask in schools and on the bus. This decision is made by their personal or family/caregiver choice, and their choices must be respected.

### **Managing students/staff with illness or possible COVID-19**

All students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19, OR traveled outside Canada in the last 14 days, OR were identified by Public Health as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate.

If a student or staff member who is self-monitoring (i.e. has been directed by public health to self-monitor for symptoms but not self-isolate) or begins to experience symptoms of COVID-19 while attending school, it is recommended that:

- All staff be advised to let the Principal know if they are showing symptoms or if a student is showing symptoms.
- Schools should promptly, but showing awareness for confidentiality concerns, separate the student or staff who display symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, fatigue, headache, muscle aches). The student should be put in an area separate from others, with adequate supervision, until they can go home. The staff should leave the building and follow health procedures. Notify the Superintendent.
- To help prevent transmission, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene practices are recommended, as well as, to the extent possible, having the ill student or staff stay two meters away from others. The student should be placed in a separate room from other students with a closed or partially closed door. The person monitoring the student should wear gloves and a mask.
- The student should be instructed to cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Schools should notify parents/guardians if their child begins to show symptoms of illness or COVID-19 while at school, including the need for immediate pick up. They should not go home on the bus.
- Advise parents/guardians that they can phone 8-1-1 for a health assessment if their child has symptoms compatible with COVID-19 while at school.
- Notify the Director of Facilities to have any rooms where the student was symptomatic be cleaned and disinfected. This is best done at break times or after school if practical.
- For mild symptoms of illness, without fever, students and staff can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to school without further assessment.
- If symptoms include fever or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain unchanged or worsen, seek a health

assessment. A health assessment can include calling 8-1-1 or a primary care provider.

- If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, the student/staff can return to school when symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough.
- If a COVID-19 test is negative, the student/staff can return to school once symptoms have improved and they feel well enough. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless the person develops a new illness.
- Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves.
- If a COVID-19 test is positive, the student/staff must stay home until they are told by public health to end their self-isolation. In most cases this is 10 days after the onset of symptoms.
- Public Health Officials will identify individuals who may have had contact with a COVID-19 infected person and alert school administrators to actions that need to be taken. Public Health will contact close contacts of a confirmed case and advise them if self-isolation is needed.
- Try to maintain familiar routines and activities.
- Listen to students and provide age-appropriate information to their questions.