



**COWICHAN VALLEY**  
School District

Health and Safety Guidelines  
For  
Cowichan Valley School District

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# Health and Safety Guidelines for Cowichan Valley School District

## General Information

The Cowichan Valley School District COVID-19 Stage 2 In Class Learning Health & Safety Guide is based on recommendations in the [Ministry of Education's Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) and tailored for local practices. As information on COVID-19 illness is evolving, up to date information on symptoms and prevention can be found on the [BCCDC](#) website.

## About COVID-19

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses mostly found in animals. In humans they can produce symptoms that are like the common cold and flu. Symptoms can range from mild to severe. It can be spread through droplet transmission. Infected persons can spread droplets up to two meters, for example when coughing or sneezing, but they do not stay suspended in the air due to their size. These droplets can infect other people via entry on surfaces like the eyes, nose, and mouth through transfer from hands. Droplet transmission is different from airborne transmission; airborne transmission allows microorganisms to be suspended in the air for long periods and inhaled and droplet transmission does not.

## Children are Low Risk

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.

## Controlled Environments

Compared to some other community settings that are considered uncontrolled environments (such as grocery stores, retail outlets, restaurants, etc.), schools are considered “controlled environments” in that they have a comprehensive set of safety measures in place, a consistent and limited group of people accessing the building, and the majority of those people are children who are at lower risk for transmitting COVID-19. The combination of these features reduces the risk of bringing more children and youth together in schools.

For the purpose of these guidelines, Grades K – 7 are considered Elementary Students and grades 8 – 12 are considered Secondary Students. This may be customized at schools to ensure consistency in building practice (e.g., Chemainus Secondary School's grade 7 students would be considered Secondary; Lake Cowichan School's grade 4 to 7 would be

considered Elementary and the grade 8 – 12 Secondary; Quamichan’s grade 8-9 would be Secondary).

### Covid-19 Safety Plan Reviews

School medical officers noted that most school exposures in fall 2020 did not result in transmission within the school. While each case was unique, a common recommended action from school medical officers was to review existing COVID-19 safety plans to ensure required measures were in place and were being consistently implemented. A review of the COVID-19 safety plan to ensure it adequately protects workers from transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace is required in the Provincial Health Officer’s December 16, 2020 Workplace Safety order.

With this in mind, school and district administrators must regularly review COVID-19 safety plans and should do so with their Site Based Joint Health and Safety Committees and address areas where there are identified gaps in implementation. BCCDC has developed a COVID-19 School Health & Safety Checklist that can support these safety plan reviews. In addition, school medical officers have recommended the following key areas of focus for schools based on reviews of school exposures to date:

1. Prevent crowding and gathering; pay particular attention to the start and end of the day, and stagger recess, lunch and transition times for students and staff whenever possible.
2. Avoid close face-to-face contact whenever possible.
3. Assign staff to a specific learning group whenever possible.
4. Ensure that the use of masks does not reduce or replace practicing physical distancing between learning groups and other prevention measures, for both students and staff.
5. Ensure prevention measures are in place in staff only areas, including break and meeting rooms.
6. Implement music classes according to the British Columbia Music Educators’ Association and the Coalition for Music Education in British Columbia Guidance for Music Classes.
7. High intensity physical activity should occur outside whenever possible.

### Learning Groups

Learning groups are a recommended public health measure to help reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Organizing students and staff into learning groups helps to reduce the number of different interactions and potential exposure to COVID-19 and supports better contact tracing if there is a confirmed case in a school community. A learning group is a cohort of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term (e.g., a school quarter, semester or year) and who primarily interact with each other. A learning group could be made up of a single class of students with their teacher, multiple classes that sometimes join for additional learning activities, or a group of secondary school students with the same courses.

In Stage 2, members of the same learning group must minimize physical contact, but they are not required to maintain physical distance.

The composition of learning groups should remain consistent for all activities that occur in schools (i.e., students and staff cannot be part of more than one learning group at the same time). Students and staff from different learning groups can interact with one another while practicing physical distancing.

Learning group composition can be changed at the start of a new term (e.g., quarter, semester). Outside of these transition points, composition should be changed as minimally as possible except where required to support optimal school functioning. This may include learning, operational or student health and safety considerations. No additional safety protocols are required following a change in learning group composition.

School administrators should keep up-to-date lists of all members of a learning group, and others who work with that learning group (e.g., itinerant teachers, TTOCs), and their contact information to support swift communications from the school and to share with public health to support contact tracing, if needed.

Consistent seating arrangements are encouraged where practical. This can further reduce the number of close, prolonged face-to-face interactions a person has, and assist public health should contact tracing need to occur.

### 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. Staff outside of a learning group must practice physical distancing (2m) when interacting with the learning group. For example, an itinerant educator (e.g., a teacher teaching on call, an Indigenous support worker, a teacher candidate, a district specialist) can teach/support multiple learning groups but must practice physical distance from students and other staff and avoid close face-to-face interactions. See section on Itinerant Staff for additional guidelines.

Unless staff members belong to the same learning group, they should maintain physical distance (2m) from one another at all times. Masks are not a replacement for physical distancing between staff from 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.

Elementary students:

- When interacting with peers outside of their learning group, students should:
  - minimize physical contact when outdoors.

- maintain physical distance (2m) when indoors. 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.

Secondary students:

- When interacting with students and staff 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.

Multi-Learning Group Instruction:

Students from different learning groups can be in the same learning space at the same time if physical distancing can be maintained (as per the requirements outlined above), and there is adequate space available to prevent crowding of those from within the same learning group. Masks are not a replacement for physical distancing between students from different learning groups in the same learning space.

Multi-Learning Group Services:

Students from different learning groups may be required to be together to receive beneficial social supports, programs or services (e.g., meal programs, after school clubs, etc.). Within these supports or services, it is expected that learning groups are maintained, and physical distancing is practiced between learning groups, as much as is practical to do so while still ensuring the support, program or service continues.

### Itinerant, Non-enrolling, Support Staff and Specialists

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.

Schools should, where possible, assign staff to a specific learning group to help minimize the number of interactions between students and staff, while continuing to support students who may need special assistance. Examples could include:

- Assigning an educational assistant to a learning group where they can support one or more students in the same learning group.
- Assigning a learning assistance teacher to a cohort for 6-to-8-week durations.

Those outside of a learning group must practice physical distancing (2m) when interacting with the learning group. For example, an itinerant teacher (e.g., a teacher teaching on call, an Indigenous support worker, a fine arts teacher, a district specialist, etc.) counsellor can work with students from multiple learning groups, but they should maintain physical distance from students and other staff as much as possible.

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, or providing virtual services where possible.

If none of the strategies outlined above are viable options, staff should practice physical distancing as much as possible while providing services. In addition, all K-12 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) in schools.

### Physical Distancing

Physical distancing refers to a range of measures aimed at reducing close contact with others. Physical distancing is used as a prevention measure because COVID-19 tends to spread through prolonged, close, face-to-face contact.

- Within learning groups, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available.
  - Young children may not be able to consistently reduce physical contact.
- Outside of learning groups, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact and close, prolonged face-to-face interactions, spreading out as much as possible within the space available, and ensuring there is 2 meters of space available between people from different learning groups.
  - For situations where members of different learning groups interact: If people will be in the same space for an extended period of time (>15 minutes), the space should be sufficiently large, and/or should have limits on the number of people so that 2 meters of space is available between people from different learning groups.
  - If people will be in the same space for transition purposes (e.g., changing between classes), and other measures are in place (e.g., markings on the floor, staggered transition times), there should be enough space to ensure no physical contact, but 2-meter physical distancing is not required.
- Within and outside of learning groups, there should be no crowding.

Staff and other adults should seek to reduce the number of close, face-to-face interactions with each other at all times, even if wearing a non-medical mask. This includes during break times and in meetings.

**In Stage 2, members of the same learning group must minimize physical contact, but they are not required to maintain physical distance.**



## How to Support Physical Distancing When Outside of a Learning Group

To support physical distancing requirements, the following strategies that could be implemented, including:

- Avoid close greetings (e.g., hugs, handshakes).
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
- Regularly remind students about keeping their hands to themselves. Use visual supports, signage, prompt, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- Create space between students/staff as much as possible
  - Take students outside more often where possible
  - Consider arranging desks/tables to maximize distance between students and adults and arranging desk etc. so students are not facing each other and
  - Consider using consistent or assigned seating arrangements where practical.
  - Store excess equipment etc. to open up more space.
  - Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage greater space between students and staff as much as is practical to do so.
  - For middle and secondary students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require close face-to-face contact.
- Consider traffic flow planning to reduce congestion in hallways and tight spaces such as using floor markings and posters. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors.
- Consider appropriate signage to encourage and instruct people on feasibly utilizing physical distancing.
- Barriers can be installed 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 or where food is distributed. (Barriers can include tables, cones, tape, and closed doors, etc.)

## Staff only Spaces

Experience to date underscores the importance of COVID-19 prevention among adults, as well as students, in the school setting. Schools and school districts must ensure physical distancing is practiced within staff only spaces, including during break times, regardless of whether or not masks are worn. To support this, schools can implement the following strategies:

- Utilize floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding (e.g., in the break room, by the photocopier, etc.).
- Hold meetings virtually whenever possible.
- Ensure staff practice physical distancing (2m) during face-to-face meetings. Staff are required to wear masks when indoors, unable to maintain physical distance, and a barrier is not present.

WorkSafeBC guidance for offices lists measures that should be considered and implemented as applicable to the workplace for staff in office environments (both inside and outside of 'bricks and mortar' schools).

## Supporting Students with Disabilities

Schools are expected to implement health and safety measures that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities.

Schools must ensure that supports and services typically provided to students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity continue across all stages.

Students with disabilities/diverse abilities who are not able to physically distance are not to be excluded from a learning group. Prevention and exposure control measures should be implemented to support students to access learning within a learning group (e.g., assigned seating, prompts, visual support, education using video modelling, social stories, etc.)

Schools must ensure that learning groups are established in a manner that allows for the implementation of students' IEP goals, respects the principles of equity and inclusion and does not result in segregated learning environments.

Most students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity are not considered at greater risk of experiencing severe illness from COVID-19. For guidelines specific to children with immune suppression (e.g., students who have had a recent organ transplant, who are receiving chemotherapy, those with an illness impacting their immune system), please refer to the [Students, Family Members and Staff with Immune Suppression](#) section in the Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings.

## Staff Supporting Students With Disabilities Where Physical Contact May Be Required

Supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student.

When staff are working with a student indoors, physical distancing cannot be maintained, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask. Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used as part of the personal care routine normally encountered in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting).

When working with students where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, and physical distancing cannot be maintained, the strategies outlined in the *Itinerant Staff and Specialists* section should be explored. Where a mask is required, options include having the staff member wear a mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.

Middle and secondary school students are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering when receiving services indoors, in close physical proximity and where there is no barrier between the student and staff member.

Exceptions will be made for staff and students who cannot wear masks for health or behavioral reasons.

### 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.

Adequate space should be made available to prevent crowding of those within the learning group.

Staff meetings, in-service and professional development activities, and other staff-only gatherings should be held virtually wherever possible.

Staff should practice physical distancing (2m) for face-to-face interactions, whenever possible.

The number of participants gathered, and the length of the gathering should be minimized as much as possible.

Examinations or assessments are not considered school gatherings; however, they must still be delivered in accordance with the 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.

### 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, reusable food containers).

Items brought regularly to and from school should be limited to those that can be easily cleaned (e.g., reusable food containers) and/or are considered to be low risk (e.g., clothing, paper, etc.).

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 must 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.)

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

## Food and Beverage

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).

Please note that different guidelines apply to food that is prepared in schools or for school food services which are outlined in the Curriculum, Programs and Activities section.

## Student Transportation on Buses

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

- Buses used for transporting students will be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided in [BCCDC's Guidelines on Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#).
- Bus drivers will clean their hands often, including before and after completing trips and wear a non-medical mask on school buses.
- Bus drivers are required to wear a non-medical mask 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.
- 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 is sick, 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.
- Parents are encouraged to support their child to physically distance while waiting for the bus for pick up.
- Where possible, at school bus line up areas should be set up to prevent crowding, and allow for physical distancing of 2m (e.g., tape on pavement, etc.) where required.
- Students are expected to use their bus pass to scan on and off the bus for the purpose of contact tracing.
  - Names of students will be recorded if no bus pass is provided for tracing purposes.
  - Up-to-date passenger lists will be kept to share with public health should contact tracing need to occur.
- Students should not plan for friends to ride home with them on the bus – only registered students are permitted to ride a bus they are registered to.
- Face masks are mandatory for Secondary students – masks are available from the Bus Driver
- Students will load the bus from the back to the front.
  - Siblings will be asked to sit together on high-capacity routes.
  - If space is available, students will be assigned to their own seat.
  - Students will not be seated directly behind the driver.

- Students will be asked to sit by the window if seated alone.
- Bus Drivers will use consistent seating as much as possible.
- When unloading the bus at school all students will exit the bus starting from front to back.
- When unloading the bus at home students will exit the bus starting with the most forward student. Students will be passing by other seated students but are asked to exit without contacting or engaging seated students.
- Bus Drivers will wear a mask and gloves (discard after each student) when in close contact with a student who require special care such as restraints, etc.
- Families are encouraged to make alternate arrangements to using the Bus Service, if they are able.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. School will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with [the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings](#) document. Staff are asked to NOT bring in their own cleaning supplies as unhealthy chemical reactions can occur.

Schools will be cleaned and disinfected as follows:

- 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.
- 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.

No additional cleaning and disinfecting procedures are required when different learning groups use the same space or equipment, or when the composition of a learning group changes at the end of a school term, beyond the cleaning and disinfecting procedures that are normally implemented, and the guidelines outlined above.

### Frequently touched surfaces include

- Items used by multiple students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, manipulatives and toys.
- 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, etc.)

Some frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g., fabrics) or at all (e.g., sand, foam, playdough, etc.). These items **can** continue to be used, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.

In a Learning Group environment, school staff will continue regular cleaning/ disinfecting practices of toys, manipulatives, educational materials and any surface that is visibly dirty within their classroom (e.g., a dirty desk from a lunchtime spill or art project, etc.).

All staff will implement ongoing, informal cleaning and disinfecting of their workspaces.

### Cleaning Supplies

- Custodial services will provide, readily accessible, approved and properly mixed disinfectant and paper towels for 'as needed' cleaning by any staff member. Disinfectant will be available for each classroom.
- Safety Data Sheets for all cleaning products are available through the Operations Department and the school office.
- All chemicals will be properly labelled in accordance with WHMIS requirements.
- Custodial staff will ensure ongoing top-up of hand washing supplies and alcohol-based sanitizer.

### VICTORY Electro-static Disinfection

Classrooms/school facilities will thoroughly cleaned and disinfected when the school day is complete. Cleaning and disinfecting can be done manually, or with the use of the VICTORY electro-static cleaner. These cleaners efficiently disinfect all surfaces in a room through an electro-static charge which enables the disinfecting chemicals to attach to all surfaces. Dwell times are required for effective disinfection.

- To ensure proper classrooms cleaning using the VICTORY cleaner, the following must take place each day:
  - All desks and counters are cleared and free of items (including papers and pens)
  - No jackets or clothing left on backs of chairs
  - No items or articles are left on the floor, under desks and chairs
  - All cups, bottles and utensils are put away and not left in the sinks
  - All footwear has been put into appropriate designated spaces

### Cleaning and Disinfecting Bodily Fluids

- Safe Work Procedures are to be utilized for cleaning and disinfection of any bodily fluids; such as vomit or urine. PPE required is at minimum non-permeable gloves; but may additionally include a full sealing mask and goggles/glasses depending on the task.

### Laundry

Follow these procedures when doing laundry (Home Economics, Physical and Health Education, Life Skills Programs, etc.):

- Laundry should be placed in a laundry basket with a plastic liner.
- Do not shake dirty items
- Wearing gloves is optional. If choosing to wear gloves, ensure hand hygiene is

- performed before and after use. No other PPE is required.
- Clean hands with soap and water immediately after removing gloves.
- Wash with regular laundry soap and hot water

### Visitor Access/Community Use

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.).

Parents are welcome but expected to make an appointment with the school before entering to ensure safe protocols are in place.

Parents/caregivers and other visitors should maintain physical distance and avoid crowding while on school grounds, including outside.

Schools must ensure that visitors are aware of health and safety protocols and requirements prior to entering the school (e.g., maintaining physical distance, requirement to wear a non-medical mask inside the school).

Schools could include, as part of their visitor registration/sign-in process, for the visitor to confirm they are not ill and are not required to self-isolate.

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.

After hours community use of facilities can be considered after District consultation, and other health and safety measures are considered and in place.

### School Staff Access

Hours for school staff other than operations staff will be between 7:30 am and 5:30 pm for Elementary and 6:00 pm for Secondary, Monday to Friday with no access on the weekend. This is to ensure both safety and security of the premises and the staff that occupy it.

To avoid gathering, staff and students may be assigned a particular entrance at the site. School entrance and exit procedures must be adhered to, including sign in and sign out sheets.

Maintenance and Itinerant staff must, in all cases, sign in and check-in at the front office when carrying out work in schools.

## Employee/Student Attendance

Schools should notify their Associate Superintendent and District will notify their local medical health officer if staff and/or student absenteeism exceeds 10 percent of regular attendance.

## Illness & Self-Assessment Policies and Protocols

Schools must ensure staff and other adults (e.g., parents, caregivers, visitors) entering the school/worksites are aware of their responsibility to:

- Perform a daily health self-assessment (e.g., emails/letters to parents and staff, orientation video, signage on doors), and confirm upon arrival, or online prior
- stay home and self-isolate if they are sick **OR** travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak by their local health authority.

Schools must clearly communicate with parents/caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school and keep them home from school if they are sick or if they have been directed to self-isolate by their local health authority.

Schools must Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work to be sent home as soon as possible.

- Schools must provide supervision for younger children who may not be able to be picked up immediately

Schools and districts should not require a health-care provider note (i.e., a doctor's note) to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practices.

## Daily Health Self-Assessment

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.
  - Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the Provincial K-12 Health Check app for daily assessment of symptoms.
  - 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 self-assessment, in line with the Provincial Health Officer's Order on Workplace Safety, prior to entering the school.
  - School and district administrators are required to verify that staff and other adult health checks have been completed before they enter the school.



- 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

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 travelled 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.

Information on self-isolation for international students, and homestay contingency plans for illness, is available in the COVID-19 Operational Guidelines for K-12.

Additional information on self-isolation requirements and support is available from BCCDC.

### Symptoms of Illness and Return to School

**Students, staff or other adults should stay at home when sick**, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction to and the spread of COVID-19 in schools. 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 BCCDC’s “When to get tested for COVID-19”.
- Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC online Self-Assessment Tool, call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. They do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and should not be required to provide a health-care provider note. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health-care provider.

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school. Most illness experienced in B.C. is not COVID-19, even if the symptoms are similar.

### Protocol if a Student/Staff Member develops symptoms of illness at school

If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school, schools should:

- Provide the student/staff with a non-medical mask if they don't have one (exceptions should be made for students who cannot wear masks for medical and disability-related reasons).
- Provide the student/staff with a space where they can wait comfortably that is separated from others.
- Principals will select a separate area that can be used as a "waiting area" for separating a sick child while awaiting parental/caregiver pick-up, which also allows for supervision. The selected area will, ideally, have access to a sink and handwashing supplies. As a minimum, it will be supplied with a hand sanitization dispenser, and waste receptacle. The selected location shall not be the first aid room, to not impede the timely provision of school first aid services.
- The student is to be supervised and cared for, when separated.
- Make arrangements for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible.
- Contact the student's parent/caregiver with a request to have their child picked up as soon as possible. When the parent or caregiver arrives to pick up their child, they will phone school indicating they are in the parking lot and the student will be brought out to the parent or caregiver.
- Clean and disinfect the areas the student/staff used.
- Any immediate hazards such as bodily fluids must be cleaned by school personnel following the Safe Work Procedure for Bodily fluids.
- Access needs to be restricted to the waiting area to only those supporting the sick person. The waiting area needs to be cleaned and disinfected prior to being used by a different user.
- Principal will inform Health and Safety Manager and or the Custodial Manager of the usage of the waiting room to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection.
- Encourage the student/staff to seek assessment by a health-care provider.
- Request that the student/staff stay home until COVID-19 has been excluded and symptoms have resolved.

### Protocol in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case in a school

If a student or staff member is confirmed to have COVID-19, and were potentially infectious while they were at school:

- Public health will perform an investigation to determine if there were any potential close contacts within the school.
- Students and staff who have interacted with the confirmed case may be asked to stay home by Public Health while they complete their investigation.
- If it is determined that there are close contacts within the school, public health will notify the school administrators to request class and bus lists to assist with contact tracing and provide guidance on what steps should be taken.

Public health may then:

- Recommend 14-day isolation if necessary (for confirmed close contacts).

- Recommend monitoring for symptoms if necessary.
- Provide follow-up recommendations if necessary.

Schools must continue to provide learning support to students required to self-isolate. Staff are to discuss opportunities for work continuance, where possible with their supervisor, in the event they are required to isolate and are asymptomatic.

Together, schools/school districts and public health officials will determine if any other actions are necessary.

## Hand Hygiene

Rigorous handwashing 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 at least 60% alcohol-based hand rub dispensers, especially where sinks are not available.
  - Handwashing 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.
- 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 require specialized soaps.
- 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.
- The maximum occupancy for student washrooms must be posted.
- Handwashing instruction should take place at least once weekly with each group of students in Elementary.
- Handwashing signage will be posted throughout the school.

When Student Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
<p>When they arrive at school.</p> <p>Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).</p> <p>Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student's desk or locker).</p> <p>Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple cohorts (e.g., the library, gym, music room, science lab, etc.).</p> <p>After using the toilet.</p> <p>After sneezing or coughing into hands.</p> <p>Whenever hands are visibly dirty.</p>	<p>When they arrive at school.</p> <p>Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch). Before and after eating and drinking.</p> <p>Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating.</p> <p>Before and after giving medication to a student or self.</p> <p>After using the toilet.</p> <p>After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).</p> <p>After cleaning tasks.</p> <p>After removing gloves.</p> <p>After handling garbage.</p> <p>Whenever hands are visibly dirty.</p>

### Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

- Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve, or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues in lined waste receptacle (not paper recycling) and immediately perform hand hygiene.

### Personal Protective Equipment

Although personal protective equipment (including masks) is the lowest level on the hierarchy of Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures, it can provide an additional layer of protection when more effective measures are not feasible. Non-medical masks and face coverings (hereafter referred to collectively as “masks”) have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

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 for in-class instruction delivered to students from more than one learning group

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 their assigned classroom/learning environment;
- there is a barrier in place;
- eating and drinking; or
- outdoors.

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.

Exceptions will also be made for staff who cannot tolerate masks for health or behavioural reasons. Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e., a doctor’s note) to confirm if staff cannot wear a mask.

Further guidance for when staff should use masks in “staff only” office settings (both within ‘bricks and mortar’ schools, as well as in other office settings) is available from WorkSafeBC.

#### MIDDLE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

All middle and secondary school students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a non-medical 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;
  - While this exception applies regardless of the physical distance between students or their specific seating configuration, schools are 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.

All middle and 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 (e.g., health or behavioural reasons). Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e., a doctor’s note) to confirm if a student cannot wear a mask.

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.

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:

Elementary students are not required to wear a mask in schools or on school buses. Elementary students’ mask use should be based on their personal or family/caregiver choice, and their choices must be respected.

- In line with current public health guidance, masks are not required for elementary school students based on international evidence regarding younger children’s

capacity to comply with the correct use of masks (e.g. frequent touching/removal of mask, wearing mask incorrectly, etc.), and potential impact of mask wearing on learning and development.

Supporting students with complex behaviours, medical complexities or receiving delegated care may require staff providing health services or other health care providers to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a medically complex or immune suppressed student.

- People providing these services in schools should wear a mask (medical or non-medical) when providing services and physical distance cannot be practiced, or the service cannot be provided from behind a physical barrier. Additional PPE over and above that needed for routine practices and the use of a medical or non-medical mask is not necessary.
- Those providing health services in schools may be receiving different 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 the services they provide in school settings.
- Parents and caregivers of children who are considered at higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine their child's level of risk.

## Gloves

Broad spectrum glove use may increase transmission, and as such workers will not be permitted the use of gloves unless performing a task where they constitute required PPE as defined within the Safe Work Procedures for that task.

Gloves may be used by staff providing first aid, staff providing close personal care or custodians working with cleaning agents. Glove use does not replace the safety provided by good hand washing and sanitation practices.

## 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.

The district has reviewed all ventilation systems, ensuring proper operation and air exchange.

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

School district and site-based safety plans should include provisions for when a school/worksite's ventilation system is temporarily compromised (e.g., partial power outage, ventilation break down).

If the power has not returned within 2hrs we assess the conditions to determine if it is safe for staff and students. If deemed safe, Staff can continue to work in their usual workspaces and open windows or use outdoor spaces as much as possible if conditions permit. Depending on the anticipated duration of the outage, the Indoor Air Quality monitor may be setup to check good indoor air quality standards continue to be met.

If it is after-school hours the two hour period is also impacted by sufficient light. Work will be prioritized to meet the cleaning and disinfection targets; and should the time period for which the conditions permit for the work not allow for the targets to be met, the principal and operations management will create a plan for next day to address any cleaning discrepancies that remained.

### Playgrounds

There is no current evidence of COVID-19 transmission in playground environments. Playgrounds are a safe environment. The following measures should be taken when using playgrounds:

- Ensure appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play
- Attempt to minimize direct contact between students

### Water Fountains

- Water fountains will not be in use during this time
- Bottle filling stations will remain open to provide drinking water source where needed, but students and staff are encouraged to bring the necessary water for the day with them.

### 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 2.8.3.2, and modify current drill procedures to adhere to health and safety guidelines (e.g., providing additional muster spots to prevent crowding/congregating).

- Staff should be notified in advance of emergency/evacuation drills (i.e., no "surprise" drills).
- Schools are to conduct "total evacuation fire drills" involving all occupants in the building as they would have previously.
- Schools must continue to update their fire safety plans on an annual basis, as per the BC Fire Code, to "ensure it takes account of the changes in use and other characteristics of the building" (such as current pandemic protocols). School fire safety plans, including fire drill procedures, should be developed in cooperation

with the local fire department and other regulatory authorities.

- Schools may also need to consult with their local medical health officer for guidance on physical distancing and PPE, based on their site-specific conditions and evacuation procedures.
- In the event of an actual emergency, emergency procedures must take precedence over COVID-19 preventive measures.

### Communication and Training/Orientation

All school district personnel are required to:

- Review health and safety documents and all periodic updates as distributed by the District
- Review Orientation Video and PowerPoint prior to resuming regular attendance at their worksite
- Participate in any 'hands-on' training or education sessions as required to operationalize health and safety guidelines

### 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.
- 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, including wearing masks.
- Alignment with PHO guidance and Orders.
- 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 or international field trips at this time.

#### Stage 3 & 4

No field trips should occur under Stages 3 and 4.

### Keyboards and Electronic Devices

Keyboards and Electronic devices, Mobile phones, iPads and other frequently touched electronics like tablets, remotes, keyboards, mice and gaming consoles can carry germs. These electronics should be cleaned and disinfected when shared.



- Use the district provided isopropyl based cleaning product to clean the device.
- Do this by spraying the black cloth first with the solution and then wipe the piece of equipment until it is clean, and the product has mostly evaporated away.
- Never spray directly onto the device.
- Do not immerse devices in liquids and do not use alternated cleaning products such as hydrogen peroxide or vinegar as they do not work and may damage screens.
- Ideally, check with the manufacturer of your device for the best cleaning methods (e.g., did you know that you're not supposed to clean the tip of an Apple Pencil?).
- Turn off any electronics and unplug all connections before cleaning.

### Shared Office Space For Staff

WorkSafeBC guidance for offices lists measures that should be considered and implemented as applicable to the workplace for staff in office environments (both inside and outside of “bricks and mortar schools”, including Distributed Learning office, school/school district offices). Note that learning groups cannot be applied to adult-only settings (an “all adult” learning group is not an acceptable public health measure).

### 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 (e.g., sports academies, community-based programs/courses). Electives (e.g., Fine Arts education, etc.) are important to student health and well-being and should continue.

Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in music classes and music equipment use.

Students and staff should wash their hands:

- at the beginning and at the end of the class;
- before and after handling shared equipment; and
- whenever hands are visibly dirty.

### Food/Culinary Programs

Schools can continue to include food preparation as part of learning programs for students. The following guidelines should be applied:

#### Food Safety

- In the case of food and culinary programs, where food is prepared as part of learning and is consumed by the students who prepared it, the following health and safety measures should apply:
  - Continue to follow normal food safety measures and requirements.

- Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in classes and after equipment use.

## Food services

Schools can continue to provide food services, including for sale.

Some schools offer food services that are regulated under the Food Premises Regulation. These are typically cafeterias, though may include some meal programs.

- If food service is provided in schools that is regulated under the Food Premises Regulation, no additional measures beyond those articulated in this document and regular requirements as outlined in the regulation need to be implemented (e.g., a FOODSAFE trained staff member, a food safety plan, etc.).
  - Additional considerations that may be relevant when providing food services in schools are detailed in the WorkSafeBC Restaurants, cafes, pubs, and nightclubs: Protocols for returning to operation
  - The September 18th, 2020 Order of the Provincial Health Officer Food and Liquor Serving Premises does not apply to schools. As such, the restriction of six patrons at a table does not apply. However, requirements related to learning groups and physical distancing outlined in these guidelines continue to apply.
  - Schools/school districts should reach out to their local health authority if they are unsure if their food services are regulated.

For food contact surfaces, schools should ensure any sanitizers or disinfectants used are approved for use in a food service application and are appropriate for use against COVID-19. These may be different than the products noted in this document for general cleaning and disinfection. Additional information is available on the BCCDC website.

Schools can continue to accept food donations to support learning and the delivery of meal programs, breakfast clubs and other food access initiatives.

Schools should not allow homemade food items to be made available to other students at this time (e.g., birthday treats, bake sale items).

Schools should continue to emphasize that food and beverages should not be shared.

## Fundraisers

Schools can continue to offer fundraisers that can be implemented in line with the health and safety guidelines outlined in this document. If the fundraisers involve the sale of food items, they should also align with the [Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in B.C. Schools](#).

## Textiles Programs

Students and staff should wash their hands:

- at the beginning and at the end of the class;
- before and after handling shared tools or equipment; and
- 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.
- Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in classes and after equipment use.
- 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

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.

For laundry, follow the instructions provided in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section.

### Music Programs

All classes, programs and activities (e.g., Band, Choir) can continue to occur where:

- K-12 staff and middle and secondary students wear masks while singing indoors.

Under Stage 2:

- physical contact is minimized for those within the same learning group, and students and staff are spaced as far apart as possible;
- physical distance (2m) can be maintained for K-12 staff and for middle and secondary school students when interacting outside of their learning groups;
- physical distance (2m) can be maintained for elementary students when interacting outside of their learning groups when indoors; and

Under Stages 3 to 4:

- physical distance (2m) can be maintained for K-12 staff, middle and secondary school students at all times

Schools could consider installing a barrier made of transparent material in places where physical distance cannot be regularly maintained (e.g., between an itinerant teacher and a learning group). See guidance from WorkSafeBC on designing effective barriers for more information.

No in-person inter-school competitions/performances/events should occur at this time. Where possible, schools should seek virtual alternatives to continue to support these events in a different format.

Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected, including musical instruments as per Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines for high touch surfaces and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in music

classes and music equipment use. Any equipment that makes contact with the face should be cleaned between users.

Music education should be delivered in line with the Guidance for Music Classes in BC During COVID-19 developed by the B.C. Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in B.C.

### Physical and Health Education/Outdoor Programs

Create space between students and staff, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.

K – 12 teachers should plan physical activities that:

- Do not involve prolonged physical contact (i.e., physical contact 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, including within learning groups.
- Support physical distancing (2m) outside of learning groups.

K-12 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.

In middle and secondary schools:

- High intensity exercise activities (which involve sustained heavier breathing and elevated heart rates):
  - For high intensity stationary exercise activities (e.g., exercise bike, weightlifting), people and equipment need to be spaced 2 metres apart if indoors, **including for those within the same learning group**. If 2 metre spacing is not available, and the activity cannot be moved outdoors, then the activity should not take place and a different activity should be selected.
    - Masks cannot replace the need for 2 metres between students and/or fitness equipment during high intensity stationary exercise indoors.
  - For high intensity exercise activities that involve movement (e.g., basketball, soccer):
    - **Students within the same learning group** are not required to maintain physical distancing, but the activity should 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).
  - Wearing masks during high-intensity exercise (stationary or with

movement, indoors or outdoors) is left to personal choice.

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

*As a general rule, high intensity physical activities involve sustained heavier breathing and elevated heart rates - most people engaged in these activities cannot say more than a few words without having to catch their breath. In contrast, most people engaged in low intensity physical activities can carry on a conversation without having to catch their breath.*

Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting for high touch surfaces section of this document.

- 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.)

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.

### School Libraries / Learning Commons

School libraries / learning commons facilities should be open and book exchange can continue to occur during stages 1 to 4.

Students and staff should wash their hands at the beginning and at the end of the class.

At this time, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing/return of books or paper-based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., books, magazines, worksheets, etc.) and items with plastic covers (e.g., DVDs) are low risk items. Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as normal. There is no need to clean, disinfect or quarantine these items for any period of time.

When visiting the library / learning commons, students and staff should remain in their learning group as much as possible and maintain physical distance from members outside of their learning group.

Schools should consider installing a barrier at the library check out desk if physical distance cannot be regularly maintained. See guidance from WorkSafeBC on designing effective barriers for more information.

### Science Labs/ Technology Educ. / Shop classes

Students and staff should wash their hands:

- before and after handling shared tools or equipment;
- 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 guidelines.

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.

### Theatre, Film, And Dance Programs

No in-person inter-school festivals/events should occur. 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.

Dance and drama classes should minimize contact by reorganizing warmups, exercises and performance work into smaller groups allowing for physical distancing to occur as per individual space limitations.

- This could mean that portions of the class act as an audience and audit work.
- This could mean that portions of the class work in alternate areas on their own small group or individual exercises.

Blocking of scenes and dance numbers should be choreographed in ways that limit physical touch and face-to-face interactions, and instead seek creative solutions to dynamic storytelling and expressive movement.

Shared equipment such as set pieces, props, cameras etc. should be cleaned and disinfected as per cleaning and disinfecting guidelines in this document and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after participating in drama, film or dance classes.

Costume items should be limited in their shared use at this time. For laundry, follow the instructions provided in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of these guidelines. Where possible, make use of outdoor and site-specific performance spaces that allow for physical distancing for drama, film and dance, especially if working in theatres, green rooms and studios that have no windows.

Consider alternatives for audience engagement such as online streaming, in class or family-oriented presentations.

### Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities and special interest clubs should occur if:

- 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, and adequate space is provided to avoid crowding.

Non-educational activities such as student dances, performances, and in-person celebrations are considered to be events and must adhere to the requirements of the PHO Gathering and Events Order.

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

### School Sports

Programs, activities (e.g., intramurals, sports team practices and games) and sports academies can occur if:

- Activities do not involve prolonged physical contact (i.e., physical contact beyond a brief moment). For example, activities such as soccer and touch football are low risk, whereas activities like wrestling should be avoided.
  - Schools are encouraged to adapt activities/sports as needed to reduce physical contact.
- No spectators are in attendance – aside from participants, only the minimum number of individuals required to run the activity should be present.
- Masks are worn by K-12 staff and other adults when they are indoors, unable to maintain physical distancing (2m), and a barrier is not present.
- In elementary schools, physical distancing (2m) is used between learning groups when indoors.

In middle and secondary schools:

- For high intensity sport activities (which involve sustained heavier breathing and elevated heart rates):
  - For high intensity stationary activities, students and fitness equipment (e.g., stationary bikes, treadmills, weight training equipment) need to be spaced 2 metres apart if indoors, including for those within the same learning group. If 2 metre spacing is not available, and the activity cannot be moved outdoors, then the activity should not take place and a different activity should be selected.

- Masks cannot replace the need for 2 metres between students and/or fitness equipment during high intensity stationary activities indoors.
- For high intensity activities that involve movement (e.g., basketball, soccer):
  - Students within the same learning group are not required to maintain physical distancing, but the activity should 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).
  - Wearing masks during high-intensity sport activities (stationary or with movement, indoors or outdoors) is left to personal choice.
- Masks are worn by middle and secondary students during low-intensity indoor physical activities where physical distancing (2m) cannot be consistently practiced and a barrier is not present.

Under Stage 2, physical distancing (2m) can be maintained between learning groups (indoors and outdoors)

Under Stages 3 and 4, physical distancing (2m) can be maintained within and between learning groups at all times.

### Resources

**Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings.** (February 23, 2021)  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidlines.pdf>

**Provincial K to 12 Health Check App**

<https://www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca/healthcheck?execution=e1s1>

**BC Centre for Disease Control – K-12 Schools and COVID 19 Website**

<http://www.bccdc.ca/schools>