

MCCS Back to School and Health and Safety Plan,

September 2020

I am sure most of you heard Minister Fleming and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announce on July 29, 2020, plans to bring all K-12 students back to school full time in September as we move to Stage 2 of BC's Education Restart Plan. Maybe some of you are wondering what that means for MCCS. Thankfully, we already had most of our students back for the last four weeks of the school year and had some time to "practice" the health and safety guidelines: Most of those guidelines will continue in the new school year, although they have been updated slightly. Let me share a few of the details.

Students will be organized into "learning groups"—a group of students and staff that work closely together and interact mainly with each other. In elementary, the learning group size is set at 60, since it is more challenging for younger students to maintain physical distance. In our case, each elementary and middle class will be a learning group, which means they will be learning together, playing together, and sitting together. During outside breaks, they may play with students in their learning groups, as long as they minimize physical contact. At MCCS, our student cohorts, based on where students are in the building (add staff to these numbers) are:

Learning group	Washrooms	Entrances/Exits
KA and B (36)	Between KG classrooms	Across from KG
1 and 2B (44)	Primary by staff washroom	Primary end
2A and 3A and B (52)	Kitchen	Lobby to playground
4 and 5 (53)	4—Across hall 5—Across hall/Shop	4—Across from Grade 4 5—Shop
6 and 8 (57)	Downstairs across from Grade 4	Door facing shops
7A and B (36)	Downstairs across from Grade 4	Door facing shops
9-12 (95)	Upstairs and Gym	Lobby to parking lot

Notes:

1. Middle students mask when going to use washroom, since it is shared with Grade 4
2. Middle school learning groups stagger breaks by 5 minutes (e.g. Grade 7A and B go by bells; Grade 6A and B and 8 go 5 minutes later); eliminates crowding before, during, and after breaks
3. Only grade 9-12 use the gym change rooms; the other students change in “their” washroom
4. All students use only “their” washroom
5. Staff teaching across learning groups mask when teaching outside “their” learning group: Staff mask when they can’t physically distance during breaks, etc.

To reduce interaction between learning groups and minimize physical contact, we will do two things:

1. Playground will be divided into sections, that students will rotate through on a daily basis
2. Grade 9-12 is one learning group, so they will spend their lunch time on one section of the playground

In secondary, the learning group size is set at 120, since secondary students are better able to physically distance, practice hand hygiene, and recognize if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. In our case, this allows grade 9-12 students to become one learning group, which means they can continue taking courses together (as the grade 10-12 students do currently), taking their breaks together, and associating together at school. Within a learning group, students and staff do not need to maintain physical distancing but they still need to minimize physical contact. Outside a learning group, physical distancing for middle and secondary students and all staff is still required.

The following physical distancing strategies will be implemented where possible:

1. We will avoid close greetings (e.g., hugs, handshakes) and regularly remind students to **keep your “hands to yourself”**.
2. We will spread people out into different areas: We will use different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations). In all areas, we have the option of using additional empty classrooms to increase physical distancing.
3. We will paint “physical distancing dots” at all entrances to show students what physical distancing looks like and allow them to line up after breaks at correct distancing.
4. We will minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day (i.e. minimize the amount of mixing between students and different staff in the setting).
5. We will take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside.
6. Playgrounds are a safe environment, and we will encourage appropriate hand-hygiene practices before, during, after outdoor play.

7. We will incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff.
 - a. For younger students, we will adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
 - b. For adolescent students, we will minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
8. We will not hold any assemblies and other school-wide events of over 50 people.

Similar to last year, parents have some extra responsibilities. Parents must monitor their child daily for symptoms and not send their child to school if they are sick. As well, parents should encourage their child to minimize physical contact with other students, including friends. See the following chart for a “Daily Health Check” example that parents could complete prior to sending students to school.

Daily Health Check			
1. Symptoms of Illness*	Does your child have any of the following symptoms?	CIRCLE ONE	
	Fever	YES	NO
	Chills	YES	NO
	Cough or worsening of chronic cough	YES	NO
	Shortness of breath	YES	NO
	Sore throat	YES	NO
	Runny nose / stuffy nose	YES	NO
	Loss of sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
	Headache	YES	NO
	Fatigue	YES	NO
	Diarrhea	YES	NO
	Loss of appetite	YES	NO
	Nausea and vomiting	YES	NO
	Muscle aches	YES	NO
	Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	YES	NO
	Dizziness, confusion	YES	NO
	Abdominal pain	YES	NO
	Skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes	YES	NO
2. International Travel	Have you or anyone in your household returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact	Are you or is anyone in your household a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	YES	NO

*Check BCCDC’s [Symptoms of COVID-19](#) regularly to ensure the list is up to date.

If you answered “YES” to any of the questions and the symptoms are not related to a pre-existing condition (e.g. allergies) your child should **NOT** come to school.

If they are experiencing any symptoms of illness, contact a health-care provider for further assessment. This includes 8-1-1, or a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner.

If you answered “YES” to questions 2 or 3, use the [COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to determine if you should be tested for COVID-19.

Students also have extra responsibilities: Wash or sanitize their hands when they enter and leave school and before and after breaks, including bathroom breaks and lunch breaks. They

must also label their personal items and not share them. See the following chart for when students and staff should perform hand hygiene at school:

When Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they arrive at school. • Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch). • Before and after eating and drinking. • Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating. • Before and after giving medication to a student or self. • After using the toilet. • After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood). • After cleaning tasks. • After removing gloves. • After handling garbage. • Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

For younger students, it is not recommended that they wear masks. For older students (middle and secondary) and staff, masks will be provided for use in situations where the person is interacting with someone outside their learning group and cannot maintain physical distance for an extended period of time. This would include, for example, an Educational Assistant that works with students across several grade levels and learning groups; a teacher teaching across several learning groups, middle and secondary students in common areas or busses not able to physically distance from those in other learning groups, etc.

Similar to last June, for bussing we will follow the recommendations below:

1. Busses will be cleaned and disinfected following the BC Centre for Disease Control guidelines
2. Students will have their own seat, unless sharing with a member of their learning group
3. Middle and secondary students will wear face masks on the bus at all times
4. Students will sit in consistent and assigned seating
5. Bus drivers will keep up to date passenger lists to share with public health if contact tracing needs to occur
6. Bus drivers will be provided with face masks and face shields
7. In order to help decrease the density on our busses, we encourage parents to bring their children if that is possible or easy or for students to bike or walk to school if they live close by and that is safe. Grade 11 and 12 students that drive will be strongly encouraged to take their siblings along, so as to reduce the number of students on the bus.

Of course, regular cleaning and disinfecting are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 and that will continue to occur. This includes a daily general cleaning and disinfecting and an extra cleaning at lunchtime when we will disinfect high-touch surfaces, including door knobs/handles, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, tables, desks, chairs, and keyboards.

Another way to reduce physical contact will be by using floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school. Students will be taught to travel single file on the right side of the hallway and to use only their designated entrance and exit door.

Visitors, including parents and volunteers, should only enter the school if they are needed to support student-learning activities (e.g. practicum students, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist, etc.). All visitors must complete the daily health check at the school entrance and sanitize their hands, and the school must keep a list of the date, names and contact information for all visitors who enter the school, so they are asked to visit the main office first, before proceeding.

Fresh air is great! Staff will teach outside as much as feasible, will teach with open windows and doors, and have ceiling fans on to improve ventilation and air flow as much as feasible.

The staff room, library, gym, and copier rooms will have occupancy limits posted. Staff washrooms are individual washrooms. Staff will also take breaks at separate times to reduce the pressure on the staff room.

Included below is a chart that outlines protocols we will follow if staff or students develop symptoms. It is crucial to remember that 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.

Stay Home When Sick

- 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 (see <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation> for definitions and examples of self-isolate), including children of essential service workers.
- 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.

- o 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.

o 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.

- 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.

o If a child has any symptoms, they must not go to school.

- Staff and other adults must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school.

o If staff or any adult has any symptoms, they must not enter the school.

The Health and Safety Committee members have discussed and collaborated on this plan and all staff with First Aid training understand the new protocols to use during the COVID pandemic and have been provided with the WorkSafeBC “OFAA protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic” (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/information-sheets/ofaa-protocols-covid-19-pandemic?lang=en>)

<i>If a Student Develops Any Symptoms of Illness</i>	<i>If a Staff Member Develops Any Symptoms of Illness</i>
<p>Parents or caregivers must keep the student at home</p> <p>IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL:</p> <p>Staff must take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area. 2. Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible. 3. Where possible, maintain a 2-metre distance from the ill student. If not possible, staff should wear a non-medical mask or face covering if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth. 4. Provide the student with a non-medical mask or tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene. 5. Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene. 6. Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene. 7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas). <p>Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p>Staff must stay home</p> <p>IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK:</p> <p>Staff should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p>If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others. 2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. 3. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up. 4. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).
<p>The threshold for reporting student and/or staff illness to public health should be determined in consultation with the school medical health officer</p>	
<p>Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should not return to school until they have been assessed by a health-care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases AND their symptoms have resolved</p>	

As a summary, the following chart outlines the main school-based control measures we are using:



1. STAY HOME WHEN SICK

All students and staff with common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory diseases must stay home and self-isolate.



2. HAND HYGIENE

Everyone should clean their hands more often!

Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.



3. RESPIRATORY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Cover your coughs.

Do not touch your face.

No sharing of food, drinks, or personal items.



4. PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING PHYSICAL CONTACT

Spread students and staff out to different areas when possible.

Take students outside more often.

Stagger break and transition times. Incorporate individual activities.

Remind students to keep their hands to themselves.



5. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice every 24 hours (once during the school day).

General cleaning of the school should occur at least once a day.

Use common cleaning and disinfectant products.

We are returning because being in school is critical for learning, as well as mental and physical well-being. Students are returning to school because it has been deemed safe for them to do so—all Canadian provinces have students returning. Schools are controlled environments where safety protocols can be implemented to mitigate the spread of the virus.