

## MCCS Communicable Disease Plan

*Updated September 2021*

This plan and any updates is regularly shared with itinerant staff, teachers on call and visitors so they are aware of the school's communicable disease plan and their responsibility to follow measures at all times.

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) and avoid face-to-face contact. In all areas, we have the option of using additional empty classrooms to increase physical distancing.
3. 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).
4. We will take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside.
5. Playgrounds are a safe environment, and we will encourage appropriate hand-hygiene practices before, during, after outdoor play.
6. 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. Elementary students will be taught about "physical distancing" and "minimizing physical contact"
  - b. For adolescent students, we will minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
7. We will hold a minimal amount of assemblies and other school-wide events and they will be in line with permitted per relevant local, regional, Provincial and Federal health orders and recommendations.
8. Staff food: birthday treats, etc. must be pre-plated and include utensils or it must be pre-packaged
9. Staff will maintain physical distance during eating times.
10. Staff rooms and other shared areas for staff follow [WorkSafeBC guidance on Offices: Protocols for returning to operation](#)
  - For example: Minimize the number of people using previously shared office equipment or other items (photocopiers, coffee machines, microwave ovens, etc.). Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

Students 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"> <li>• When they arrive at school.</li> <li>• Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).</li> <li>• Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student’s desk or locker).</li> <li>• Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple cohorts (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.).</li> <li>• After using the toilet.</li> <li>• After sneezing or coughing into hands.</li> <li>• Whenever hands are visibly dirty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When they arrive at school.</li> <li>• Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch).</li> <li>• Before and after eating and drinking.</li> <li>• Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating.</li> <li>• Before and after giving medication to a student or self.</li> <li>• After using the toilet.</li> <li>• After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).</li> <li>• After cleaning tasks.</li> <li>• After removing gloves.</li> <li>• After handling garbage.</li> <li>• Whenever hands are visibly dirty.</li> </ul>

## Mask Use

### **K-12 STUDENTS and STAFF:**

All staff K-12 and all students in Grades 4 to 12 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) indoors in schools and on school buses. Masks are available for those who have forgotten theirs.

### **Exceptions for Staff or Students:**

The guidance outlined above regarding mask requirements does not apply to staff or students in the following circumstances:

- to a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons;
- to a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
- if the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it;
- if the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument, engaging in high-intensity physical activity, etc.);
- if a person is eating or drinking;
- if a person is behind a barrier; or
- while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements is important.

## Bus Transportation

We will follow the recommendations below:

1. Busses will be cleaned and disinfected following the BC Centre for Disease Control guidelines
2. Grade 4-12 students will wear face masks on the bus at all times
  - a. **No mask=no bus ride**
  - b. **Mask off during bus ride=one week of no bussing**
3. Students will sit in consistent and assigned seating
4. Passengers will spread out if empty seats are available.
5. Bus drivers will keep up to date passenger lists
6. Bus drivers will be provided with face masks and face shields
7. Windows are opened when the weather allows.
8. 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.
9. *School buses: Public health measures have been implemented to keep school buses clean and safe. Students and bus drivers should clean their hands before and after riding the school bus. Buses will be loaded to reduce contact and Grade 4-12 students will be required to wear a mask on the school bus. Buses will be cleaned and disinfected regularly (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/kindergarten-to-grade-12/covid/covid19-backtoschool-factsheet.pdf>)*

Field trips occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, Provincial, and Federal public health recommendations and Orders for local travel.

### **Additional Measures – cleaning, disinfecting, and administrative measures**

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, when we will disinfect high-touch surfaces, including water fountains, door knobs/handles, light switches, toilet and faucet handles, tables, desks, chairs, and keyboards.

Shared equipment (PE and Music) and teaching aids (clipboards, whiteboards, pens, plastic bins for transporting materials, etc.) must be disinfected.

### **Foods classes**

Food services (e.g., meal programs, cafeterias, fundraisers, etc.), are following regular operational and food safety practices.

### **Physical Education**

PE classes should continue to focus on spreading students out as much as possible, reducing physical contact, and eliminating prolonged physical contact or crowding.

**PE should be outside as much as possible.**

For Grade 4-12 students:

Same as above, plus;

For low intensity activities (walking, stretching, playing catch, etc.), students should wear a mask when indoors and stay six feet apart;

For high intensity activities (volleyball, hockey, soccer, basketball, badminton, and running) indoors, students should be at least six feet apart, if possible.

Doing skills training rather than games will help, as well as reducing the number of students on the court (e.g. 3 on 3 rather than 5 on 5).

Spectators and participants must be wearing a mask and students must arrive into and leave the gym with masks on.

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.

Visitors, including parents and volunteers, should only enter the school if they are essential 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, wear masks, and sanitize their hands: 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.

Guidelines for essential visitors:

- a. Teachers must communicate COVID safety measures (masks, hand sanitizer, physical distancing, etc.)
- b. Visitors must sign in at the office
- c. Visitors should join the class outside, if possible

We will maintain daily attendance records for staff, students, and visitors (including teachers on call, parents, and volunteers) and maintain accurate class and bus lists. Daily attendance records will be kept for at least 45 days.

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.

All HVAC systems are operated and maintained as per standards and specifications, and are working properly. Portable air conditioners and fans are only used in ventilated spaces, with air moved from high to low.

In times of excessive heat events or times of poor air quality students will remain indoors.

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. At all times, staff should physically distance at least six feet. Staff should reduce close, face-to-face interactions, even when wearing a mask.

### **School Facility Use by Community**

Community use of school facilities is aligned with related public health guidance, recommendations and Orders.

### **Stay Home When Sick**

**Students and staff should stay at home when new symptoms of illness develop.** The key symptoms to watch for are fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath (difficulty breathing), and loss of sense of smell or taste. Other symptoms include sore throat, loss of appetite, headache, body aches, extreme fatigue, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

- 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.
- For mild symptoms 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, a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner.

### **Stay Home When Required to Self-Isolate**

The following students, staff or other persons must stay home and self-isolate:

- A person confirmed by public health as a case of COVID-19; or
- A person confirmed by public health as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak of COVID-19; or
- A person who has travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days.

### **Daily Health Check**

- Parents, caregivers, school staff and other adults routinely entering the school must assess themselves daily for key symptoms of illness prior to entering the school. (i.e. perform a daily health check).
- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for key symptoms of illness before sending them to school (i.e. perform a daily health check for their child).

- Staff and other adults must assess themselves daily for key symptoms of illness prior to entering the school (i.e. perform a daily health check).

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.

The following is an example of a daily health check to determine if you should attend school that day.

Daily Health Check			
1. Key Symptoms of Illness*	Do you have any of the following new key symptoms?	CIRCLE ONE	
	Fever	YES	NO
	Chills	YES	NO
	Cough or worsening of chronic cough	YES	NO
	Shortness of breath	YES	NO
	Loss of sense of smell or taste	YES	NO
	Diarrhea	YES	NO
	Nausea and vomiting	YES	NO
2. International Travel	Have you returned from travel outside Canada in the last 14 days?	YES	NO
3. Confirmed Contact	Are you a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	YES	NO

If you answered “YES” to one of the questions included under ‘Key Symptoms of Illness’ (excluding fever), you should stay home for 24 hours from when the symptom started. If the symptom improves, you may return to school when you feel well enough. If the symptom persists or worsens, seek a health assessment.

If you answered “YES” to two or more of the questions included under ‘Symptoms of Illness’ or you have a fever, seek a health assessment. A health assessment includes calling 8-1-1, or a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner. If a health assessment is required, you should not return to school until COVID-19 has been excluded and your symptoms have improved.

When a COVID-19 test is recommended by the health assessment:

- If the COVID-19 test is **positive**, you should stay home until you are told by public health to end self-isolation. In most cases this is 10 days after the onset of symptoms. Public health will contact everyone with a positive test.
- If the COVID-19 test is **negative**, you can return to school once symptoms have improved and you feel well enough. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless you develop a new illness.
- If a COVID-19 test is **recommended but is not done** because you choose not to have the test, or you do not seek a health assessment when recommended, and your symptoms are not related to a previously diagnosed health condition, you should stay home from school until 10 days after the onset of symptoms, and then you may return if you are feeling well enough.

- If a child has any new symptoms of illness, they must not go to school.
- If staff or any adult has any new symptoms of illness, they must not enter the school.

**If someone in the household has symptoms or are identified as a close contact**

- **Any household members or close contacts of someone with diagnosed Covid-19 should not attend school until the date directed by Public Health.** Please be as clear as possible with public health about how well the person with Covid-19 is able to self-

isolate from the rest of the household – Public Health will make individualized recommendations about how long contacts should self-isolate based on this information. Generally, if people cannot self-isolate from the rest of their household, the household contacts' self-isolation will be extended until 14 days after the person with Covid-19 is released from self-isolation by Public Health.

- **If one or more people in a student or staff member's house has symptoms of Covid-19, household members should not attend school until all people with symptoms have received a negative Covid-19 result.** Please have a very low threshold for testing, because we know Covid-19 is circulating broadly in our community right now. Testing with even a single symptom (eg a runny nose) is recommended when a person has been or suspects they have been in contact with a person who has Covid-19.

### **If someone develops symptoms at school**

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.

<i>If a Student Develops Any New Symptoms of Illness At School</i>	<i>If a Staff Member Develops Any New Symptoms of Illness At School</i>
<p>Staff must take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area.</li> <li>2. Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>5. Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.</li> <li>6. Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.</li> <li>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).</li> </ol> <p>Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p>Staff should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p>If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others.</li> <li>2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others.</li> <li>3. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up.</li> <li>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).</li> </ol>
<p>Students and staff should return to school according to the guidance under the 'Stay Home When Sick' and Appendix C sections of this document.</p> <p>A health-care provider note should not be required for students or staff to return.</p>	

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

**1. STAY HOME WHEN SICK**  
*Staff or students with new symptoms of illness should stay home.*  
*Staff or students who develop symptoms at school should go home.*

**2. HAND HYGIENE**  
*Clean hands more often.*  
*Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds helps prevent the spread of illness.*

**3. RESPIRATORY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE**  
*Cover coughs.*  
*Sneeze into elbows.*  
*Don't share food, drinks, or personal items.*

**4. PHYSICAL DISTANCING**  
*Minimize close, face-to-face interactions.*  
*Avoid 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.*

**5. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION**  
*General cleaning of the school should occur at least once a day.*  
*Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces should occur at least one additional time, during the school day.*

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.

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>)

**Health and Safety Committee members:**

**Jan Neels—Chair**

**John Giesbrecht—Co-chair**

**Caroline Van Saane—Secretary**

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