

Communicable Disease Prevention Plan for Sacred Heart School

August 31, 2022

Introduction

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

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted, and continues to impact students, staff and families in many ways, with some longer-term impacts of the pandemic yet to be realized. As we enter the 2022-23 school year, school boards, independent school authorities and schools will continue to build on their experiences and the advice of public health experts to determine communicable disease prevention plans. Our shared experience highlights the need to continue to be flexible and responsive to changes in transmission trends, as well as provides the opportunity to incorporate our learnings into approaches for sustainable communicable disease prevention moving forward.

COVID-19 will continue to circulate in our population, and as long as cases occur within our communities, K-12 students and staff members will continue to be affected. However, [BCCDC notes](#) that transmission within K-12 school settings accounts for a minority of COVID-19 cases, even amongst students and staff. Moreover, with high immunization rates in BC and treatment options for people at higher risk of serious disease, public health advises that COVID-19 can be managed as are other serious respiratory infections in the community. As such, the guidance in this document supports reducing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19 and will be modified as needed.

Recovery

Key Principles

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted, and continues to impact students, staff and families in many ways, with some longer-term impacts of the pandemic yet to be realized. The following principles will continue to guide the K-12 sector throughout the 2022-23 school year:

- Communicable disease prevention measures will continue to be aligned with public health guidance to support student and staff wellness.
- Using an inclusive and trauma-informed lens, with a focus on mental health and wellness.
- Focusing supports to address unique student and staff needs, recognizing the pandemic has impacted individuals and communities differently.
- Consulting and working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to address the unique educational and learning needs of their communities.
- Engaging and collaborating with parents/caregivers, staff, unions and community partners to develop local solutions when needed.
- As required by [WorkSafeBC](#), all boards of education, independent school authorities & schools must ensure the health of their workers by ensuring that steps are taken to reduce the risk to workers from communicable diseases.
- The Provincial Health Officer or local Medical Health Officers may issue temporary provincial, regional or local recommendations or orders of additional prevention measures during times of increased communicable disease risk.

Trauma-informed Practice

Trauma-informed practice is a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events including the emotional and traumatic impact of a pandemic. Trauma-informed practice includes:

- Providing inclusive and compassionate learning environments
- Understanding coping strategies
- Supporting independence
- Helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual needs of students and staff

Some students may have experienced elements of trauma during the pandemic. Educators and support staff should be aware of changes in student behaviour, including trauma-related behaviors which may include fear; hyperactivity; aggression; body aches and pain; depression; self-harming behaviours; excessive shyness; or withdrawal. To support educators and staff in identifying and responding to the needs of students who have experienced trauma, the Ministry has created [trauma-informed practice resources](#) that are available on the [erase \(Expect Respect and a Safe Education\) website](#).

Public Health Measures

Keeping Current

The principal reviews documents sent from the Public Health Officer, the Superintendent's Office and FISA to ensure practices and procedures are current. New information is communicated through Friday letters to parents, Monday Memos to staff, PEC and staff meetings in addition to Leadership Team / Joint Health and Safety Committees and Sub Team Meetings.

Vaccines

Vaccines are important tools to protect against many serious communicable diseases. Vaccination protects from serious illness due to COVID-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including from the omicron variant. It is important to get all recommended vaccine doses to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19. People 6 months and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. More information about COVID-19 vaccines is available from the [BCCDC website](#). Students and staff are also encouraged to ensure they are up to date on [all recommended vaccines for other communicable diseases, including COVID-19 vaccines](#).

Schools are encouraged to share evidence-based information and promote opportunities to be vaccinated in partnership with public health and local Medical Health Officers. More information on COVID-19 vaccination and the workplace is available on the [WorkSafeBC website](#). Evidence-based immunization information and tools for B.C. residents are available from [BCCDC](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#) websites.

Environmental Measures

Ventilation

- Classes are encouraged to take students outside for learning, eating and playing.
- Staff are encouraged to open windows as weather permits.
- In times of extreme heat, the school has a working air conditioning system.
- During times of wildfire smoke, windows will be closed and air will be filtered with the air circulation system.
- The air circulation system uses the highest available filters (MERV 13) and the filters are changed regularly throughout the year.
- The air circulation system is regularly serviced (approximately 4 times a year)
- A portable Hepa filter unit is used in the French Room in the Parish Centre.
- If a fan must be used, it must move from high to low instead of across blowing air from one person's breathing space to another. Avoid horizontal cross breezes.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty.
- Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects.
- Items and surfaces that children have placed in their mouths or that have been in contact with bodily fluids should be cleaned as soon as possible and between uses by different children.
- Dishwasher-safe items can be cleaned and disinfected in a dishwasher with a hot rinse cycle.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least once in a 24-hour period and when visibly dirty.
- Empty garbage cans once a day.
- Wear gloves when cleaning bodily fluids (wash hands before and after)
- If a student shows symptoms of Covid-19, clean all equipment the student may have touched (desk, chair, chrome book etc.)
- Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g., fabrics) or at all (e.g., sand, foam, playdough, etc.) can be used. Carpets and rugs (e.g., in Kindergarten and StrongStart classes) can also be used.

Administrative Measures

Gatherings and Events

- Schools can resume all types of gatherings and events without specific capacity limits for disease prevention.

Space Arrangement

- Schools can use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.
- Entry into school is a staggered start. Children may enter the school between 8:35am and 8:50am.
- Kindergarten students are dismissed at 2:50pm except on Wednesdays when they will be dismissed at 1:50pm.
- Students will be dismissed at 3:00 pm except on Wednesday where they will be dismissed at 2:00pm and will exit via assigned doors.
- Students will not be staying after school (inside or playground) unless they are part of an extracurricular program or club.
- The library and computer lab will be closed for before and after-school activities and recess unless it is a scheduled extracurricular program or club.

- School entrance and exit doors
 - Kindergarten doors
 - Classes K, Ka 2:50 dismissal, (1:50 on Wednesdays)
 - Classes K, Ka, 7, 6a, 5, 5a
 - Front doors
 - Classes 2, 2a, 1, 1a, 3a
 - Back doors
 - Classes 6, 7a, 4, 4a, 3
- Students will exit and enter these doors for recess:
 - Kindergarten doors
 - Classes K, Ka, 1
 - Classes 7, 6a , 5 (use kindergarten staircase)
 - Back doors
 - Class 3, 3a and 1a (class 3a use back door staircase)
 - Classes 7a, 6 (use back door staircase)
 - Front doors
 - Classes 2 and 2a
 - Classes 5a, 4 and 4a (use middle staircase)
- There will be arrows on floors to help with the flow of traffic.
- Outside of recess times, the centre staircase will be for going up and the side staircases will be for going down.
- Classes are encouraged to go outside for learning, eating and playing.

Fire Exits

Fire exits will be the same as noted on the posters in each room of the school. The last student will close the door to the classroom during a fire or earthquake.

Visitors

- Must be aware of the communicable disease prevention plan, stay home when sick and practice hand and respiratory hygiene.

Curriculum, Programs and Activities

- Students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after shared equipment use.
- Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g., instrument mouth pieces, water bottles, utensils) or has been in contact with bodily fluids should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.
- Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g., fabrics) or at all (e.g., sand, foam, playdough, etc.) and carpets and rugs (e.g., for circle time activities) can be used.
- Students can sing inside.
- Playgrounds are a safe environment. Students must sanitize their hands before and after using playground equipment.

- Theatre, film, dance and choir can continue. Students must wash their hands before and after touching shared equipment. Equipment needs to be washed once a day.
- Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as per routine practice.
- Chromebooks will be shared by grade. Chromebooks and computers in the computer lab will be sanitized once a day. Students need to wash their hands before and after using shared equipment.

School Sports

- Intra and inter-school sports can continue.

Field Trips

- When planning field trips, staff should follow existing policies and procedures as well as the guidance in this document.

Overnight Camps

- Sacred Heart School will consider guidance provided for overnight camps from [BCCDC](#) and the [BC Camps Association](#) when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

Transportation

- People must wash or sanitize their hands before or after using the bus or carpool
- Open windows on bus or carpool weather permitting
- Clean frequently touched surfaces in a bus or carpool once a day
- Encourage walking, biking as much as possible
- Bus drivers and students should be encouraged to practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Bus drivers, teachers and students may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus.

Food

- All people preparing food must have taken Foodsafe Level 1
- Staff and students should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g., food, drinks, unwashed utensils).

Water Fountains

- Students are encouraged to bring water bottles from home.

Washrooms

- Staff can use any staff washroom.
- Students can use either upstairs or downstairs washrooms and must adhere to occupancy limits for each area.
- Staff and students need to wash their hands before and after using the washroom.

Personal Measures

Health Awareness

- Staff, other adults entering the school, parents, caregivers, and students should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. Please continue to complete a daily health check.
- A health check means a person regularly checking to ensure they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness (including but not limited to [COVID-19 symptoms](#)) that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school to prevent spread of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, within school settings.

What to do When Sick

- Staff, students, or other persons who are exhibiting new symptoms of illness (including symptoms of COVID-19 or gastrointestinal illness) should stay home and follow the BCCDC guidance outlined below:
 - If the person is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
 - The [When to Get Tested for COVID-19 resource](#) or the [B.C. Self-Assessment Tool](#) provides more information on whether you should get a test for COVID-19. Those unsure or concerned about their symptoms should connect with a health care provider or call 8-1-1.
 - Staff, children, or other persons in the school setting who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the guidance on the [BCCDC website](#) as to how long they should self-isolate. They can return to school when they no longer need to self-isolate as long as symptoms have improved, and they are well enough to participate in regular activities. Schools should not require a health care provider note (e.g., a doctor's note) to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.
 - If the person is experiencing other symptoms, it isn't recommended to take a COVID-19 test (most people) or tests negative for COVID-19
 - Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved enough to where they feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen). Information specific to COVID-19 is available from [BCCDC](#).

Symptoms Develop at School

- If a student develops symptoms at school, they can wait for their parents to pick them up in the sick room.
- Students may wear a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms.
- All materials that the student touched must be disinfected.

Returning to School

- All staff and students must stay home when sick.
- Students/staff must stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.
- Information specific to COVID-19 is available from [BCCDC](#).

Hand Hygiene

Washing hands for 20 seconds with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Both students and staff can pick up and spread germs from objects, surfaces, food and people. Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices among students. If sinks are not available (e.g., students and staff are outdoors), use an alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol. Here is a list of [approved hand sanitizers](#). If hands are visibly dirty, washing hands with soap and water is more effective than hand sanitizer.

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.

Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils.

Personal Protective Equipment

Masks for Students, Staff and Visitors

The decision to wear a mask beyond when it is recommended by public health is a personal one, based on individual preference. Some students and staff may choose to continue to wear a non-medical mask or face covering throughout the day or for certain activities. The choice of staff and students to choose whether they practice additional personal prevention measures should be respected.

Students with Disabilities and Diverse Abilities

Follow a student's care plan. No additional personal protective equipment is needed beyond the scope of the care plan. In-class instruction may not be suitable for some children (or families) with severe immune compromise or medical complexity, which should be determined on a case-by-case basis with a medical care provider. Districts should follow regular practices for those needing alternative learning arrangements due to immune compromise or medical complexity to ensure access to learning and supports.

School Supportive Environments

Personal Prevention Practices

- Staff will model and review prevention practices outlined in this document with students.
- Signage will be posted.
- Staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventive practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature.

Personal Space

- Staff should also utilize a trauma-informed lens when planning school activities (e.g. gatherings and events) and interacting with other staff and students, including considerations around respecting others personal space
- Staff and students should be encouraged to respect others personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person).

Working Alone and Remote Policies

Staff are encouraged to stay home when sick.

All staff working remotely are required to contact the administration by 7:00 am so the information can be added to the Daily Updates staff memo. Staff who are working alone are required to contact the office two additional times (by noon and 3:30).

Any staff working in the school after 5:00 pm on weekdays and any time on weekends are required to contact the administration when they arrive at school and when they are in their car and about to leave the school property.

Violence Prevention Program

Any students who demonstrate aggressive behaviour have a functional behaviour assessment, Behaviour Plan and a Safety Plan that is signed by all employees who may have contact with the potentially aggressive student. Staff are trained in CPI protocols (Crisis Prevention and Intervention). The latest training was on September 3rd, 2020.

Communication Plans and Training

Staff receive training before the students return to classes. Staff have an opportunity to bring questions to the administration or the leadership team. The administration will monitor staff and students to ensure that the Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is being followed. The Communicable Disease Prevention Plan will be emailed to parents and staff as well as posted on the website. The office staff will put up clear signage regarding handwashing, occupancy limits, cleaning protocols, social distancing and respiratory etiquette.

Monitor the workplace and update plans as necessary

The Leadership Team acts as the Joint Health and Safety Committee at Sacred Heart School. Communication flows from Sub Teams to the Leadership Team and Administration. All staff can either bring up concerns to Sub Team leaders or go directly to the administration. Issues are addressed at leadership team meetings which occur twice a month at a minimum. The administration communicates updates to the staff in the Monday Memo and the parents in weekly newsletters or as needed.

Training

All new staff or staff in new roles will be asked to review the Communicable Disease Prevention Plan independently. The administration will review procedures with the new staff and field any questions and concerns.