

Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

(November 24, 2021)

Whytecliff Agile Learning Centres, Burnaby & Langley, Nov 2021

The Ministries of Health and Education and the BCCDC have issued guidelines to all schools to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases like COVID-19 and to maintain the health and safety of staff, students and families. Whytecliff is committed to providing a safe environment for all members of our school family, which includes following all WorkSafe BC guidelines, Ministry of Health (MOH) standards, and providing our staff with the necessary training and equipment.

In the pages that follow, we have outlined the measures included in our Communicable Disease Prevention (CDP) plan. We anticipate this plan to change over the course of the year. If there are changes, we will update the CDP plan and communicate with youth and families.

While the impetus for this plan comes from the need to respond to the prevalence of COVID-19 over the past two years, we can expect that moving forward, a plan of this type will become a permanent part of our programme's operating guidelines. By following the guidelines outlined in this document, we can create an environment that keeps our staff and students as safe and healthy as possible.

COVID-19 and Schools (data from the BCCDC)

The information below summarizes high-level evidence gathered since early spring 2020 about COVID-19, including its impacts on people and K-12 schools in B.C., nationally and internationally. Up-to-date information about COVID-19 is available from [BCCDC](#).

COVID-19 in B.C.

B.C. currently has variable community prevalence of COVID-19; some parts of the province have relatively low community transmission while other parts have relatively high levels of community transmission. Communities with high levels of transmission are typically those with lower vaccination rates.

- Since early summer 2021, the rate of COVID-19 cases has increased due to the easing of pandemic restrictions. Most cases, hospitalizations, and deaths were among unvaccinated individuals.

B.C. has a highly vaccinated population, with the majority of those aged 12 and older having received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. As of August 22nd, 83% of eligible people 12 and older in B.C. had received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine and 75% had received their second dose.

- Vaccinated individuals tend to have milder illness if they get infected and are also less likely to pass virus on than unvaccinated individuals. Severe outcomes in fully vaccinated individuals are

infrequent.

- Everyone eligible is encouraged to be fully vaccinated (i.e., receive two doses) against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them.

Four COVID-19 Variants of Concern have been detected in B.C.: Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta. Currently, Delta is the most common. The vaccines delivered in B.C. remain highly effective against variants, including the Delta variant, especially against severe outcomes.

- The Delta variant is currently the predominant variant in B.C. This variant spreads more easily and may lead to more severe disease.

COVID-19 and Schools

Based on [national and international](#) evidence collected between January - July 2021:

- There is little high-quality evidence to suggest that having schools open meaningfully contributes to community transmission.
- The likelihood of a person attending school while infectious with COVID-19 reflects local community prevalence.
- The consistent implementation of prevention measures, particularly in communities with higher transmission and/or lower vaccination uptake, is critically important to limiting the spread of COVID-19.
 - Within clusters and outbreaks, adult to adult transmission appears more common than child to adult or adult to child.
- Widespread asymptomatic transmission is not commonly occurring within schools.
- Evidence continues to be gathered about the impact of staff and student vaccinations on mitigating risk of COVID-19 transmission at school.

During the 2020-21 school year in B.C.:

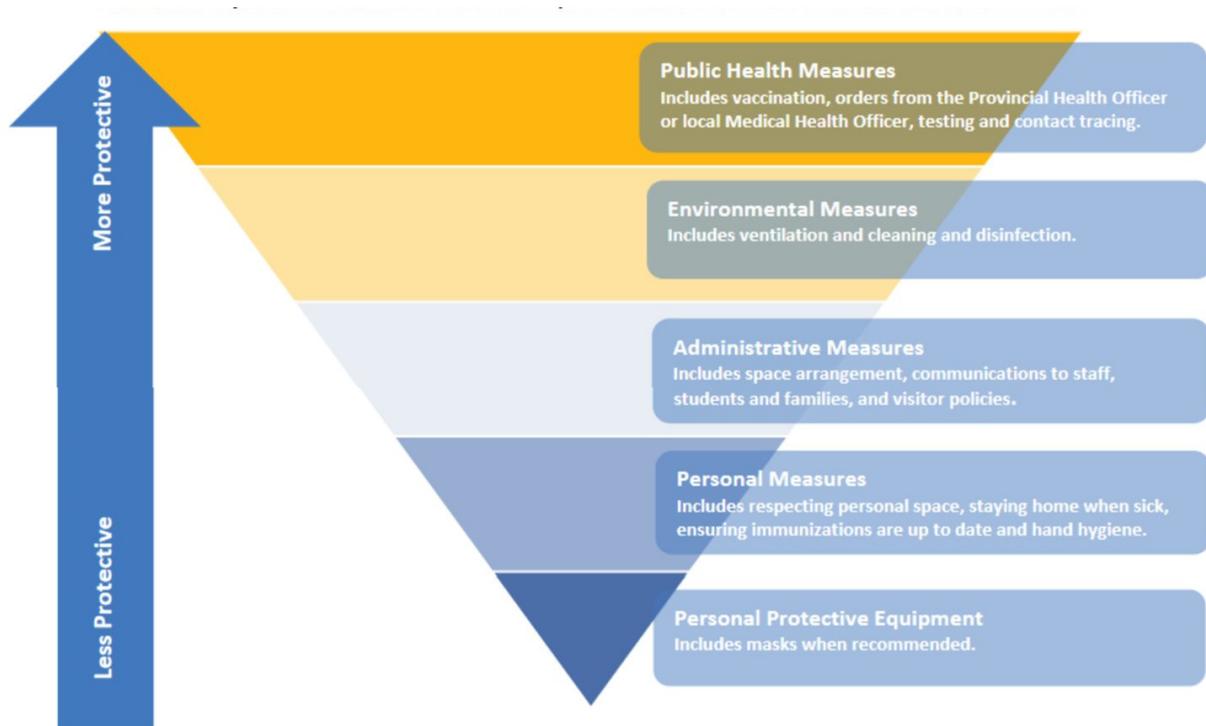
COVID-19 cases in schools reflected the number of cases in their communities. Most cases of COVID-19 among students and staff were acquired outside of school, in their community or household.

- Vancouver Coastal Health and Fraser Health led school transmission studies to understand transmission in school settings:
 - In Vancouver Coastal Health from September 10 – December 18, 2020, out of 699 cases among students (77%) and staff (23%), 55 cases (8% of student and staff cases) were likely acquired in school. When transmission did occur, a case would typically lead to 1 or 2 other cases in the school.
 - In Fraser Health from January 1 – March 7, 2021, out of 2049 cases among students (83%) and staff (17%), 267 cases (13% of student and staff cases) were likely acquired in school. When transmission did occur with a school setting, a case would typically lead to 1 other case in the school.

Infection prevention and exposure control measures (prevention measures) help create low-risk environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19. These are more effective in controlled environments, like schools, where multiple measures of various effectiveness can be routinely and consistently implemented.

To ensure the safest environment possible for our students and staff, we follow the *Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease*, which outlines measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases like COVID-19 in schools. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease



Public Health Measures and Notification

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools. Everyone eligible is strongly encouraged to be fully vaccinated (i.e., receive 2 doses) against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them – including those who are not eligible to be vaccinated. Both doses are needed to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19 and provide longer-lasting protection.

Whytecliff will continue to adhere to all Public Health orders and follow the guidance of public health officials in determining which actions should be taken to prevent or control the spread of illness.

As before, the school must follow the directions from public health on if and when exposure notifications are to be shared with our school community.

To ensure personal privacy rights are maintained, public health will only disclose a confirmed case of a communicable disease if the person was infectious when they attended school. Public health will only provide the personal information needed to support effective contact tracing.

The school will not provide notifications to staff or students' families about potential or confirmed communicable diseases cases (including COVID-19) unless the school is directed to do so by the local Medical Health Officer.

Environmental Measures

Air Circulation and Ventilation

Over the course of last year, Whytecliff serviced our (air ventilation) system and has added Hepa air cleaners throughout our buildings.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of diseases like COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. The school will be cleaned daily according to MOH guidelines which include:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises will occur at least once a day
 - All areas of the school will be sanitized once a day
- Frequently-touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day
- Visibly dirty surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected
- Common, commercially-available detergents and disinfectant products will be used, closely following the instructions on the label

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 of books or paper-based educational resources to students.

Disinfectant wipes will be available in each classroom, staff room, in both photocopy areas and other common use areas.

Physical Barriers

Physical barriers are no longer recommended for communicable disease prevention.

Administrative Measures

Gatherings & Events

School extracurricular and social gatherings and events (those that are not a part of the regular school

day or our regular education program) will occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and orders. Currently, indoor gatherings and events are capped at no more than 50 persons, or 50% of the seated operating capacity of the venue, excluding event staff. The event must have seating for each participant and there can be no moving from seat to seat (ie, mingling, dancing etc.)

Use of Space

In learning environments, schools can return to classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches. The school will seek to use all available space to maximize distance between individuals. Separate learning groups will no longer be used.

Visitors

To start the school year, we will keep visitors limited to those supporting activities that benefit student learning and well-being (e.g. teacher candidates, public health nurses, etc.). Those wishing to have an appointment with a member of staff are asked to schedule a phone or Zoom meeting. Parents dropping off or picking up students are asked to remain outside the building and ensure they respect other people's personal space. We will continue to ensure visitors follow the school's communicable disease plan, including completing a daily health check, wearing a mask at all times, and not entering the school if they are sick.

Also, in keeping with BC's timeline and implementation of a vaccine passport, we will also put in place measures to ensure that all visitors are double vaccinated.

Water

Full use of water fountains will be not be permitted at sites we use and filtered water coolers will continue to be used on site with disposable cups. Students are encouraged to practice hand hygiene before and after using a water cooler.

Staff-only Areas

WorkSafe BC guidance and policies will apply to all staff-only spaces in the school such as the staff room, staff work room or staff offices.

Personal Measures

Daily Health Check

Each day, parents must assess their child for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. It is a parent's responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school.

Students who show signs or symptoms of any illness must be kept home.

Daily health checks can be supported by the BCCDC resource on [When to get tested for COVID-19](#)

or the Ministry of Education's [K-12 Health Check](#). The school will not confirm a daily health check has been done or monitor students and staff for symptoms of illness.

The school will also communicate the ongoing expectation that staff must do a daily health check and that they should not come to school if they are sick.

Students or staff who are directed by public health officials to self-isolate, must stay home for the entire period of quarantine.

Students or Staff Who Become Ill at School

A student or member of staff who arrives at school with, or develops symptoms of, any illness, including COVID-19, will be isolated from others in a separate location. For students, arrangements will be made to have a parent or designate pick them up as soon as possible. For staff members, arrangements will be made to ensure they can get home safely as soon as possible.

Students or staff who cannot readily be picked up will remain in a separated location in the building until they are able to depart, or make their own way home safely.

Returning to School After Illness

When a person can return to school after being sick depends on the type of illness they had.

- If they had COVID-19 or another communicable disease, they can return according to the guidance provided to them from public health.
- For most illnesses, generally, the person can return when their symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all activities at school.

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 a communicable disease (including but not limited to COVID-19), public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on next steps.

Hand Hygiene

Extensive procedures will be in place. Hand sanitizer pumps will be available in every classroom, the Atrium, the main entrance and other common areas.

Staff and student are asked to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer:

- Upon entering the school or program vehicle.
- When entering each classroom
- After using the washroom
- Before and after eating and drinking
- After using common areas (e.g. photocopier, computer)
- After using shared utensils/resources/equipment (stapler, projector remotes)
- After sneezing or coughing into hands
- After using a tissue

Rigorous hand washing 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 easily, from objects, surfaces, food and people. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene. Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices among students. All staff and students will be reminded of proper and diligent hand-washing according to the [BCCDC Handwashing Poster](#).

Respiratory Etiquette

All students, staff and visitors are asked to use proper respiratory etiquette: avoid touching their faces and frequently wash their hands. This includes coughing or sneezing into one's elbow or a tissue. All staff and students should refrain from sharing any food, drinks or unwashed utensils.

Keeping Your Distance

Strict physical distancing is no longer required. The school will continue to create space between people, including:

- Managing flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow people to pass through easily
- Reminding students and staff about respecting others' personal space, using visual supports, signage, prompts or video modelling as necessary
- Using available space to spread people out where possible
- Taking students outside when possible

Personal Protective Equipment Measures

Non-medical Masks

For the start of the school year, all students, staff and visitors must wear a non-medical mask or face covering that has at least two layers. A mandatory mask mandate will allow for an added layer of protection as schools transition to new measures. The non-medical mask guidance is expected to be reviewed later this fall with the intention that wearing a mask will eventually transition to a personal choice.

Wearing a mask at all times is to help protect others. Non-medical, two layer masks will be required at all times inside the building, this includes all classrooms, common areas, washrooms, hallways, before entering the school, and when using the school bus. Masks act as a barrier and help stop the spread of droplets from a person's mouth and nose when talking, laughing, yelling, singing, coughing, or sneezing. As per CDC guidelines, any masks with valves are not permitted.

If they forget, students can pick up a mask from the front office and are expected to bring a mask to school every day. Parental support is appreciated to ensure masks are worn properly and in keeping with this mandatory requirement.

Masks may be temporarily removed for the purpose of identifying the person wearing it. Masks may be removed while eating or drinking.

Transportation

Vans will run as usual and will be cleaned and disinfected according to the cleaning and disinfection practices outlined above.

- High-touch surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected after each use

Families will be required to sign up their children for the van to ensure we can plan to seat all students. To reduce the number of close in-person interactions on school buses, the following strategies will be implemented:

- Vans will whenever possible operate with a reduced capacity to provide distance in spacing between students
- Students must wear a mask at all time

Carpooling

For families that regularly carpool with members of other households, please consider the following:

- Continue to spread out as much as possible,
- Travel with the same people whenever possible,
- Set the vehicle's ventilation to bring in fresh outside air, and do not recirculate the air,
- Open the windows when the weather allows,
- Clean hands before and after trips, and
- Clean frequently touched surfaces regularly.

All passengers are encouraged to wear masks while carpooling unless the car occupants are all from the same household.

Food and Beverages

Students may not share any food or beverages nor any utensils, containers or anything that comes in contact with the mouth. All students and staff are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to school.

Physical Education and Athletics

Students will be spread out as much as possible during physical activities. Physical education and extracurricular exercise and sport activities will occur outside as much as possible.

Staff and students are required to wear masks during PHE classes when they are indoors.

Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity physical activities, though a mask is always a personal choice. Staff will move high-intensity activities outside when possible.

For low intensity activities, students are required to wear a mask when indoors.

Shared equipment will be used and will be cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the cleaning and disinfecting section of this document.

Information about school sports and competitive athletic programs will be shared with students and their families

Field Trips

All field trips will be planned in accordance to, and must align with, the school CDP plan and any regional, provincial or federal public health guidelines or recommendations. Any members of staff or other adults must be trained in, and adhere strictly to, all school-based and provincial health and safety guidelines.

Training and Plan Review

Training and review of this plan is mandatory for all staff members and students. All parents are also asked to be familiar with this document; in particular, their responsibility to assess their children's health daily and to keep them home if they have signs of any illness.

The school will conduct regular training for staff, which will be documented and reviewed by a staff safety designate. This document will also be reviewed regularly to ensure the school is complying with all current provincial guidelines and practices including those of the MOE, MOH, PHO and WorkSafeBC.

This document was prepared with strict adherence to:

- BC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools (MOH/BCCDC: August 24, 2021)
- K-12 Educational Recovery Plan (MOE: August, 24, 2021)
- WorkSafe BC: Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers
- Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings (August 24, 2021)

Useful Links:

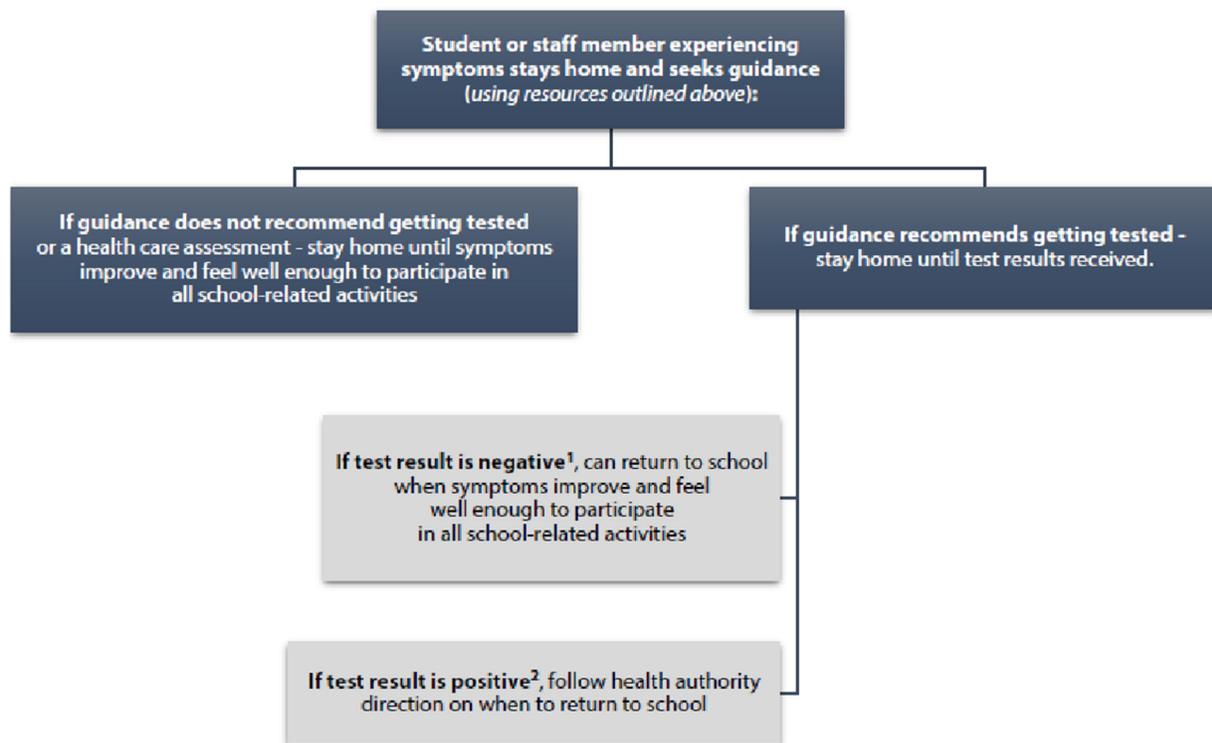
[BCDCD When to Get Tested for COVID-19](#)

[Ministry of Education K-12 Health Check](#)

[BCCDC Website](#)

APPENDIX A: COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing and Return to School

When a student, staff or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced and if a COVID-19 test is recommended.



1. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless the person develops a new illness. BCCDC has information on receiving negative test results.
2. Public Health will contact everyone with a positive test. Visit the BCCDC website for more information on positive test results.