



Catholic Independent Schools of the Diocese of Victoria (CISDV) Communicable Disease Prevention Plan Updated September 1, 2022

INTRODUCTION

CISDV schools have continued to build on the experiences and the advice of public health experts to determine our communicable disease prevention plan. The CISDV Communicable Disease Prevention Plan focuses on reducing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19.

This document was created/updated based on:

- [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#) (August 25, 2022)
- [BC Centre for Disease Control | Ministry of Health Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) (August 25, 2022)
- [Supporting Child Wellness: Public Health Guidance for Communicable Disease \(including COVID-19\) Management in Child Care Settings](#) (August 25, 2022)
- The [Daily Health Check](#) (January 2022)

NOTE: Much of the following document includes direct quotes from one or more of the above links.

Employees, parents, and school visitors are to review this document and follow these operational guidelines when in any CISDV building in order to ensure the health & safety of self and others; everyone must do their part to help reduce the spread of communicable diseases.

The [BCCDC notes](#) that schools continue to be low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission. The guidance of this document supports reducing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19. **NOTE:** The CISDV Communicable Disease Prevention Plan will be updated when temporary additional measures are required to reflect any new information from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and WorkSafeBC.

The following is divided according to the following:

1. Recovery
2. Communicable Disease Prevention Guidance
3. Communicable Disease Prevention Plans
4. Environmental Practices
5. Administrative Practices
6. Personal Practices
7. Administrator Protocols for Managing Communicable Disease Activity at School
8. Resources For Parents, Students and Staff

1. RECOVERY

Trauma-Informed Practice

Schools should continue to create supportive school environments, including utilizing a trauma-informed practice. As part of *trauma-informed practices* in our schools, **staff** are to:

- provide inclusive and compassionate learning environments
- understand coping strategies
- support independence
- help to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual needs of students and staff.

Indigenous Students (First Nations, Métis And Inuit)

First Nations Students

First Nations may take increased safety measures during the pandemic recovery phase. This may mean that some First Nations learners will not be able to attend in-person classes. First Nations have the authority to declare states of emergency and have responsibility for the education of their citizens. In the spirit of Reconciliation and consistent with the [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#), CISDV schools are encouraged to engage with First Nations communities who have First Nation students living in community (on-reserve) discuss any school plans for the 2022/23. This will help to identify potential accommodations needed to support students who may not be able to attend in-person classes. Schools are expected to continue to support equitable outcomes and opportunities for all Indigenous learners by maintaining Indigenous student supports and collaboration with Indigenous communities and education partners.

2. COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION GUIDANCE

Supportive School Environments

Schools should be supportive environments for communicable disease prevention by:

- Having **staff** model personal practices (e.g., hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette), and assist younger students as needed.
- Sharing reliable information, including from the BC Centre for Disease Control, Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and local health authorities with parents, families and caregivers.
- Promoting personal practices in the school (e.g., posters).
- Ensuring individual choices for personal practices (e.g., choosing to wear a mask or face covering) are supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

Vaccines

Vaccines are important tools to protect against many serious communicable diseases, including reducing the risk of COVID-19 in schools and communities. All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including various variants of concern. It is important to get all recommended vaccine doses to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19. People 6 months or older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. More information about COVID-19 vaccines is available on the [BCCDC website](#).

- Although proof of vaccination is NOT required for schools for staff, students, or visitors, **students and staff** are encouraged to ensure they are up to date on [all recommended vaccines for other communicable diseases](#), including COVID-19 vaccine.
- Schools/**administrators** are encouraged to share evidence-based information and promote opportunities to be vaccinated in partnership with public health and local Medical Health Officers. Evidence-based immunization information and tools for B.C. residents are available from [BCCDC](#) and [ImmunizeBC](#) websites.
- Each **school** is required to provide a designated space for public health nurses or other qualified health personnel to carry out their duties (including immunizations).

WorkSafeBC – Communicable Disease Prevention

Schools must follow [WorkSafeBC communicable disease prevention guidance](#) and must provide communication, training, and orientation to ensure the health and safety of their workers. WorkSafeBC communicable disease prevention guidance is aligned with the guidance provided by BCCDC. Please see their website for specific requirements and additional information.

3. COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLANS

Emergency and Evacuation Drills

Emergency and evacuation planning, and drills should consider the CISDV Communicable Disease Prevention Plan. In the event of an actual emergency, communicable disease prevention measures can be suspended to ensure for a timely, efficient, and safe response.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES

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.

Products & Procedures for Cleaning and Disinfecting

- For **cleaning**, use water and detergent (e.g., liquid dishwashing soap), or common, commercially available products, along with good cleaning practices. For hard-to-reach areas, use a brush and rinse thoroughly prior to disinfecting.
- For **disinfection**, use common, commercially available disinfectants listed on Health Canada’s hard-surface disinfectants for use against coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Follow these procedures when cleaning and disinfecting:
 - Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects.
 - Items and surfaces that a person has 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 people.
 - A dishwasher can be used to clean and sanitize dishwasher-safe items if the sanitize setting is used with adequately hot water.

General Cleaning and Frequently Touched Surfaces

- General cleaning should include cleaning of the premises.
- Cleaning and disinfection of **frequently touched surfaces** should occur at least **once in a 24-hour period and when visibly dirty**.
- Frequently touched surfaces are items touched by larger numbers of students and staff. They can include doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains and toilet handles, as well as shared equipment (e.g., computer keyboards, PE/sports and music equipment), appliances (e.g., microwaves) and service counters (e.g., library circulation desk), and may change from day to day based on utilization.
- Carpets/rugs/and frequently touched items such as toys, can be used. 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.
- Garbage containers should be emptied daily.

Cleaning and disinfection activities should focus on spaces that have been utilized by staff or students.

Cleaning & Disinfecting Bodily Fluids

Staff are to follow these procedures, in conjunction with CISDV policies, when cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine):

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.

- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Follow regular health and safety procedures and regularly used PPE (e.g., gloves, protective or woven sleeves) for blood and bodily fluids (e.g., toileting, spitting, biting).

Laundry

Schools can use regular laundering practices.

General Ventilation and Air Circulation

Administrators are to continue to ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort of workers ([Part 4 of the OHS Regulation](#)), and that they are working properly. Open windows when the weather permits if it doesn't impact the functioning of ventilation systems.

NOTE: Taking students outside more often is no longer necessary for communicable disease prevention.

- Schools should regularly maintain HVAC systems for proper operation. Schools should consider guidance for school ventilation systems offered by [ASHRAE](#). This includes considering:
 - Schools with recycled/recirculated air systems should consider upgrading filters to finer grain filters such as MERV 13 (if possible)
 - increasing air exchanges by adjusting the HVAC system
 - managing air distribution through building automation control systems
 - where possible, opening windows if weather permits and HVAC system function will not be negatively impacted.
- When using air conditioners and fans in ventilated spaces, air should be moved from high places to lower places instead of blowing air directly from one person's breathing zone to another's. Avoid horizontal cross breezes.
- Natural ventilation (operable windows, etc.) and portable HEPA filter units are acceptable in regularly occupied classrooms that do not have mechanical ventilation systems.

Should a school's ventilation system be temporarily compromised (e.g., partial power outage, ventilation break down), the **principal** is to inform the **superintendent** of schools to determine the course of action.

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water or using an [effective hand sanitizer](#) reduces the spread of illness.

- Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene.
- **Staff** are to facilitate regular opportunities for students to wash their hands. (This can include using portable hand-washing sites and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers containing at least 60% alcohol.)
- If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizer may not be effective at eliminating microbes. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty.
- Staff and students can refer to the BCCDC's [hand hygiene poster](#) to learn about how to perform hand hygiene.
- **Custodians** should ensure hand hygiene supplies are always well stocked including soap, paper towels (or air drier) and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.

Respiratory Etiquette

Parents and **staff** should teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices among students, including:

- 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, cigarettes, or vaping devices.

5. ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

Health Awareness

Staff, parents, caregivers, students and visitors should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. The importance of everyone doing a health check remains in place. A health check means a person regularly checking before coming to school 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. A daily check helps prevent the spread of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, within the school setting.

School administrators should ensure that everyone entering a school is aware and routinely reminded of their responsibility to practice health awareness, including that they should not come to school if they are sick.

What To Do When Sick

Staff, students, or other persons in the school setting who are exhibiting symptoms of illness, such as [COVID-19 or gastrointestinal illness](#), should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities. 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 one feels well enough to return to regular activities and any fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen). 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. If you are unsure or concerned about your symptoms, connect with your health care provider, or call 8-1-1.

Staff, children, or other persons in the school setting who **test positive for COVID-19** are to 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 do 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 practice.

If a **staff member, student, or other person** develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they will be supported to go home until their symptoms have improved. Appropriate infection control precautions are to be taken while the person is preparing to leave the school premises, including use of appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. The ill person may use a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms.

School administrators are expected to establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work, including.

- Continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one (for both the person who is sick and for those who may be assisting them).
- Make arrangements for the student/staff member to go home as soon as possible (e.g., contact student's parent/caregiver for pick-up).
- For students or staff members that are unable to be picked up immediately, have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably and are separated from others.
NOTE: Younger children must be supervised when separated. Supervising staff can wear a non-medical mask and should avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible and practice diligent hand hygiene.
- **Staff responsible for facility cleaning** should clean and disinfect the surfaces/equipment which the person's bodily fluids may have been in contact with while they were ill (e.g., their desk in a classroom, the bathroom stall they used, etc.) prior to the surfaces/equipment being used by others.

Cleaning/disinfecting the entire room the person was in (a “terminal” clean) is not required in these circumstances.

- Request that the individual stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.

Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities and/or Receiving Health Services

- **Schools** are expected to implement health and safety measures that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities.
- 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. Schools should follow regular practices for those needing alternative learning arrangements due to immune compromise or medical complexity to ensure access to learning and supports.
- **Staff** and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct or delegated care, or with disabilities and diverse abilities who are in close proximity to a student should follow routine infection control practices and care plans for the child, if applicable.
- **Those providing health services** in CISDV schools may receive 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 communicable disease (including COVID-19) are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine their child’s level of risk. Students are not required to wear a mask or face covering when receiving services, though may continue to base on their or their parent/caregiver’s personal choice.
- Schools are to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.

Space Arrangement

Schools can use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

Transportations – Buses

For school buses, schools can follow normal seating and onloading/offloading practices.

- Buses used for transporting students should be cleaned and disinfected in line with the cleaning and disinfection practices outlined in this document.
- **Bus drivers** and **students** should practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Bus drivers, teachers and students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus.

Visitor Access/Community Use

Schools can follow normal practices for welcoming visitors and the community use of schools.

- All visitors, including community groups using the school, should follow the CISDV Communicable Disease Prevention Measures outlined in this document.

Curriculum, Programs & Activities

Schools should implement communicable disease prevention practices (e.g., cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to the activity.

Field Trips

When planning field trips, **staff** should follow existing policies and procedures as well as the guidance in this document. Schools should consider guidance provided for overnight camps from [BCCDC](#) and the [BC Camps Association](#) when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

Music/Physical & Health Education (PHE) / Outdoor / Food & Culinary / Theatre, Film & Dance / Other Shared Equipment Programs

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 between uses.

School Libraries / Learning Commons

Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as per routine practice.

Trades in Training / Work Experience Programs

Students enrolled in individual training/work experience programs should follow the communicable disease prevention plan required by the workplace/facility. Classes (or other similar groupings of students) participating in training/work experience programs together should follow the more stringent measures (if applicable) between the school and the workplace/facility's communicable disease prevention plans.

6. PERSONAL PRACTICES

Health Awareness

Everyone at school should practice health awareness, including staying home when sick. See "Administrative Practices" (Section 5 in this document).

Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings

The decision to wear a mask beyond when it is required 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 is to be respected. Information on non-medical masks is available from [BCCDC](#).

- Masks are most effective when fitted, worn and handled correctly.
- **Administrators** should set, communicate and consistently reinforce clear expectations that any bullying or other disrespectful behaviour or conduct related to personal mask use choice is unacceptable. Administrators should address inappropriate behaviour in line with student codes of conduct.

Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette

See page 3 & 4 in the "Environmental Practices" (Section 4 in this document).

Staff, students, and visitors should be encouraged to practice frequent hand hygiene. To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the BCCDC's hand hygiene poster.

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).

Sharing Food, Beverages & Other Items That Touch the Mouth

Staff and students should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g., food, drinks, unwashed utensils, etc.). Shared-use items that touch the mouth should be cleaned and disinfected between use by different individuals (e.g., water bottles, instrument mouth pieces).

International Travel Requirements Following Return to Canada

Staff, students, and families are responsible for understanding and adhering to all COVID-19 international travel requirements outlined by the Government of Canada, including those required following return to Canada. Full details on requirement for travelers are available on the [Travel to Canada: Requirements for COVID-19 vaccinated travellers](#).

7. ADMINISTRATOR PROTOCOLS FOR MANAGING COMMUNICABLE DISEASE ACTIVITY AT SCHOOL

Most communicable diseases experienced by students and staff within school settings may be managed by the individual/family and through routine preventative measures, such as staying home from school until well enough to participate in regular activities.

Public health may become directly involved if certain reportable diseases, such as measles, are identified where there are effective interventions available to prevent further spread and protect against severe disease. Additional time-limited public health measures may also be implemented at the discretion of the local Medical Health Officer or the Provincial Health Officer in response to broader risk of communicable disease transmission in the community.

NOTE: **School administrators** can contact public health if they have concerns about communicable disease transmission within the school setting and require additional support.

Communications and Protecting Personal Privacy

Medical Health Officers play the lead role in determining if, when and how to communicate information regarding increased communicable disease activity within a school. To protect personal privacy and to support accuracy, schools are to exercise caution in providing communicable disease notifications beyond when and what is recommended by public health.

Functional Closures

A functional closure of a school is the temporary closure of a school determined by the Superintendent's Office due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial to ensure the health and safety of students. This would likely be due to a high number of staff or certain employees away who are required for a school to function, and the inability to temporarily replace them. The **Superintendent** should notify their Medical Health Officer and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (educ.covid@gov.bc.ca) when they are considering or implementing a functional closure.

Public Health Closure

A public health closure is the temporary closing of a school ordered by a Medical Health Officer when they determine it is necessary to prevent the excessive transmission of a communicable disease.

8. RESOURCES FOR PARENTS, STUDENTS AND STAFF

- Learn more about [COVID-19 stress](#) and [managing anxiety](#)
- Access [virtual mental health supports](#)
- Call 310Mental Health Support at [310-6789](tel:310-6789) for mental health information, resources, and emotional support
- Youth and adults 15+ can [sign up for the BounceBack program](#) to learn to manage mental health and well-being
- BCCDC has information on [mental well-being during COVID-19](#)
- The First Nation Health Authority provides information on [mental health and cultural supports during COVID-19 \(PDF, 77KB\)](#) and [stories from youth about COVID-19](#)

- Resources are available to support management of routine communicable diseases, including [HealthLink BC](#), the [BCCDC Guide to Common Childhood Diseases](#), the [Sneezes and Diseases website](#), and other school health resources hosted on [Island Health](#) website.
- [Resources for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities and diverse abilities](#).
- [Provincial Outreach Programs](#) are available to support boards/authorities through professional learning, resources, consultation, and training during recovery.
- [Indigenous Education in British Columbia](#)
- [Indigenous Education Teaching Tools and Resources](#)
- [Communicable disease prevention \(G-P2-21\)](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Addressing the mental health effects of COVID-19 in the workplace: A guide for workers](#)
- [Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal - webinar](#)
- [Linda O’Neill – Trauma Informed in the Classroom](#)
- [MCFD: Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#)
- [North American Centre for Threat Assessment & Trauma Response: Education as a Special Consideration](#)
- [Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#)
- [Recommendations for Access to Library Learning Commons Resources to Meet COVID-19 Requirements](#)