



St. Catherine's Elementary School

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COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plan – Updated August 2023

The following is the COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plan for the start of the school year in September of 2023 for St. Catherine's Elementary School in Langley, British Columbia.

This plan will be communicated with staff, students, and parents, and be made available on our school website.

1) Understanding the Risk – Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk for communicable disease transmission in the workplace.

- Administration frequently receives updates from the Ministry of Education on any changes to the BCCDC Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings.
- When we receive updates, the administration reviews our Communicable Disease Plan and makes changes to reflect the updates. Staff, Parents, and Students are made aware of any changes to the Communicable Disease Plan.
- Staff, Students, and Parents will be trained, when necessary, on any changes to protocols in our school in order to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission.
- We have a Joint Health and Safety Committee that meets once a month that will also make changes to the Communicable Disease Plan when necessary.

2) Implementing Measures, Practices, and Policies to Reduce the Risk

Supporting Staff in the workplace:

- When sick, staff will be permitted to go home as soon as possible, and administration will arrange for covering any duties (e.g. teaching, working with individual students, supervision) that the staff member normally has.
- If unable to leave immediately:
 - Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others.
 - Maintain a distance of 2 meters from others.
 - Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up. 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).
- If a staff member feels sick, they will go home and the administration will arrange for coverage for any responsibilities/duties of said staff member for that day.

Supporting Students in the school/Daily Health Checks:

- Staff, other adults entering the school, parents, caregivers, and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. It is important that everyone does a health check whereby a person regularly checks 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 the spread of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, within school settings.
- Schools do not need to monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness.
- [BCCDC - Know the symptoms](#).
- Parents are required to do a healthscreen of their children prior to coming to school. If needed, parents can also use the following link - <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- When to get tested for COVID-19: [When to get tested for COVID-19](#).
- If tested positive for COVID, students must remain isolated for 5 days and be symptom free before returning to school. For the link to the BCCDC website for more information and updates, please refer to the “**Return to School**” section on page 3 of this plan.

If a student develops symptoms at school, staff must take the following steps:

- Immediately, separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area.
 - Contact the student’s parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.
 - Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 meters from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.
 - Provide the student with tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene.
 - Avoid touching the student’s body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.
 - Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.
 - Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).
- Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.
 - Staff and other adults entering the school are made aware that they should not come into the school if they are sick or are required to self-isolate.
 - Visitors to the school must also complete a daily health check before entering the school.
 - Staff to support students, when necessary, who are having difficulty emotionally. Communicate with the student’s parents when appropriate.
 - When supporting students, staff should use trauma-informed practices which provide a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful for students. Staff are aware of the following resource from the Ministry of Education in order to help them support their students: [Trauma Informed Practices Resource](#).

- For students or staff who may not be able to be picked up immediately, we will have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably and are separated from others.
- In the event that in-class instruction may not be suitable for some children (or families) with severe immune compromise or medical complexity, such cases will be determined on a case-by-case basis with a medical care provider.

Returning to School

- “Staff, children, or other persons in the school setting who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the guidance on the BCCDC website ([BCCDC If you have COVID](#)) 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 (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.” *Source - BCCDC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools (August 2022).*
- As per the BCCDC, “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 you feel well enough to return to regular activities and any fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g. acetaminophen, ibuprofen).”
- As per BCCDC guidelines with regards to being a close contact to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, “You are not required to self-isolate, and you can continue to participate in routine activities, such as work or school, as long as you do not have any symptoms.” Link - [BCCDC Instructions for Close Contacts](#)
- COVID-19 Federal Travel Regulations/Restrictions - <https://travel.gc.ca/travel-covid>.

3) School-wide Measures in Place:

Sanitization

- Facilitate regular opportunities for staff and students to practice hand hygiene.
- Hand sanitizing stations are made available at all exit/entry points of each room.
- Adequate supply of hand sanitizer to refill empty bottles and hand sanitizing stations. Staff can refill at their leisure or let the office/administration know that a hand sanitizing station needs to be refilled.
- Students can bring their own personal hand sanitizer to school.
- As per the Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings, we will use "common, commercially available disinfectants.”
- Students and staff are encouraged to sanitize each time they enter/exit the classroom.
- Signage throughout the school and in every classroom regarding how to wash your hands, how to cough and sneeze properly, etc.

- Hand washing signage from Fraser Health and the BCCDC at every sink in the school, and a sign about not entering the school if you have symptoms at the front entrance doors of the school.
- Frequently shared items are sanitized as much as possible.
- General cleaning of the premises by janitorial staff, and cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, done at least once in a 24-hour period.
- Staff, with students playing a supporting role, in ensuring shared equipment and shared furniture is frequently sanitized.
- Our janitorial room is stocked with appropriate cleaning supplies and is re-stocked when needed.
- Handwashing is encouraged upon school entry, before/after breaks and eating, using the washroom, etc. On school field trips, the bus driver, staff, and students practice hand hygiene before and after the trip.
- Staff to diligently remind students about the importance of diligent hand-washing and sanitizing.
- Staff to assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- School buses are sanitized after every use.

Ventilation Practices:

- Staff keep doors and windows open during the day, when weather permits.
- School bus windows opened if weather permits. Also, we will encourage car windows to be opened for carpools for school extracurricular activities when traveling to other schools.
- Use of air purifiers throughout the school.
- As per the K-12 Guidelines, "use of portable air conditioners and fans in unventilated spaces with doors and windows closed should be avoided, except when necessary (e.g. during high or excessive heat events)."
- 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.
- Regular maintenance of air filters in the ventilation system occurs (at least three times per year).

Personal Protective Equipment:

- The decision to wear a mask, face covering, or other personal protective equipment is a personal choice for staff, students, and visitors. A person's choice is to be supported and respected.
- Students/adults can choose to wear a mask or another face covering on the bus or while traveling in carpools on field trips or traveling to extracurricular events outside of the school.
- Masks are available for those who have forgotten their mask and who wish to wear one.
- Remind students about respecting other peoples' personal space.

School Gatherings, Field Trips, Capacity Limits, Visitors:

- Schools can continue to use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet students' needs.
- All school gatherings (e.g. assemblies, school masses) have no specific capacity limits.
- All school gatherings, including inter-school events (e.g. track meets, sports tournaments) can be done at 100 % capacity.
- For bus transportation on field trips, we will follow normal seating and unloading/offloading practices.
- Visitor Access – routine sign in/sign out practices.
- Field trips that are in line with public health recommendations and orders are encouraged.
- For staff meetings and PEC meetings, these can be held in person, but use available space to spread out people as much as possible.
- Schools can be in full operation of all spaces in alignment with the protocols outlined in the *Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings*.
- PE/Music/Outdoor Ed - Students will 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.
- Library - regular circulation and browsing of books can occur.

4) Communicating Measures, Practices, and Policies

- How are measures, practices, and policies communicated at the workplace?
 - Staff orientation on measures, practices, and policies in this document, who will then review with their students.
 - Students and Parents are made aware of the Communicable Disease Plan on the school website and in the weekly newsletter.
 - TOCs and other staff who are not part of the everyday staff are made aware of our Communicable Disease Plan (i.e. the aforementioned individuals will be given a copy of this plan for them to review).
- How are supervisors informed of measures, practices, and policies, and kept abreast of changes as they are made?
 - Staff who have a volunteer helping him/her will let the volunteer know of the updated measures, practices, and policies within this document.
- Identify any workplace signage used to communicate measures.
 - Signage throughout the school regarding maintaining safe distances, washing/sanitizing hands properly, room occupation limits where applicable, how to cough/sneeze properly, sign at the front door about not entering the building if feeling sick, etc.

5) Monitoring the Workplace and Updating Our Plan as Necessary

- How are joint health and safety committees or worker representatives involved in the ongoing evaluation of measures, practices, and policies at their workplace?
 - Meeting of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) once a month.
 - Update Communicable Disease Plan, if needed, based on any concerns brought to the attention of the JHSC, even if no updates have been given by the local health authorities.
- What is the mechanism at your workplace for workers to escalate health and safety concerns?
 - Staff are asked to bring any concerns to administration who will then look into the concerns and/or bring to the attention of the JHSC.
- What is the process in place at your workplace to monitor whether measures, policies, and practices are being followed?
 - Building inspections done periodically.
 - Staff can bring concerns to administration.

Resources:

[BC Centre for Disease Control - Main Website](#)