

# School District 52 Prince Rupert

## Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

**2021 – 2022**

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This revised plan (**effective April 16, 2022**) has been developed in alignment with the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K – 12 Setting (Updated April 8, 2022) in British Columbia. The goal of this document is to support K – 12 education employees, students, parents, caregivers, administrators and school community members to:

- Be informed about communicable disease measures and how they support a safe school environment.
- Understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting safe and healthy schools.

## RESOURCES

The following Provincial guidance documents and websites have been used in preparing this Back to School Communicable Disease Plan:

- [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)
- <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart>
- [K-12 Education Recovery Plan](#)
- [BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)
- WorkSafeBC; <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/covid-19/bcs-four-step-restart>

## KEY PRINCIPLES

- All school districts are to adhere to the standards, guidelines, and protocols of the BC Centre for Disease Control and WorkSafeBC.
- Using the guidelines, school districts are required to have communicable disease plans, adjust the plans to reflect any updates in the guidelines and post these updated plans to the district/school websites **and at the school.**
- Psychological safety measures and trauma-informed practice will be valued and implemented alongside physical health and safety measures.
- Effective and ongoing communication with school leaders, community partners, Indigenous rights holders, parents, caregivers, students, unions and employees is an essential aspect of successfully implementing the plans.

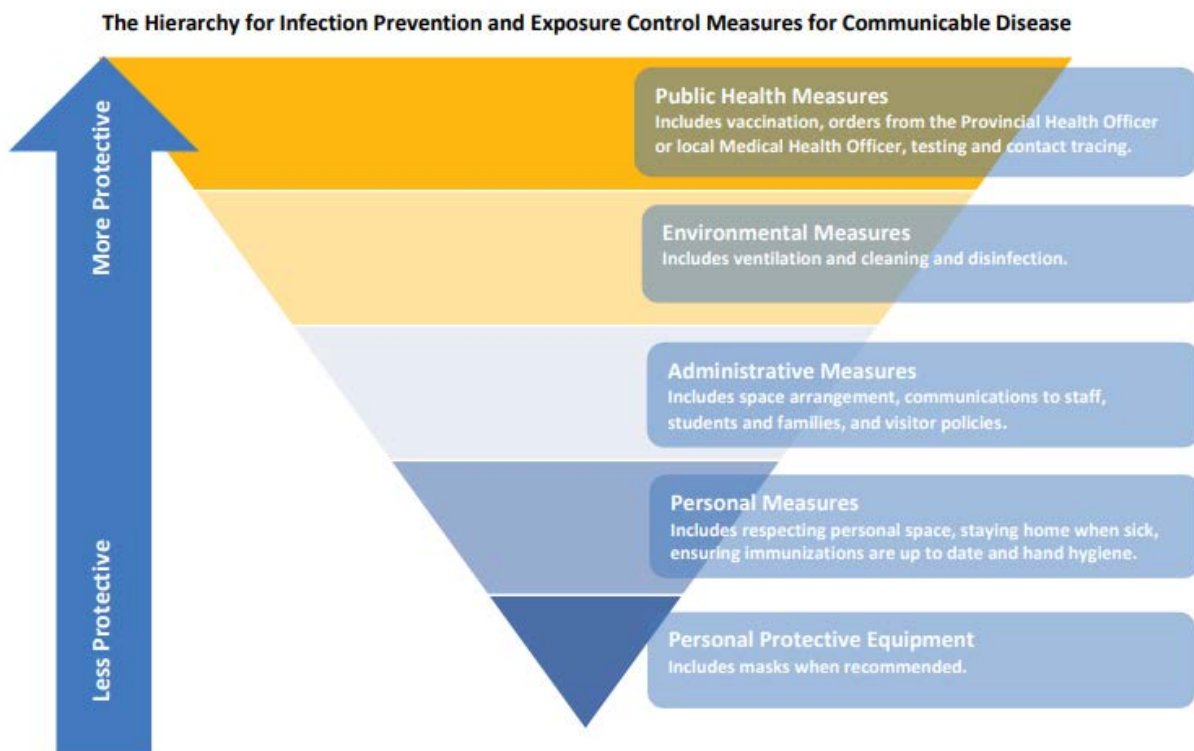
## REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Moving forward, Medical Health Officers will have the authority to put regional measures in place during times of increased community transmission of COVID-19 and within communities with low vaccination uptake. Local Public Health Orders may be placed for entire regions, communities, including but not limited to schools, or for specific settings or activities within a health authority or region.

## INFECTION PREVENTION and EXPOSURE CONTROL MEASURES

The Exposure Control Measures are adhered to in the school district to reduce the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19. Our schools support these preventative measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours
- Sharing reliable information from the BCCDC with parents, families and caregivers
- Promoting safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids and signage
- Striving to utilize positive and inclusive approaches that are not punitive or stigmatizing
- Using a trauma-informed lens when planning school activities and events



## SPACE ARRANGEMENT

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

## **STAFF ONLY SPACES**

Staff only spaces can use preferred configurations.

## **SCHOOL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS**

Schools can resume all types of gatherings and events (including staff only gatherings and events), and there are no longer specific capacity limits. Schools and staff should use an inclusive and trauma-informed lens when planning school gatherings and events. See the Visitor Access/Community Use Section for more information on protocols for visitors.

## **PERSONAL ITEMS**

Staff and students can continue to bring personal items to school but will be encouraged not to share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils, vaping devices, wind instruments).

## **SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES and/or Receiving Health Services**

The school district will continue 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. 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.

### **Guidelines for Staff**

Those providing health or education services that require being in close proximity to a student should follow their standard risk assessment methods to determine what PPE is needed for general communicable disease prevention in accordance with routine practices. Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting).

Those providing health services in schools may be receiving different 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 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 based on their or their parent/caregiver's personal choice.

Schools should continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.

## **STUDENT TRANSPORTATION**

### **BUSES**

The following strategies are recommended for student transportation on buses:

- Buses used for transporting students should be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided in the [Cleaning and Disinfecting section](#) of the Provincial guidelines.
- Bus drivers and students should be encouraged to 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.

## CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the transmission of communicable diseases from contaminated objects and surfaces

Classrooms and offices are provided with wipes and food grade disinfecting spray to use throughout the day as required in classrooms. The District has implemented cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces, including washrooms, equipment, tools, common tables, desks, light switches, hand railings and door handles. Those engaged in cleaning have adequate training and materials. The school district has invested in Electrostatic Disinfectors which are extremely effective in sanitizing high touch surfaces.

Frequently touched surfaces in public spaces and washrooms will be cleaned at least once in a 24-hour period by custodial staff.

### Frequently Touched Surfaces:

Frequently touched surfaces include:

- Items used by multiple students and staff including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet and toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, manipulatives and toys.
- Shared equipment such as computer keyboards, and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for Science labs, kitchen equipment for Culinary programs, sewing machines, PE/Sports equipment.
- Appliances staff and students can share such as microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers, or laminators.
- Service Counters in offices and libraries.

Frequently-touched items that are not easily cleaned (e.g. fabric, playdough, sand, foam) can be used as long as hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or paper-based products. Laminated or glossy-paper products and items with plastic covers can be contaminated if handled by someone with COVID-19; however, the risk is low. There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.

## **VISITOR ACCESS/COMMUNITY USE**

Schools should ensure visitors are aware of and follow a school's communicable disease prevention plan, including personal practices. This could include posting information by the entrance of the school, on the school's website and including in communications to students and families.

After hours community use of facilities should occur in alignment with activities permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders.

## **HEALTH AWARENESS AND ILLNESS PRACTICES**

### **HEALTH AWARENESS**

Health awareness reduces the likelihood of a person with a communicable disease coming to school when they are infectious. This includes a person checking regularly they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness (including but not limited to COVID-19 symptoms) to ensure they are not coming to school when they are sick (including if they are unable to participate fully in regular activities due to symptoms of illness).

### **PERSONAL PRACTICES**

#### **HEALTH AWARENESS**

Everyone at school should practice [health awareness](#), including staying home when sick.

#### **MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS**

The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors. A person's choice should be supported and respected. Refer to [Supportive School Environments](#) for more information.

#### **HAND HYGIENE**

Staff and students should be encouraged to practice hand hygiene upon school entry and before/after breaks and eating, using the washroom and using frequently touched shared equipment.

The School District has added sinks in all of the classrooms that did not have a sink to encourage hand hygiene.



## **RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE**

Students and staff should:

- Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

## **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).

## **GENERAL VENTILATION AND AIR CIRCULATION**

Improvements were made to SD 52 facilities to increase fresh air flow and exchange. Natural ventilation (operable windows, etc.) and portable HEPA filter units are used in regularly occupied spaces that do not have mechanical ventilation systems.

## **EMERGENCY and EVACUATION DRILLS**

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

## **COMMUNICATION and TRAINING/ORIENTATION**

The School District will continue to consistently communicate guidance, recommendations and Orders from public health to their school communities.

School districts and independent school authorities must provide COVID-19 safety orientation opportunities for staff when there are updates to communicable disease plans. These should be in consultation with their local unions and staff health & safety representatives.

## **CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

All curriculum, programs and activities will operate in alignment with the school communicable disease prevention plans, including school-led activities held off campus. (e.g. sports academies, community-based programs/courses). Schools will continue to implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices (e.g. cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to the activity.

### **DUAL CREDIT/TRADES IN TRAINING PROGRAMS**

Schools will ensure that students taking dual credit courses or training in trades in post-secondary institutions are aware of, and adhere to the communicable disease plans set out by those institutions.

### **FIELD TRIPS**

Staff should follow existing school district 52 policies and procedures as well as the guidance in the school and district communicable disease plans.

Schools should make every effort to avoid venue/locations that place additional requirements that could prevent a person from being able to participate, particularly students. If this is not possible (and the field trip/travel cannot occur otherwise), schools can require participants to confirm they are able to meet the additional requirements (e.g., are able to provide proof of vaccination).

Students and staff are required to follow the communicable disease prevention plan of places attended on a field trip. Where there is a conflict with a school's communicable disease prevention plan, the more stringent safety protocols should be followed.

### **FOOD/CULINARY PROGRAMS**

Schools can continue to include food preparation as part of learning programs for students. Staff and students will be following the guidelines set out by Work Safe, Food Safe and the BCCDC to ensure cleaning and disinfecting measures as well as hand hygiene are followed.

## **FOOD SERVICES**

Schools will continue to provide food services for the breakfast and lunch programs, including for sale. We will continue to emphasize that food and beverages should not be shared. We will also continue to accept food donations to support learning and the delivery of meal programs and other food access initiatives.

## **FUNDRAISERS**

Schools can continue to offer fundraisers that can be implemented as outlined in the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines. The Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools will continue to guide our practices.

## **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM AND ENTRY**

Information about communicable disease prevention measures that will be in place in schools will be shared with students and their families **prior to school start**. Parents/caregivers will follow the guidelines for Visitors in our schools. We recognize that Kindergarten students are just learning about personal space and this will be an area of learning for them. Hand hygiene will be necessary and effective in adding a layer of protection for the students.

## **MUSIC/PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION/OUTDOOR/FOOD AND CULINARY/THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE/OTHER SHARED EQUIPMENT PROGRAMS**

Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after shared equipment use.

o Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g. instrument mouth pieces, water bottles, utensils) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.

## **SCHOOL LIBRARIES/LEARNING COMMONS**

At this time, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, the distribution or sharing/return of books or paper-based educational resources to students because of COVID-19 will not be limited.

- Students and staff will practice diligent hand hygiene before and after handling shared equipment and resources
- Shared equipment can be used and staff will encourage hand hygiene and use cleaning and disinfection guidelines.

- Sports activities should be held outside whenever possible.
- We will use the [Return to School Sports Plan from BC School Sports](#) for further guidance.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

Students can still engage in work placements in accordance with the current guidelines from Provincial Health and Work Safe along with the ministry [Work Experience Program Guide](#).

## COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN

The school district will provide all communications through regular channels (Synrevoice, website, email, Twitter, and Facebook) for parents and partner groups. All schools will post their site-specific Communicable Disease Plans on their websites.

## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

Students will continue to receive service from school-based counsellors. Referrals to community-based services may also be offered.

The Mental Health Literacy Teacher(s) will continue to support Social Emotional Learning and Mental Health Literacy for students and staff.

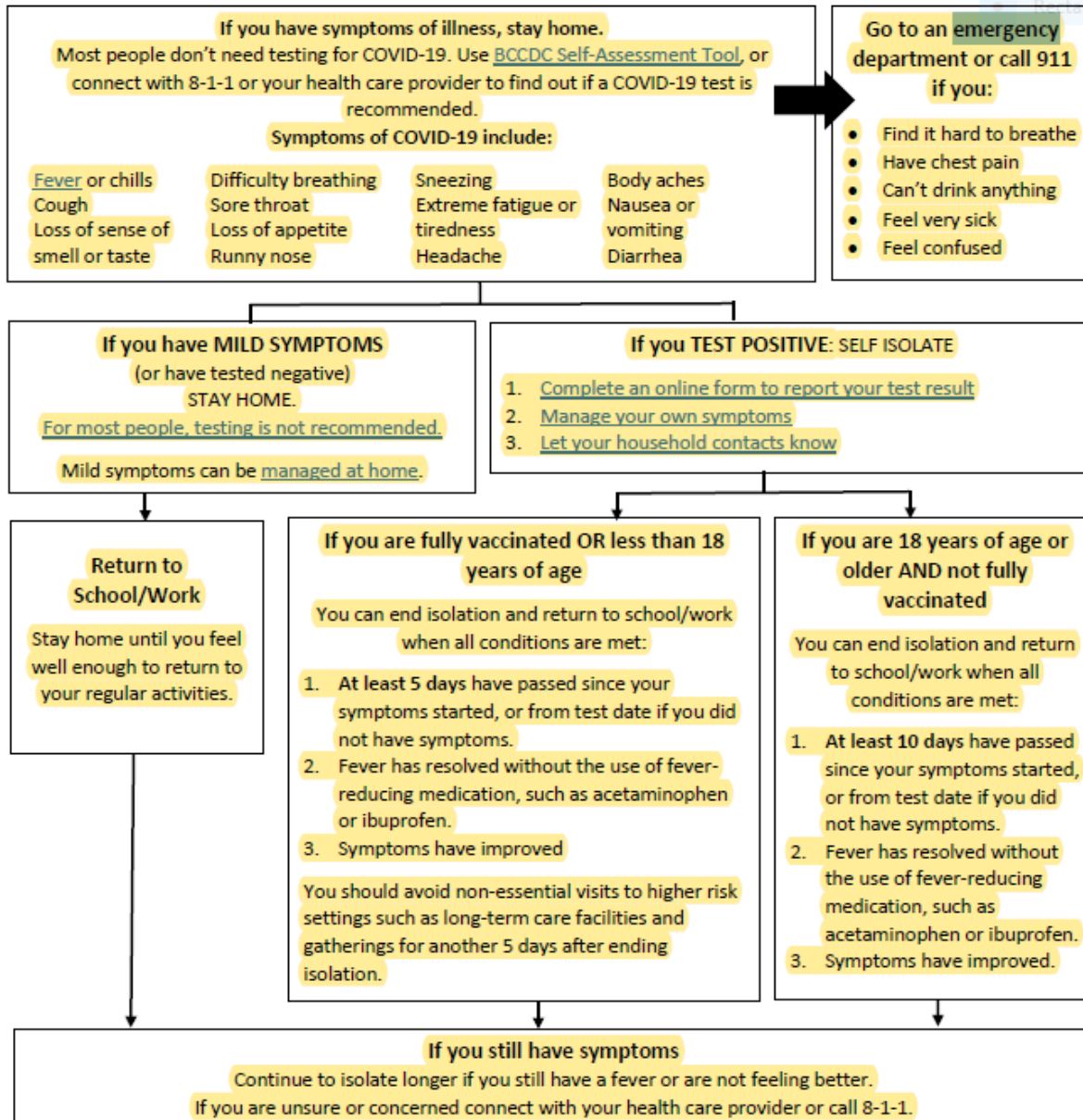
Counselling teams will continue to promote student and staff wellness.

## Appendix A: COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing & Return to School

When a student, staff or other adult can return to school depends on if they have tested positive for COVID-19. The table on the next page is summarized from BCCDC and is accurate as of March, 2022. Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC online [Self-Assessment Tool](#), or call 8-1-1 or their health care provider when they are experiencing symptoms of illness.

BCCDC provides information about COVID-19, including what to do if a person suspects they have the virus, and what actions to take based on a [COVID-19 test result](#).

**Summary: What To Do When Sick**



**What to do if someone is sick in your household:**  
You can continue to attend school if someone in your household is sick and/or self-isolating as long as you do not have any symptoms of illness and feel well. This includes if they have tested positive for COVID-19. Ensure you closely monitor yourself (or your child) for symptoms of illness and stay home if you feel unwell. The best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. Vaccines are available for anyone ages 5 and up. Register now at: [Getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca](https://getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca)