

School District 52 Prince Rupert

Back to School Communicable Disease Plan

2021 – 2022*

***See Appendix B for the Summary of
Key Updates – Effective March 19, 2022**

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This plan (effective the first day of Spring Break, March 19, 2022) has been developed in alignment with the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K – 12 Setting (Updated March, 10,2022) 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](#)
- [K-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines-addendum.pdf \(gov.bc.ca\)](#)
- <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.

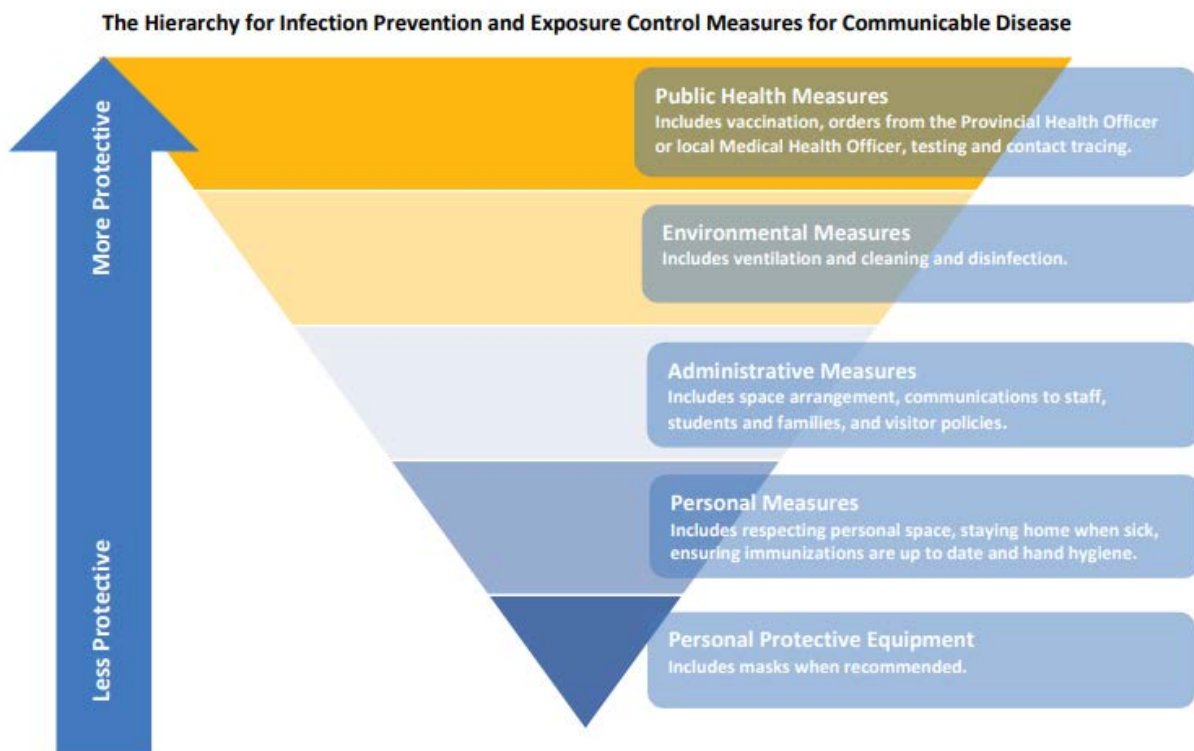
REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

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, though should still consider implementing strategies to create space between people and to support students and staff using a trauma-informed approach:

- Remind students and staff about respecting others personal space. Use visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- Use available space to spread people out, both in learning environments and for gatherings and events, where possible.
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop off times.
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.
- Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school.

STAFF ONLY SPACES

Experience to date underscores the importance of COVID-19 prevention among adults, as well as students, in the school setting. We are using the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) to guide staff-only spaces within schools. [WorkSafeBC Guidance for Workplaces](#) will be used to determine what measures should be in place for non-school spaces such as Board Offices and Maintenance Buildings.

The following strategies will be implemented:

- Floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding (e.g. in staff rooms, by the photocopier, etc.)
- For meetings and professional development gatherings, room occupancy limits, spreading staff out and virtual options will be applied.

SCHOOL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

For school gatherings and events that bring together multiple classes or other groupings of students (e.g., school assemblies, multiple classes doing a single activity, etc.) from the same school (but members of the school community beyond staff, students and necessary volunteers are not attending), there is not a specific capacity limit.

On March 10th 2022, the Provincial Health Officer announced the Gathering and Events Order requiring proof of vaccination for certain community-led gatherings and events would be lifted end of day on April 7th, 2022.

While that Order is in place, indoor school extracurricular and social gatherings and events that bring together members of the school community beyond staff, students and necessary volunteers (e.g., an arts club performance, community fair, etc.), or that occur between schools (e.g., a music festival, a sports game or tournament, etc.) should not exceed 50 people or 50%

operating capacity (whichever is greater) and proof of vaccination requirements should not be implemented.

When the Gatherings and Events Order requiring proof of vaccination for community-led gatherings and events is lifted, all school gatherings and events can return to 100% capacity.

School-led Gatherings and Events with Visitors	
While PHO Gatherings & Events Order is in place	After PHO Gatherings & Events Order is lifted (expected end of day April 7, 2022)
Schools should not implement proof of vaccination requirements and indoor capacity should not exceed 50 people or 50% operating capacity (whichever is greater)	All school gatherings and events can return to 100% capacity

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.

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/CARPOOLING

Bus drivers, teachers, parents and students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus or carpooling.

The following strategies are recommended for student transportation on buses or when carpooling:

- 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 should clean their hands often, including before and after completing trips. Drivers are encouraged to regularly use alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol during trips.
- Bus drivers, teachers and students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. **If a child is sick, they must not take the bus or go to school.**
- Students should clean their hands before and after taking the bus.
- Spread passengers out if empty seats are available.
- Open windows when the weather permits.
- Bus drivers and students should be encouraged to practice respiratory etiquette while on the bus.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Our schools are cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings Guidelines.

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 can return to routine pick up/drop off practices, though should still consider strategies to prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off time. Parents/caregivers and other visitors should respect others' personal space while on school grounds, including outside.

After hours community use of facilities is allowed in alignment with other health and safety measures:

☑ Use must occur in line with those activities permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders

☑ Diligent hand hygiene

☑ Respiratory etiquette

☑ Ensuring participants stay home if they are feeling ill

☑ Where possible, limiting building access to only those areas required for the purpose of the activity

ILLNESS and SELF-ASSESSMENT POLICIES and PROTOCOLS

DAILY HEALTH CHECK

A daily health check is a tool to reduce the likelihood of a person with COVID-19 coming to school when they are infectious.

- Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the Daily Health & What to Do When Sick at <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220121/daily-health-check--jan-2022.pdf>
- Staff and other adults must complete a daily health check prior to entering the school.
- If a student, staff or adult is sick, they must not enter the school.

Schools and school facility administrators will put protocols in place at all school district facilities to ensure;

- Staff, parents, caregivers and visitors know they are responsible to complete the health check before entering school/work sites and stay home if they are sick
- Parents, caregivers have completed the daily health check with their child and keep them home if they are sick.
- Procedures are established for students or staff members who become sick at work to go home as soon as possible.
- Procedures are established for students and staff to return to school/work after being sick.

Schools and the school district will not require a health care provider note to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodations.

STAYING HOME, SELF-ISOLATION AND SYMPTOMS

Stay Home when Required to Self-Isolate

Students, staff or other adults must stay home if they are required to self-isolate. Additional information on self-isolation requirements and support is available from the BCCDC.

Symptoms of Illness and Return to School

Students, staff or other adults should stay at home when sick, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction to and the spread of COVID-19 in schools. The following resources provide guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness:

- [When to get a COVID-19 test](#)
- [Daily Health Check & What To Do When Sick Tool](#)
- Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC online [Self-Assessment Tool](#), call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.

When a staff, student or other adult can return to school depends on [they have tested positive for COVID-19 and/or improvement of their symptoms](#).

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g. seasonal allergies) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. They do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and should not be required to provide a health-care provider note. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a healthcare provider.

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness [and/or has tested positive for COVID-19, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves](#). BCCDC has more information for those considered a [close contact](#), which are usually people from the same household.

HAND HYGIENE

Rigorous hand-washing with plain soap and water or using an effective hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness. The following guidelines will be followed in our schools:

- Diligent hand hygiene which means washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (water temperature does not change the effectiveness)
- Facilitation of regular opportunities to practice hand hygiene:
 - portable hand-washing or sanitization stations where sinks are not available
 - hand-sanitization is encouraged upon entry to the school, before/after breaks, using the washroom and using gym/playground equipment.
- Handwashing posters are displayed at handwashing and sanitization sites.
- Staff and students have received training about effective handwashing as well as to avoid touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.

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 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) – 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.

Schools should continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one, or who become ill at school.

IMPROVEMENTS to SCHOOL VENTILATION SYSTEMS

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute to the spread of the virus. However, improvements have been made to SD 52 facilities to increase fresh air flow and exchange.

EMERGENCY and EVACUATION DRILLS

Schools will continue to practice emergency and evacuation drills, including the six required annual fire drills per year. Schools will modify current drill procedures to adhere to health and safety guidelines.

COMMUNICATION and TRAINING/ORIENTATION

The School District will continue to consistently communicate guidance, recommendations and Orders from regional Medical Health Officers and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO), including COVID-19 resources.

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 Provincial K – 12 Health and Safety Guidelines, 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 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).

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. 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 PROGRAMS

All classes, programs and activities will continue to occur where;

- K – 12 students and staff are required to wear masks when indoors, and a barrier is not present. Masks can be temporarily removed while engaging in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument), but must be worn while singing.
- Cleaning and disinfecting guidelines will be followed for shared equipment
- Hand hygiene will be followed
- Music Teachers will access further guidance from [Guidance for Music Classes in BC During Covid-19](#).

PHYSICAL and HEALTH EDUCATION(PHE)/OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Spread out students and staff within available space and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.

Cleaning, disinfecting and hand hygiene are two extra layers of protection that will be practiced when students and staff are sharing equipment.

PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds are a safe environment. Staff will ensure students are practicing proper hand hygiene, and encourage minimal physical contact between students on the playground.

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

SCHOOL SPORTS

Programs, activities (intramurals, sports team practices, games), sports academies will continue in alignment with the guidance in this document.

- Following relevant local, regional and provincial public health recommendations and orders for community gatherings and events
- Use all available space to spread students and staff out as much as possible.
- 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.

THEATRE, FILM AND DANCE PROGRAMS

Intra- and inter-school programs, activities and events (e.g., plays, concerts) can continue in alignment with the guidance within this document and the following:

- Capacity should follow that outlined for school gatherings.
- Spread out students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities and programs, as much as possible.
- Shared equipment will be cleaned and disinfected as per guidelines and proper hand hygiene will be practiced

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.

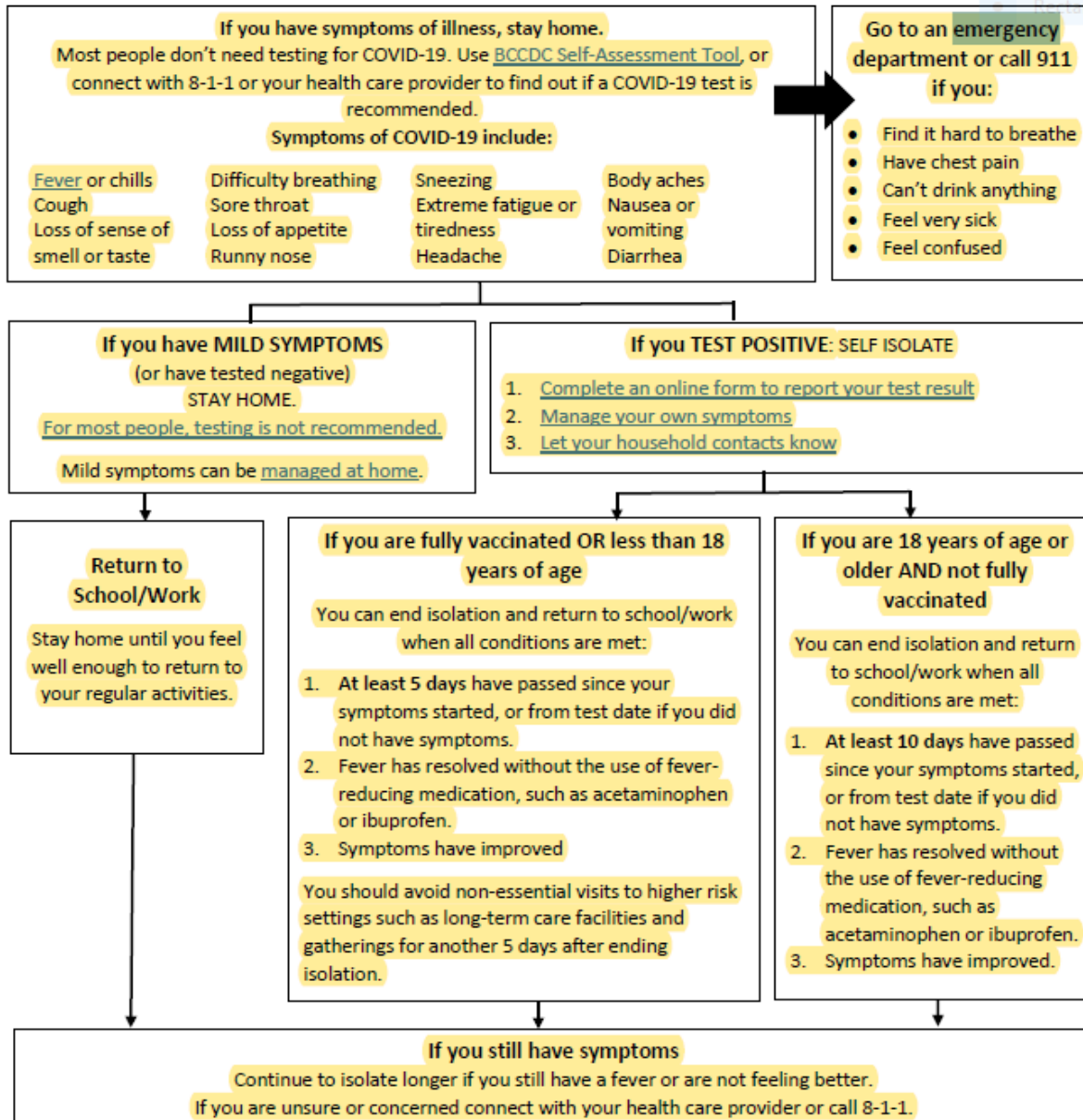
Counselling teams will continue to promote student and staff wellness.

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

APPENDIX B: Effective March 19, 2022

Summary of Key Updates – Effective the First Day of Spring Break

Space Arrangement	Schools can return to classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches, though should still consider strategies to create space between people.
School Gatherings and Events	<p>For events with visitors (e.g., parent/caregiver spectators):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should not exceed 50% capacity and proof of vaccination should not be implemented while the PHO Gatherings and Events Order is in place. • Can return to 100% capacity when the PHO Gatherings and Events Order is lifted (expected end of day April 7, 2022). <p>Schools should make every effort to avoid venue/locations that place additional requirements that could prevent a person from being able to participate.</p>
Visitor Access/Community Use	Schools can return to routine sign in/sign out practices. Schools do not need to keep a list of the date, names and contact information of visitors for communicable disease prevention purposes.
Personal Protective Equipment	The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice. A person's choice is to be supported and respected.
Field Trips	Schools should make every effort to avoid venue/locations that place additional requirements that could prevent a person from being able to participate. If the trip cannot occur otherwise, schools can require participants to confirm they are able to meet additional requirements (e.g., are able to provide proof of vaccination).