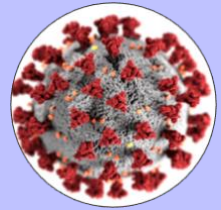


**School District No. 59**  
**COVID-19**  
**Communicable Disease**  
**Protocols for Schools**

K-12 Education Recovery Plan



(Revised January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022)

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

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# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## Overview

The Ministry of Education has shifted from a pandemic response to a recovery. This recovery is guided by health and safety guidelines, measures, protocols, and orders as well as the principles developed for continuity of learning during the pandemic. This Protocol is meant to address a return to face to face instruction.

### **Before a child is able to attend school, it is expected that parents/caregivers will:**

- complete a daily health check with their child, checking for symptoms of COVID-19 each day prior to dropping their child off at the school site. Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the [K-12 Health Check](#) app for daily assessment of symptoms, or reference the SD59 Daily Health Check Form. The parental check will include checking for fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea and vomiting, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue, headache, body aches and diarrhea.
- **Keep child at home when sick.**
- provide their child with a water bottle (water fountains may not be available).

### **All Students in Grades K – 12**

- All students in grades K - 12 are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses.

## **COVID-19 Preventative Measures for Staff**



- Complete the active daily health check, checking for symptoms of COVID-19 each day prior to coming to work. Staff can utilize the [BC COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms, or reference the SD59 Daily Health Check Form. The health check will include checking for fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea and vomiting, sore throat, loss of appetite, extreme fatigue, headache, body aches and diarrhea. School and district administrators are required to verify that staff and other adult health checks have been completed before they enter the school.
- **Stay home when you are sick.**
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, sneezing, going to the washroom, before eating or preparing food, and entering the building. If sinks are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their learning group, except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking
- Staff will work with the students to help them understand and practice coughing and sneezing etiquette; reminding students to cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue, and then throw out the tissue if used and wash hands or use hand sanitizer afterwards.
- Staff will work with the students to help them understand and practice avoiding touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through. 2 metre physical distancing is not required.

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plan Reviews**

Schools must regularly review COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plans and should do so with their Site Committees and address areas where there are identified gaps in implementation. Schools are to use the BCCDC COVID-19 School Communicable Disease Checklist (See Appendix C) to support these plan reviews.

## **Learning Groups**

Public Health no longer recommends Learning Groups. Schools should use best efforts to mitigate student mixing.

## **COVID-19 Procedures for Staff - Multiple Sites**

In order to support students, families and staff, School District #59 has many staff who work at multiple sites including but not limited to the district learning services team (speech, elementary counsellors, educational psychologist, literacy teachers, etc.) and on call teachers (TTOCs and TOCs) and on call educational assistants (EA). These staff work in multiple schools and with multiple learning groups.

1. Staff who work at multiple sites are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking
  - Outdoors
2. When entering schools, staff who work at multiple sites must follow all school COVID-19 protocols and procedures (daily health checks, entrance and location routines, hand hygiene, sign in, etc.). Staff must familiarize themselves with these protocols before going to a school.
3. When possible, staff who work at multiple sites can participate virtually in meetings with others if it meets their job requirements and responsibilities.
4. Staff who work at multiple sites must schedule their visits with schools to ensure space and availability for working with students, families and staff. Schools will designate the contact person (for example: administrator, learning assistance teacher, etc.). In addition, they need to coordinate with other staff when possible to limit the number of outside staff in a school at a given time.
5. Staff who work at multiple sites must keep a detailed log, including names (first and last) of anyone with whom they worked (students, families, staff, community agencies, etc.)
6. TTOC, TOC and EA substitutes will need to follow all COVID-19 Communicable Disease Protocols:
  - a. District administration/staff and/or school-based administrators will meet with TTOC, TOC and EA substitutes to review district and school COVID-19 Communicable Disease Protocols prior to working at school sites.
  - b. TTOCs, TOCs, and EA substitutes are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools at all times, except when:
    - There is a barrier in place
    - Eating or drinking
    - Outdoors

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## **COVID-19 Procedures for Community Agencies**

School and district staff also work closely with community agencies such as the Ministry of Children and Families, Children and Youth Mental Health, Children and Youth with Special Needs, etc. in order to support student and family needs. These community agencies are an integral part of the school team for many students and families and may need to come into the school to be a part of this team.

1. When entering schools, community agencies must follow all school COVID-19 Communicable Disease Plan protocols and procedures (daily health checks, entrance routines, hand hygiene, sign in, etc.). Schools must ensure that the community agency is familiar with these protocols prior to coming to the school.
2. When possible, schools may connect with the community agency virtually.
3. Schools will designate a contact person (for example: administrator, learning assistance teacher, etc.) to schedule times and locations to meet with outside agency in the school building.
4. Community agency staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools at all times, except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking
5. Community agencies will be asked to keep a detailed log including names (first and last) of anyone with whom they worked (students, families, staff, etc.) during their time at the school.

## **COVID-19 Procedures for Students with Diversabilities**

Supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student. When staff are working with a student indoors, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield). Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used as part of the personal care routine normally encountered in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting).

When working with students where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, options include having the staff member wear a mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth. More information on masks and face coverings is available on the BCCDC website.

- Students in Grades K to 12 are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering when receiving services indoors and a barrier is not present.

In addition to a non-medical mask, 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.

Schools will have non-medical masks and face shields available for staff.

- a. Staff are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools at all times, except when:
  - There is a barrier in place
  - Eating or drinking

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

## School Gatherings and Events

Hold school gatherings and events (e.g., assemblies, parent-teacher interviews, etc.) virtually.

If gatherings and events must be in-person (e.g., inter-school sports game, theatre productions), minimize the number of people in attendance as much as possible, do not exceed 50% operating capacity, and do not allow spectators.

For indoor spaces without a defined operating capacity, schools should determine a capacity limit that is at most half the number of individuals that would be within the space for that activity or event if prevention measures weren't in place.

## Staff Only Spaces

Hold staff-only gatherings (e.g., staff meetings, in-service and professional development activities) virtually.

For indoor staff spaces (i.e. staffrooms, photocopy rooms, etc.) without a defined operating capacity, schools should determine a capacity limit that is at most half the number of individuals that would be within the space if prevention measure weren't in place.

## Visitors

Limit visitors to those that are supporting activities that are of direct benefit to student learning and wellbeing (E.g., teacher candidates, immunizers, meal program volunteers, etc.).

Schools can leave front doors unlocked for visitor access but must encourage visitors to make appointments.

Schools are responsible for ensuring that visitors are aware of communicable disease protocols and requirements, and have completed a daily health check, prior to entering the school.

- Information on communicable disease protocols and requirements for visitors should be posted by the entrance to the school, on the school's website and included in communications to students and families.

Schools must have a sign in/sign out process in place for all visitors and staff who are not typically onsite (e.g. TTOCs, itinerant teachers/specialists, maintenance or IT personnel, district/authority administrators).

- **All visitors must wear a non-medical mask when they are inside the school.**
- Where possible, visitor access should be limited to those areas required for the purpose of the visit (e.g. school office for drop-off/pick-up of items, gymnasium for a sports event, etc.), and parents/caregivers should be encouraged to drop-off/pick-up students outside of the school.
- Parents/caregivers and other visitors should respect others' personal space 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, including wearing a non-medical mask when required
- 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

# COVID-19 COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PROTOCOL: SCHOOL SITE PROCEDURES

Community users are responsible for checking vaccination status of participants where required, and collecting and names and contact information of participants to support contact tracing activities.

## Student Drop Off/Pick Up and Breaks:

- Schools will implement staggered lunches and breaks to mitigate student mixing.
- Students will use designated entrance(s) and exit(s). These are site-specific.
- Students will maintain physical distancing as they enter/exit the school.
- Students will wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when they enter/exit the school.
- Parents must drop off and pick up their students at their designated time (site specific).
- Schools will have further site-specific procedures for student arrival/exit at school.
- Schools will develop site specific procedures for students arriving and departing by bus.
  - Where possible, bus line up areas should be set up to prevent crowding.

## Playgrounds and Outdoor Activities

- Take students outside more often.
- Reassure students, parents and caregivers that playgrounds are a safe environment, and encourage appropriate personal hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play.
- Spread people out into different areas.
- Limit the number of students on certain pieces of playground equipment.

## Washrooms

- Schools will develop a washroom use plan for students to prevent crowding.
- Regularly review the COVID-19 handwashing guidelines (as posted) with students.

## Food for Students

- Students must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before handling food.
- Students are not to share food items or contact food items that belong to others.
- Microwave ovens must be treated like other frequently touched items and cleaned and disinfected.
- Students should consume food items at their individual designated work area and clean the area when finished.
- All beverage and food containers should be clearly labeled with the student name.

## Workspaces for Students

- Avoid close greetings (**e.g. hugs, handshakes**). Regularly remind students about keeping their **“hands to yourself”**.
- Learning spaces are arranged to maximize the space available and to minimize people directly facing one another (where possible).
- **Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.**
- Incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff.
  - For younger students, adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
  - For adolescent students, minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.



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- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and washrooms.
- Regular learning activities that bring together multiple classes (e.g., examinations, physical education) should be spread out across multiple locations/spaces whenever possible, but do not need to be reduced in size.

## **Physical Education**

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

K-12 staff and students in Grades K to 12 are required to wear masks during PHE/outdoor program classes when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present.

- Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity physical activities (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these activities is left to students' choice. Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity physical activities outdoors whenever possible.
- For low intensity activities (e.g. yoga, walking), students are required to wear masks when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present.
- Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of this document.
  - Students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after using frequently touched pieces of equipment (e.g. before and after a sports game using a shared ball), as well as proper respiratory etiquette.
  - Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g. water bottles) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.

Why are masks not required during high intensity physical activity? During high intensity physical activity, respiration rates are increased (resulting in a wet mask) and the wearer is more likely to touch their face and adjust the mask frequently. These factors lessen the protective value a mask may offer. In addition, a wet mask is more difficult to breathe through; those wearing masks during high intensity activities should change them as soon as they become wet.

## **Music Classes**

K-12 staff and students in Grades K to 12 must 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.

Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per Cleaning and Disinfecting guidelines and students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after music equipment use.

- Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g. instrument mouth pieces) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.

## **School Sports**

Intra and inter-school programs, activities (e.g. intramurals, sports team practices, games), sports and events can continue in alignment with the following guidance:

- Extracurricular sports tournaments must be paused.

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- Sports tournaments are a single or multi-day gathering of three or more sports teams, who come together outside regular league play for the purpose of teams playing against multiple other teams, but does not include:
  - A gathering where team members compete on an individual basis against members of other teams, or
  - A gathering where the result will decide if a team will advance to play in a national or international competition.
- Requirements of relevant local, regional and provincial public health recommendations and Orders for community gatherings and events.
- Masks are worn by K-12 staff, other adults and students in grades K to 12 when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present.
  - Students are not required to wear masks during high-intensity sport activities (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these activities is left to students' personal choice. Staff are encouraged to move high-intensity sport activities outdoors whenever possible.
  - For low intensity sport activities (e.g. stretching, golf), students are required to wear masks when they are indoors and a barrier is not present.
- Use all available space to spread students and staff out as much as possible.

Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per the guidelines in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of this document.

- Students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after using frequently touched pieces of equipment (e.g. before and after a sports game using a shared ball), as well as proper respiratory etiquette.
- Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g. water bottles) should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.

Sport activities should be held outside whenever possible.

All non-school staff volunteers, community coaches, organizers and officials, age 22 and older must be fully vaccinated. Proof of vaccination is required.

See the Return to School Sports Plan from BC School Sports for additional information. In the case of any discrepancy in guidance, schools and school districts are expected to follow the Ministry of Education guidelines outlined in this document.

## **Emergency Evacuation Drill**

Schools should continue to practice emergency (e.g. fire, lockdown) and evacuation drills, including the six required annual fire drills as per BC Fire Code 2.8.3.2, and modify current procedures to adhere to health and safety guidelines (e.g., providing additional muster spots to prevent crowding/congestion).

- Staff should be notified in advance of emergency/evacuation drills (i.e. no "surprise" drills)
- The BC Fire Code requires schools to conduct "total evacuation fire drills" involving all occupants in the building. Partial evacuations involving smaller groups of students would not comply with the fire drill requirements of the Fire Code.
- Schools must continue to update their fire safety plans on an annual basis, as per the BC Fire Code, to "ensure it takes account of the changes in use and other characteristics of the building" (such as current pandemic-related protocols). School fire safety plans, including fire drill procedures, should be developed in cooperation with the local fire department and other regulatory authorities.

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- Emergency procedures may require modification to adhere to communicable disease plans (e.g. designating additional muster locations to reduce crowding where required, making efforts to minimize involuntary physical contact between participants, etc.). Schools may also need to consult with their local medical health officer for guidance on current public health Orders, which may affect site specific emergency and evacuation procedures.
  - In the event of an actual emergency, emergency procedures must take precedence over COVID-19 preventive measures.

## **Staff Will Promote Good Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette with Students**

### **Reinforce and remind the rule of “hands to yourself”.**

Students will wash hands or use hand sanitizer, particularly:

- When they arrive at school and before they go home.
- Before/after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).
- Between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).
- Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student’s desk or locker).
- After using the washroom.
- After handling common resources/equipment/supplies or pets.
- Before and after using an indoor learning, space used by multiple learning groups (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.)
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

## **Staff Should Wash Hands Frequently**

Staff should wash hands or use hand sanitizer:

- When they arrive at school, before they go home. Before/after breaks (e.g. recess, lunch).
- Before and after eating and drinking.
- Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating.
- Before and after giving medication to a student or self.
- After using the washroom.
- After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).
- After cleaning tasks, or handling garbage.
- After removing gloves.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.



## **Staffroom and Breaks**

- Staff are required to wear masks indoors (See PPE section for more guidance).
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before you go into the staffroom.
- For indoor staff spaces (i.e. staffrooms, photocopy rooms, etc.) without a defined operating capacity, schools should determine a capacity limit that is at most half the number of individuals that would be within the space if prevention measure weren't in place.
- Bring a lunch/snack that does not require a lot of preparation (to limit microwave use, surface use, utensil use, etc.).

- Clean the areas, surfaces, appliances, etc. that you use in the staffroom.
- Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer again before you go back to your classroom, office or workspace.
- Do not share food or drink.

### **Other Shared or Specialty Spaces**

- Administrators will develop procedures for use of other shared spaces within their individual buildings (libraries, gyms, shops, etc.). Procedures for these spaces must be in line with District protocols.

### **Maintain Cleaning/Disinfecting Procedures**

The following frequency guidelines must be adhered to when cleaning and disinfecting:

- General cleaning of the premises, and cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces, **at least once in a 24-hour period.**
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Empty garbage containers daily.

The requirements for daily cleaning and disinfecting outlined above do not apply to spaces/equipment that are not being used by students, staff or visitors. Many schools may have implemented procedures such as sign-in sheets posted next to room entrances that help custodial staff focus cleaning/disinfecting activities on those spaces that have been utilized by staff or students.

Frequently touched surfaces include:

- Items used by larger numbers of students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles.
  - Limiting access to water fountains is no longer recommended. Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after use.
  - **School communicable disease plans should not include restricting access to water, washrooms or other spaces that support student learning and well-being (e.g. gymnasiums, libraries, support rooms, etc.). Schools should return to full operation of all spaces in alignment with the protocols outlined in this document.**
- Shared equipment (e.g. computer keyboards and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for science labs, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing machines and sewing equipment for home economic programs, PE/sports equipment, music equipment, etc.)
- Appliances (staff and students can share the use of appliances and other objects, but treat items like microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers or laminators as frequently touched surfaces)
- Service counters (e.g., office service window, library circulation desk)

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, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use. Carpets and rugs (e.g. in Kindergarten and StrongStart classes) can also be used.

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g. children's books or magazines) and items with plastic covers (e.g. DVDs) can be contaminated if handled by a person 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.

## **Universal Precautions**

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after you have had contact with blood or other body fluids, after going to the washroom, before preparing or eating food, and after removing latex gloves. Use hand lotion to help keep your hands from becoming chapped or irritated. Intact skin is your first defense against infection!
- Wear gloves when in contact with blood or other body fluids, excrement or non-intact skin.
- Wear gloves when in contact with articles such as clothing or surfaces that have been contaminated with blood or body fluids.
- Replace torn or punctured gloves immediately.
- DO NOT clean up blood or other bodily fluids from surfaces, call administrator or speak with the on-site custodian regarding clean-up
- If you have cuts or open sores on your skin, cover them with a plastic bandage.

## **Illness and Self-Assessment Policies and Protocols**

The School District has developed local protocols that:

- Ensure staff and other adults (e.g. parents, caregivers, visitors) entering the school/worksites are aware of their responsibility to complete a daily health check prior to entering the school/worksites (e.g. emails/letters to parents and staff, orientation video, signage on doors) and to stay home if they are sick.
- Clearly communicate with parents/caregivers their responsibility to complete a daily health check with their child, and keep them home from school if they are sick.
  - Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work to be sent home as soon as possible.
  - Some students or staff may not be able to be picked up immediately. As such, schools should have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably and is separated from others (at least 2M), and provide the student or staff with a non-medical mask if (unless they are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms and are at risk of vomiting).
    - Schools must provide supervision for younger children. Supervising staff should wear a non-medical mask and face shield if they are unable to maintain physical distance, 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 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.

- Establish procedures that allow for students and staff to return to school/work in line with the guidance in the Staying Home, Self-Isolation and Symptoms section.

This is to ensure students and staff who are not sick are not kept out of school/away from work longer than necessary.

- Schools and districts should not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practices).

## **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 and caregivers must assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.
  - Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the provincial K-12 Health Check app for daily assessment of symptoms.
- Staff and other adults must complete a daily health check prior to entering the school.
- If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.
- See Appendix B-1, B-2, and B-3.

## **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.**

### **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:

- Parents/caregivers and students can use the [K-12 Health Check](#) app.
- Staff and adults can refer to the BCCDC's [When to get tested for COVID-19](#)
- 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 the type of symptoms they experienced (as indicated in the [K-12 Health Check](#) app and the BCCDC "[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)" resource), if a COVID-19 test is recommended, and the type of illness they had (e.g. COVID-19 or other illness). **See Appendix A – COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing and Return to School for more information. If a student or staff member has tested positive for COVID-19, the following BCCDC resources provide guidance on what to do when sick and how to notify close contacts: I Tested Positive for COVID-19, and Instructions for Close Contacts (Appendix E and F).**

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 health-care provider.

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 COVID-19, the asymptomatic student/staff should follow the BCCDC guidance on self-isolation and when they may return to school in Instructions for Close Contacts ([Appendix F](#)).

## **Northern Health Online Clinic and Information Line: [1-844-645-7811](tel:1-844-645-7811)**

### **Protocol if a Student/Staff Develops Symptoms of Illness at School**

If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school, schools will:

- Provide the student/staff with a non-medical mask if they don't have one (exceptions should be made for students and staff who cannot wear masks for medical and/or disability-related reasons).
- Provide the student/staff with a space where they can wait comfortably that is separated from others.
  - The student is to be supervised and cared for, when separated.
- Make arrangements for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible.
  - Contact the student's parent/caregiver with a request to have their child picked up as soon as possible.
- Clean and disinfect the areas the student/staff used.
- Request that the student/staff stay home until COVID-19 has been excluded and symptoms have resolved.

**Students, staff or other adults should stay home when sick.**

### **Protocol in the Event of a Confirmed Covid-19 Case in a School**

The emergence of the more transmissible Omicron variant of COVID-19 has necessitated changes in public health management. With higher levels of community transmission, a shorter virus incubation period, and the increased use of rapid antigen testing, contact tracing and close contact notification by public health is no longer effective to minimize spread of COVID-19.

Public health has transitioned to individual self-management (i.e., individuals care for themselves, engaging with health care providers when needed), with public health focused on identifying and responding to larger clusters and outbreaks. Individuals who test positive are to notify those they live with or have had intimate contact with. **They do not need to notify the school or others at school.**

Going forward, schools are to monitor their attendance to determine if a public health-determined threshold for a grade or school has been met. If met, schools will send a notification to the school community indicating the threshold has been met and that they are following up with public health for further investigation.

There is no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health-care professionals.

The District and school personnel must not provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school, including if they display symptoms of COVID-19, unless directed to by public health.

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

The [PHO Order – Face Coverings](#) requires all students, staff and visitors to wear a mask indoors at school. Everyone who is able to (i.e., does not have a mask exemption) must wear a mask.

Personal protective equipment (including masks) can provide an additional layer of protection. Non-medical masks and face coverings (masks) have a role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. They provide some protection to the wearer and to those around them.

In the event a regional or provincial public health recommendation or Order requires stricter non-medical mask use than what is outlined in this document, that recommendation or Order should be followed.

Those wearing masks should still continue to respect others personal space. Masks should not be used in place of the other safety measures detailed in this document.

### **K-12 Staff**

All K-12 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses.

### **Supporting Students with Complex Needs**

Supporting students with complex behaviours, medical complexities or receiving delegated care may require staff providing health services or other health care providers to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a medically complex or immune suppressed student.

- People providing these services in schools must wear a mask (medical or non-medical) when providing services and the service cannot be provided from behind a physical barrier. Additional PPE over and above that needed for routine practices and the use of a medical or non-medical mask is not necessary.
- 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

### **Students in Grades K-12**

All students in grades K-12 are required to wear a mask or face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses.

**Parents requesting a mask exemption for their child must submit a Student Mask Exemption Request Form (See Appendix D). Mask exemptions will not be honoured without submission of this form.**

### **Exemptions for Staff and Students**

The guidance outlined above regarding mask requirements does not apply to staff and students in the following circumstances:

- To a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons;
- To a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
- If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. playing a wind instrument, engaging in high-intensity physical activity, etc.);



- If a person is eating or drinking;
- If a person is behind a barrier; or
- While providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements is important.

Those with mask exemptions must continue to follow any strategies identified to reinforce and enhance other safety measures.

Those not able to wear a mask all day continue to be encouraged to wear one as much as they're able to.

Administrators and staff use positive and inclusive approaches, aligned with existing professional practices to address non-compliant behaviour for those able to wear masks. For those with mask exemptions, administrators and staff support other strategies identified to reinforce and enhance other safety measures (as outlined in the Planning Resource: Mask Exemptions).

For those with mask exemptions, alternative strategies identified are adjusted if needed, based on the additional prevention measures.

Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm if staff or students cannot wear a mask.

There will be no mask wearing exemptions for visitors or parents in our schools. If visitors/parents state that they will not/cannot wear a mask, offer to meet them via phone, via video conference, or outdoors.

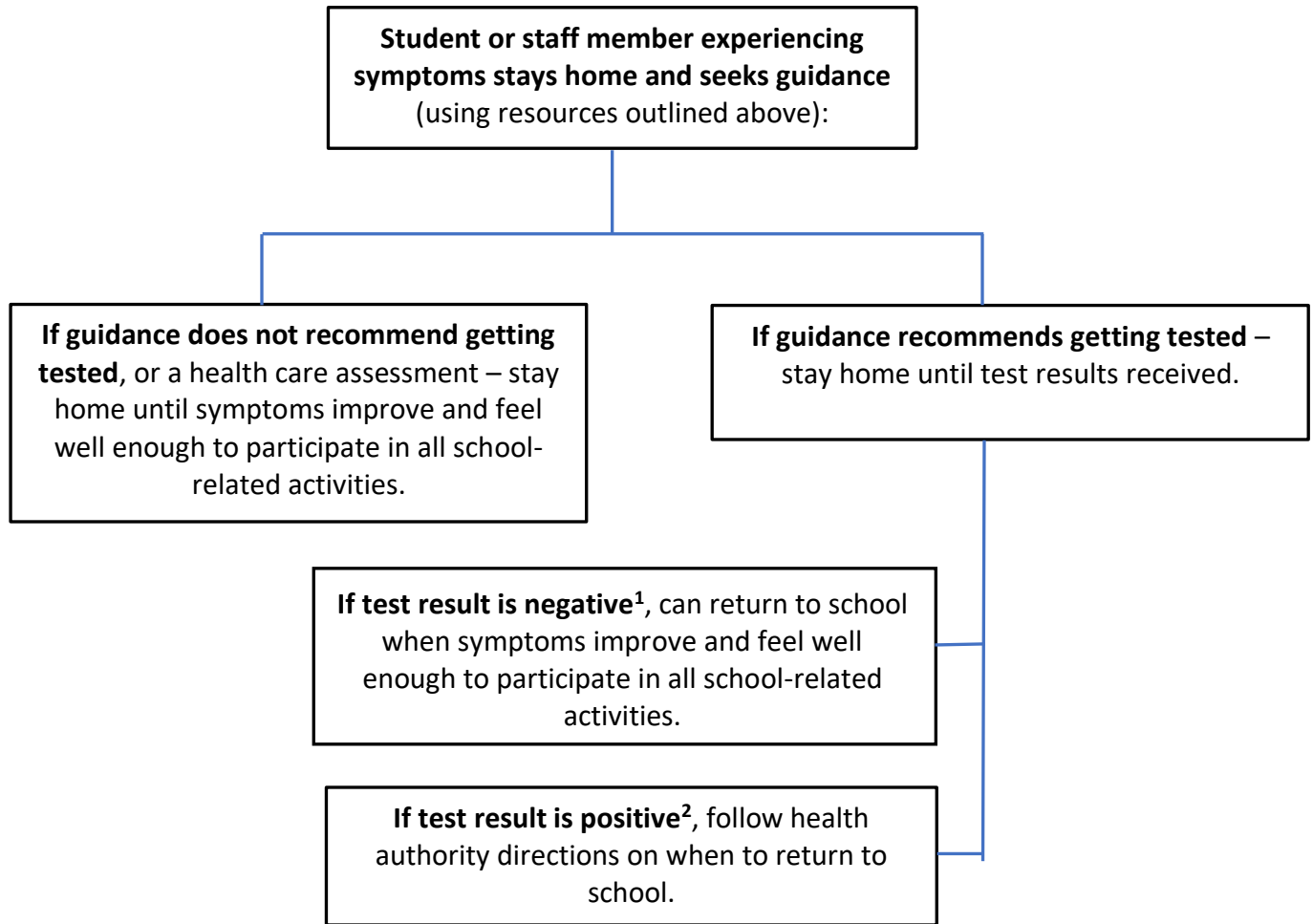
This "no mask exemption for visitors protocol" in SD59 schools is a result of the high COVID-19 case counts and low vaccination rates in the Peace River South District. This protocol will be reviewed and is subject to change as COVID-19 case count numbers decrease and vaccination rates increase.

## **Supporting Documents:**

- **BC's K-12 Education Recovery Plan**: Updated August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020 provides direction to boards of education and independent school authorities to deliver educational programs and supports in line with provincial pandemic recovery efforts in the 2021/22 school year by:
- **Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Setting**: Updated October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to provide detailed information and guidelines pertaining to health and safety in K-12 schools.  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf>
- **BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings**: Updated October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 to provide health and safety standards for schools to operate.  
[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID\\_public\\_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf)
- BC Ministry of Education **COVID-19 Planning Resource: Mask Exemptions**: Updated November 2021.
- **BCCDC Addendum – Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools: Updated Decemebr 29<sup>th</sup>, 2021**
- **Ministry of Education Addendum – Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings: Updated December 29, 2021**

## **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. See the K-12 Health Check app and BCCDC When to get tested for COVID-19 resource for specific guidance. Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC on Self-Assessment Tol or call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.



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. Visit the BCDCC website for more information on negative test results.

## **Appendix B: Daily Health Check for Students (Parents)**

### **Daily Health Check**

Updated January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Individuals must perform a daily health check and follow directions to stay home:

Symptoms	What To Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fever/Chills</li><li>• Cough</li><li>• Loss of sense of smell or taste</li><li>• Difficulty breathing</li><li>• Sore throat</li><li>• Loss of appetite</li><li>• Runny Nose</li><li>• Sneezing</li><li>• Extreme fatigue or tiredness</li><li>• Headache</li><li>• Body aches</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Diarrhea</li></ul>	<p><b>1 or more of these symptoms: STAY HOME</b> until you feel better.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• find it hard to breathe</li><li>• have chest pain</li><li>• can't drink anything</li><li>• feel very sick</li><li>• feel confused</li></ul>	<p><b>Go to an urgent care clinic or emergency department.</b></p>
<p>If you are not showing any symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need to be tested, unless you are asked to by Public Health. Not sure if you should be tested? Complete the <a href="#">BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool</a></p>	

\*For more information and instructions on close contacts, go to: [www.bccdc.ca/covid19closecontacts](http://www.bccdc.ca/covid19closecontacts).

### **Self Monitoring for Close Contacts**

- Always monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 listed above. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 listed above, please use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see if you should get tested for COVID-19.

### **Self-Isolation for Close Contacts**

- **At this time, close contacts do not need to self-isolate.**
- If you have no symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need a test.
- At this stage in the pandemic, close contacts are not required to self-isolate or take any special measures. Therefore, contact tracing is of limited value except for high-priority settings.

### **Stay Home When Required to Self-Isolate**

When you self-isolate, you stay home and keep away from others to help stop the spread of COVID-19. You should self-isolate if:

- You have symptoms of COVID-19.
- You have been asked to self-isolate by public health or because of recent travel.

For more information on self-isolation and self-monitoring, please visit the [BCCDC webpage on self-isolation](#).

## Appendix C: COVID-19 School Communicable Disease Checklist – January 2022

Complete this checklist with your school's health and safety committee to assess your school's safety plan with the [Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#) and this Addendum.

Measures below should always be in place.

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrative Measures		
<b>Entrance and Exits</b>	Strategies are in place to prevent crowding during class transition times (e.g., staggered start/stop times, or recess/snack, lunch and class transition times).	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
<b>Space Arrangement</b>	In indoor spaces, people have enough room to carry out intended activities without involuntary physical contact.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Spaces are configured to maximize space between people.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
<b>Staff-Only Gatherings</b>	Staff gatherings (e.g., staff meetings, in-service and professional development activities, etc.) occur virtually.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
<b>Itinerant Staff, Temporary Teachers on Call and Other Visitors</b>	Process in place to ensure itinerant staff, Teachers On-Call and visitors are aware of the school's health and safety measures and their responsibility to follow them at all times.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
<b>Gatherings &amp; Events</b>	School gatherings and events (e.g., assemblies, etc.) are held virtually, whenever possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
	If gatherings and events must be in-person (e.g., inter-school sports game, theatre productions), the number of people in attendance is minimized as much as possible, does not exceed 50% operating capacity, and spectators are not present.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
<b>Extracurricular Activities</b>	Sports tournaments are paused.	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
<b>Hand Hygiene</b>	Hand cleaning facilities are available and accessible throughout the school and are well maintained.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
<b>Bus Transportation</b>	Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least 1x/day. Surfaces touched by fewer people are cleaned 1x/day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

### Administrative Measures

	Practices are in place to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces when they are dirty.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Other general cleaning occurs in line with regular practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Everyone on the bus (without exemptions), wear masks in accordance with the <a href="#">PHO Order on Face Coverings</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Practices are in place to encourage bus drivers and passengers to practice hand hygiene before and after trips.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Passengers are spread out if empty seats are available.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Windows are opened when the weather allows.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

### Environmental Measures

<b>Learning Space Configuration</b>	Learning spaces are arranged to maximize the space available and to avoid people directly facing one another (where possible).	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
<b>Increased Cleaning and Disinfecting</b>	Frequently touched surfaces (those touched by larger numbers of people) are cleaned and disinfected at least 1x/day. Surfaces touched by fewer people are cleaned 1x/day.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Practices are in place to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces when they are dirty.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Other general cleaning occurs in line with regular practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Practices are in place to clean and disinfect any surfaces a person's body fluids have contacted after they have displayed symptoms of illness.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
<b>Ventilation and Air Exchange</b>	All HVAC systems are operated and maintained as per standards and specifications, and are working properly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

### Environmental Measures

	Schools with recycled/recirculated air systems have upgraded their current filters to MERV 13 where possible or have identified mitigation efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	If using portable fans or air conditioning units, ensure they are set up to move air downward and not blowing air directly from one person's breathing zone to other occupants of a room. Avoid horizontal cross breezes.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Risk mitigation strategies are identified for excessive heat events or times of poor air quality.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

### Personal Measures

<b>Daily Health Checks</b>	Parents and students are reminded of their responsibilities to complete a Daily Health Check and are provided with resources on how to complete one (e.g., the <a href="#">K-12 Health Check</a> app).	<input type="checkbox"/> Included
<b>Stay Home When Sick</b>	Staff and students are reminded to stay home when they are sick.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
<b>Symptoms Develop at School</b>	Practices are in place to appropriately respond when a staff member, student, or other person develops symptoms of illness while at school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

### Personal Protective Equipment

<b>Masks</b>	Everyone at school (without exemptions), wear masks in accordance with the <a href="#">PHQ Order on Face Coverings</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Schools work with those with mask exemptions to explore potential strategies to reinforce and enhance other safety measures, as described in the <a href="#">COVID-19 Planning Resource: Mask Exemptions</a> .	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
	Masks are available for those who have forgotten theirs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

## Appendix D: Student Mask Exemption Request Form

### STUDENT MASK EXEMPTION REQUEST FORM

\*\*\*Please return this form to the attention of the school principal

#### To Be Completed by Parent/Guardian

As per the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K – 12 Settings announced on October 1, 2021, all K – 12 staff in schools, all grade K – 12 students and all visitors are to wear non-medical masks in all indoor areas of schools and on school buses. The only exceptions are:

- Intolerance to wearing a mask for health or behavioural reasons;
- To a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
- If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it;
- While eating or drinking; or,
- If the person is behind a barrier.

Mask exemptions remain in place for students and staff who cannot wear a mask for health or behavioural reasons. ***This form is intended to help the School District consider a student mask exemption. Please note that names of students approved for mask exemptions will be shared with school-based and transportation staff as required.***

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name, grade and age: \_\_\_\_\_

Mask Exemption Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Can your child wear a face shield rather than a mask?  Yes  No

Can your child wear a mask while on a school bus?  Yes  No

If 'No' to either of the above, can you explain why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

#### To Be Completed by Principal/Vice Principal

Received By: \_\_\_\_\_ When (date and time): \_\_\_\_\_

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Copy forwarded to the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent at the School Board Office



## I Tested Positive for COVID-19

### People who test positive for COVID-19 will need to:

1. Self-isolate and manage their symptoms
2. Complete an online form to report your test result
3. Notify close contacts

### How long should I self-isolate?

The amount of time you need to self-isolate depends on your vaccination status and age.

#### I tested positive for COVID-19 and I am fully vaccinated:

You are considered to be fully vaccinated if you have two doses of any of the World Health Organization [approved COVID-19 vaccines](#) or one dose of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine. You do not need to have a booster dose to be considered fully vaccinated.

- If you test positive for COVID-19 and are **fully vaccinated**, you need to self-isolate at home for **5 days AND until your symptoms improve and you no longer have a fever**. After your self-isolation period, you also need to avoid non-essential visits to **high-risk settings** for 5 days. This guidance is intended to prevent non-essential visits (e.g. social visits), and does not apply to essential workers. Employees should follow their workplace guidance.

You do not need to be re-tested for COVID-19 to end your self-isolation period and return to your normal activities.

#### **High-risk settings include:**

Long-term care  
Assisted living residences  
Rural and remote communities  
Indigenous communities

#### **High-risk settings DO NOT include places such as:**

Childcare  
**School**  
Work  
Grocery stores or pharmacies

#### I tested positive for COVID-19 and I am not fully vaccinated:

If you have not received a full series of any of the World Health Organization [approved COVID-19 vaccines](#), you are not fully immunized.

- If you are **18 years of age or older, test positive for COVID-19, and are not fully vaccinated**, you need to self-isolate at home for **10 days AND until you no longer have a fever AND your symptoms improve**. You do not need to be re-tested for COVID-19 after your self-isolation period ends to return to normal activities; you can remain test positive for many weeks, even after you are no longer infectious.
- If you are **under 18 years of age, test positive for COVID-19, and are not fully vaccinated**, you need to self-isolate at home for **5 days AND until you no longer have a fever AND your symptoms improve**. You do not need to be re-tested for COVID-19 after your self-isolation period ends to return to normal activities; you can remain test positive for many weeks, even after you are no longer infectious.

### [What if I have symptoms of COVID-19 but do not get tested for COVID-19?](#)

At this time, most people don't need to be tested for COVID-19, and are not required to self-isolate or self-monitor for a set amount of time.

However, if you develop [symptoms of COVID-19](#), it's still important to stay home until you feel better and your symptoms have improved. This means staying home from work or school, avoiding public places like restaurants, and avoiding travel unless you're going to a medical appointment. You can go back once your symptoms have improved and you are able to participate in your usual activities. It's also important to be aware of and follow public health guidance, such as masking in public spaces.

## Appendix F: BCCDC – Instructions for Close Contacts (from the BCCDC)



### Who is considered a “close contact” of a person with COVID-19?

A close contact is generally someone who has been near a person with COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes when health and safety measures were not in place or were insufficient.

#### Self-Monitoring:

At this time, **close contacts do not need to self-isolate**. You should monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 even if you are fully vaccinated or had COVID-19 in the last 90 days.

If you have no symptoms of COVID-19, you do not need a test. If you develop symptoms, you should stay at home until your symptoms improve. You can use the following tools to determine if you are eligible to get tested:

- Visit the [BCCDC When to get Tested page](#)
- Use the [Self-Assessment Tool](#)

When a person tests positive for COVID-19, they become a “case”. The people they have spent time with during their infectious period may be considered “close contacts.” At this stage in the pandemic, **close contacts are not required to self-isolate** or take any special measures. Therefore, contact tracing is of limited value except for high-priority settings.

### Should I get tested if I am a close contact of someone with COVID-19?

If you are not showing any [symptoms](#) of COVID-19, you do not need to be tested, unless you are asked to by Public Health.

It can take several days from the last time you were exposed to someone who has COVID-19 for symptoms to develop or to have enough virus in your body for a test to detect COVID-19.

If you develop any symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home until you feel better. Learn how to [manage your COVID-19 symptoms](#) at home.

Not sure if you should be tested? Complete the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#).