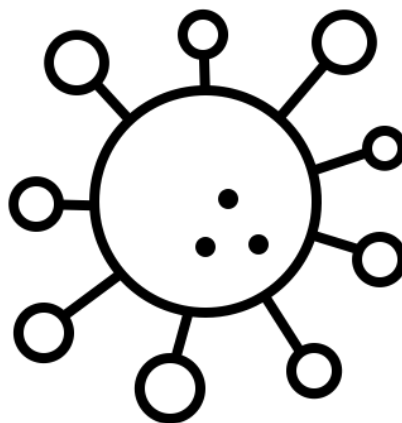


# School District No. 59 Communicable Disease Plan



Updated September 3, 2024

**School District No. 59 Communicable Disease Plan**



# SD59 (Peace River South) Communicable Disease Plan

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## INTRODUCTION

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace/school from one person to another. Examples of communicable disease that may circulate in a workplace/school include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

Communicable disease protocols are guided by health and safety guidelines, measures, and orders. SD59 will continue to build on our experiences and the advice of public health experts to determine communicable disease prevention plans on an annual basis. Our shared experience highlights the need to continue to be flexible and responsive to changes in transmission trends and provides opportunity to incorporate our learnings into approaches for sustainable communicable disease prevention moving forward.

COVID-19 will continue to circulate in our population and as long as cases occur within our communities, K-12 students and staff members will continue to be affected. However, BCCDC notes that transmission within K-12 school settings accounts for a minority of COVID-19 cases, even amongst students and staff. Moreover, with high immunization rates in BC and treatment options for people at higher risk of serious disease, public health advises that COVID-19 can be managed as are other serious respiratory infections in the community. As such, the guidance in this plan supports reducing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19, and will be modified as needed. [BCCDC](#) is the primary source of information about COVID-19 in BC. The School District No. 59 Communicable Disease plan aligns with expectations and recommendations from the [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#) (September 13, 2023) and the [Public Service workplace Communicable Disease Prevention Plan](#) (April 12, 2023).

Most communicable diseases experienced by students and staff within school settings can be managed by the individual/family and through routine preventive measures, such as staying home from school until well enough to participate in regular activities. Resources are available to support management of routine communicable diseases, including [HealthLinkBC](#), the [BCCDC Guide to Common Childhood Diseases](#), the [Sneezes and Diseases](#) website, and other school health resources hosted on health authority webpages ([Northern Health](#)).

WorkSafe BC lists four steps employers should follow to ensure best efforts are made to prevent communicable disease transmission within the [Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#) document:

- **Step 1: Understand the Risk:** Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in your workplace. It also involves implementing additional measures when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk. The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. This may occur at a local or regional level, or within a certain workplace.
- **Step 2: Implement Measures, Practices and Policies to Reduce the Risk**
- **Step 3: Communicate Measures, Practices and Policies**
- **Step 4: Monitor Your Workplace and Update Your Plan as Necessary.**

The WorkSafe steps are reflected throughout the SD59 Communicable Disease Plan.



# Communicable Disease Prevention Plan Guidelines:

## HEALTH AWARENESS



- Staff, parents, caregivers, and students should not come to the school or workplace if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities.
- Everyone should do a daily health check.

## ILLNESS PRACTICES / WHAT TO DO WHEN SICK

- **STAY HOME:** Staff, students, or other persons in the school setting who are exhibiting symptoms of illness, such as COVID-19 or gastrointestinal illness, should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities. Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved enough to where they feel well enough to return to regular activities and any fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., acetaminophen, ibuprofen).

The BC Daily Health Check Tool is a simple and effective means of checking and reminding people of their obligation to stay home if sick. If you are unsure or concerned about your symptoms, connect with your health care provider, or call 8-1-1 (<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/more/contact-us/8-1-1>).

## IF A STAFF MEMBER or STUDENT BECOMES SICK AT SCHOOL OR WORK:

- Arrange for staff/student to go home or isolate until transportation/parent arrives.
- Have space where sick person can wait until pickup.
- Have non-medical masks available for those who would like to wear one.
- Supervising staff may choose to wear a non-medical mask.
- Avoid touching any bodily fluids.
- Clean and disinfect any surfaces which the person's bodily fluids may have come into contact with.
- Cleaning/disinfecting the entire room the person was in (terminal clean) is not required.

## Practices Expected and Promoted Across School District No. 59:

### CLEANING AND DISINFECTING:



- Use regular cleaning practices.
- Frequently used surfaces – Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty.

### HAND HYGIENE



- Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Use soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

### RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE



- Staff to practice, teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette among students, including:
  - Cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue.
  - Refrain from touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.

### SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES AND/OR RECEIVING HEALTH SERVICES



- Staff and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct care or with diverse abilities who are in close proximity to a student should follow routine infection control practices and care plans for the child, if applicable.
- Children are not required to wear a mask or face covering when receiving services, though may continue to do so, based on their parent/caregiver's choice.



## BUSES



- Schools can follow normal seating and onloading/offloading practices.
- Buses should be cleaned and disinfected in line with common industry practices.
- Bus drivers, teachers and students in K-12 may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus.

## VEHICLE USE



- Mask wearing is recommended, and is an individual's choice, any time two or more staff travel together in a vehicle.
- Mask wearing is recommended, and is an individual's choice, if staff are transporting students or members of the public.
- Students transported in district vehicles are also recommended (may choose) to wear a mask.

## MASKS & FACE COVERINGS



- The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students, and visitors.
- Promote the school environment as supportive for wearing masks through mask-specific messaging at assemblies and in announcements, signs, and written communications.
- Set, communicate, and consistently reinforce clear expectations that any bullying or other disrespectful behaviour for conduct related to personal mask use choice is unacceptable.

## PPE When Providing Student Services



- Staff and those providing services to children with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct or delegated care, or with disabilities and diverse abilities who are in close proximity to a child should follow routine infection control practices and care plans for the child, if applicable.

## VISITOR ACCESS/COMMUNITY USE



- Building managers should ensure staff, parents, caregivers, and students entering the premises are aware they should not enter if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. Building managers can support this practice by communicating the importance of everyone doing a health check.

## PERSONAL SPACE



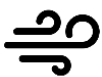
- Staff, students, parents, and guests working in or visiting any SD59 building should be encouraged to respect others personal space.

## SHARING FOOD BEVERAGES AND ITEMS THAT TOUCH THE MOUTH



- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unused utensils, etc.
- Shared items that touch the mouth should be cleaned and disinfected between use by different individuals (e.g., water bottles, instrument mouth pieces).

## VENTALATION



- As part of ongoing measures in Communicable Disease Prevention Plans, WorkSafeBC requires employers to ensure building ventilation is adequate and properly maintained. The School District will continue to ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort of workers (Part 4 of OHS Regulation), and that they are working properly. Open windows when the weather permits if it doesn't impact the functioning of ventilation systems. Taking students outside more often is no longer necessary for communicable disease prevention.



**MESSAGING CONNECTED TO VACCINES:**

**VACCINES**

- Vaccines are important tools to protect against many serious communicable diseases. Vaccination protects from serious illness due to COVID-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including from the omicron variant. It is important to get all recommended vaccine doses to get the most effective protection against serious cases of COVID-19. People 6 months and older are eligible for COVID-19 vaccines. More information about COVID 19 vaccines is available from the BCCDC website. Students and staff are also encouraged to ensure they are up to date on all recommended vaccines for other communicable diseases, including COVID-19 vaccines. Schools are encouraged to share evidence-based information and promote opportunities to be vaccinated in partnership with public health and the local medical health officer. Evidence-based immunization information and tools for B.C. residents are available from BCCDC and ImmunizeBC websites.

**Additional Resources from WorkSafeBC:** Prevent the spread of communicable disease.

**Cover coughs and sneezes:**

**Handwashing:**

## Prevent the spread of communicable disease

### Cover coughs and sneezes




Or



Cough or sneeze into your sleeve, not your hands. Avoid touching your face with your hands.

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and put your used tissue in a wastebasket.



Or



Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Clean your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

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## Prevent the spread of communicable disease



Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. If soap and water aren't available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

**Wash your hands:**

- When you arrive at work
- Before and after going on a break
- After using the washroom
- After handling cash or other materials that have come into contact with the public
- Before and after handling shared tools and equipment
- Before and after using masks or other personal protective equipment

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