



Catholic Independent Schools of the Diocese of Victoria (CISDV) Communicable Disease Prevention Plan Updated December 2021

INTRODUCTION

The government of British Columbia directed all schools in the province to transition to a Communicable Disease Prevention Plan. Communicable disease prevention focuses on reducing the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, and includes both ongoing measures (e.g. Hand hygiene) and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health. **On December 29, 2021, the Ministry provided additional addendums due to the rise in Omicron variants.**

This document was created/updated based on:

- The [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#),
- The [BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#),
- The [K-12 Education Recovery Plan](#) regarding education programs and supports and
- The [COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff](#) regarding the management of illness and exposures in school.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Medical Health Officers continue to be able to place local Public Health Orders requiring additional health and safety measures beyond the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings. Local Public Health Orders may be placed for entire regions or communities, including schools, or for specific settings or activities within a health authority region. FOR SCHOOLS, the local Medical Health Officer may issue a recommendation for an individual school, groups of schools, district etc.

Schools continue to be low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission.

Employees, parents and school visitors are to review this document and follow these operational guidelines when in any CISDV building in order to ensure the health & safety of self and others; everyone must do their part to help reduce the spread of the virus.

NOTE: This document will be updated as needed to reflect any new information from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and WorkSafeBC.

VACCINE

Vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of COVID-19 in schools and communities. The vaccines used in B.C. remain highly effective against COVID-19, including among variants of concern. Vaccinated people aged 12 and older tend to have milder illness if they get infected and are also less likely to spread COVID-19 than unvaccinated people 12 and older. **Vaccinations are available for children aged 5 and older.**

Proof of Vaccination is NOT required for schools for staff, students, or visitors.

Physical Distancing and Space Arrangement

Remind students and staff about respecting others' personal space (maximize space between people).

- In all situations, **maximize space** between individuals to avoid unintentional physical contact
- Use available space to spread out people; provide both common space, classroom and learning environment configurations. Limit and whenever possible, avoid face to face seating arrangements.
- Emergency drills and evacuation drills must continue; administrators will ensure that muster points for these drills are also spaced out to avoid overcrowding
- 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 lockers (floor markings and traffic flow signs should be used)

Staff Only Spaces

- Manage flow of people and overcrowding in common areas such as break rooms, photocopier by using floor markings, traffic flow signs and posters and occupancy limits
- Staff only gatherings (e.g. staff meetings, in-service and professional development activities) are to be held virtually at this time

School Gatherings and Events

- School gatherings and events are to be held virtually at this time
- If gatherings and events must be in person, minimize the number of people in attendance as much as possible and do not exceed 50% operating capacity; do not allow spectators
- Examinations or assessments are not considered school gatherings; however, they must still follow all current COVID-19 requirements

Personal Items

- Continue to bring personal items to school
- Students and staff should not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils, wind instruments)
- Encourage use of lockers

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Staff will utilize positive and incisive approaches to engage students in the use of masks and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature.

- **All K-12 staff** are required to wear masks or a mask and face shield indoors and on school buses
- **All K-12 students** are required to wear masks indoors and on school buses
- **All visitors** to the school must wear a mask when they are inside the school

Exemptions for staff, students and visitors (regarding PPE)

The guidance outlined above regarding mask requirements does not apply to staff, students, and visitors 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 for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it

- 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
- in particular circumstances while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (see below)

Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities

Supporting student with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student

- When indoors, and the services cannot be provided from behind a barrier, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, face covering or face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield).
- When working with students when 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.

If a staff, student or visitor is unable to wear a mask, other controls will remain in place.

Buses

- Bus Drivers are required to wear a non-medical mask, face covering or non-medical mask face shield
- Student and staff masks should be put on prior to loading
- Students and staff should practice diligent hand hygiene (before and after a trip)
- Buses need to be cleaned and disinfected: **all frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned at least once a day; surfaces touched by fewer people are cleaned once a day**
- Windows should be open when weather permits **for increased ventilation**
- Spread passengers out if empty seats are available

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Frequently touched surfaces **(e.g. doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles etc.)** will be cleaned and disinfected at least once in a 24-hour period
- Visibly dirty surfaces will be cleaned as well as disinfected
- Garbage containers will be emptied daily
- Carpets/rugs/and frequently touched items such as toys, may be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use

Water fountains

- Water fountains/drinking stations access will not be limited
- Hand hygiene **must be** practiced before and after use

Illness & Self-Assessment Protocols

Daily Health Check

- Parents and caregivers are reminded to assess their children **daily** for illness before sending them to school. Please use the K-12 Daily Health Check [app](#) [Health Check app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms. **If you feel unwell, stay home**
- Staff and other adults should complete the Daily Health check prior to entering the school. If sick, they must stay home and not enter the building
- Doctor's notes are NOT required to confirm health status

Staying home, self-isolation AND returning to school

- Students and staff are to stay at home when sick
- Students and staff must stay home if required to self-isolate
- **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**
- Students and staff can return to school after illness:
 - After Covid-19 or other communicable disease return following the advice of a health practitioner
 - For other illnesses, when the symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough to participate in all school activities
 - If you are unsure, call 811
 - **A doctor's note is NOT required**

Visitors

- **Visitors to schools are limited to those who are supporting activities that are of direct benefit to student learning and well-being at this time**
- Visitors are to complete a daily health check prior to entering the school. If sick, they must not enter the building
- Visitors are to be aware of the communicable disease protocols and requirements – please see entrance of school and/or website
- Visitors must sign in/sign out

Ventilation and Air Circulation

- Regularly maintain HVAC systems
- MERV 13 filters or higher when possible
- Open windows weather permitting
- Fans must not direct air into faces/breathing zones of staff or students
- Move activities outdoors when possible

Curriculum, programs and Activities

For more information on course specific guidelines please see the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)

- Equipment that touches the mouth should not be shared unless disinfected between use
- Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after using frequently touched equipment
- **Extracurricular sports tournaments are paused at this time**

Food Services

- Food sales, hot lunch programs and fundraisers are permitted
- Food and beverages should not be shared

Music Programs

- K-12 staff and K-12 students must wear masks when indoors and a barrier is not present. Masks may be temporarily removed while playing a wind instrument, but must be worn while singing
- Shared equipment must be disinfected between different individual use and proper hygiene should be practiced

PE programs/School Sports

- Spread students and staff out in available space, outdoor activities are encouraged
- K-12 staff, and K-12 students are required to wear mask during PE class while 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) but may choose to do so
- Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per guidelines
- Students are encouraged to wash their hands before and after using frequently touched

Playgrounds

- Practice proper hand hygiene before and after outdoor play
- Minimize unintentional physical contact between students
- Sand and water can be used (for play) provided student wash their hands before and after play

School Libraries/Learning Commons

- There is no need to clean, disinfect or quarantine laminated or glossy paper-based products

Theatre, Film and Dance Programs

- Shared equipment such as set pieces, props, cameras etc. should be cleaned and disinfected between use; proper hand hygiene should be practiced before and after use of high frequency touched equipment

Communication and Training

Island Catholic Schools is committed to assisting Vancouver Island Health Officers and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) in communicating out guidance, recommendations, and orders. ICS will also continue to communicate to staff and parents about changes to COVID-19 protocols using various means including:

- Emails from ICS or local school administrators
- Letters
- ICS and local school websites
- Social media outlets
- Staff meetings
- Memos

All ICS staff will review the updated ICS Communicable Disease Prevention Plan, in addition to their local updated COVID-19 plans. School administrators will ensure all staff know and understand the protocols in place to help safeguard the school community's well-being.