



G.A.D. Elementary School
Communicable Disease Plan 2022-2023
Updated: August 25th, 2022

Facing a new normal, we can go back to many of the safety protocols we have practiced pre-pandemic, some pandemic measures can still be used to enhance safety. COVID-19 will continue to circulate in our communities as well as in K-12 school settings. However, studies still show that transmission within a K-12 setting is only a fraction of overall transmissions. With high rates of immunization and better treatment options, COVID-19 can be managed just like other respiratory infections in the community. **Please be reminded that measures can change; provincial Orders can be circumvented by local or regional Orders when deemed necessary by the Medical Health Officer in our region to help mitigate the spread of any communicable disease.**

Both psychological safety measures and trauma-informed practice alongside physical health and safety measures should be implemented.

A trauma-informed lens should be used when planning school activities (e.g. gatherings and events) and interacting with other staff and students, including considerations around respecting others' personal space.

Students/staff may choose to wear masks, face shields or other PPE in schools still, those choices must be respected.

Vaccines are still one of the most important tools to mitigate the spread of communicable diseases such as COVID-19. Vaccination is available for anyone aged 6 months and up. Being vaccinated is still one of the most effective protections against contracting, spreading and complications from COVID-19 and its variants. More info regarding vaccines for COVID-19 is available at <https://immunizebc.ca/> and <http://www.bccdc.ca/>.

Health Checks

Health Checks are still essential for all staff and students before coming to school. While we no longer monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness, it is up to the individual and in the case of students, the family/parents, to check if they are experiencing symptoms that inhibit them from coming to school. If any symptoms of illness are present, individuals should stay home until they are well. Symptoms of COVID-19, a rapid test should be taken (available for free at any pharmacy).

What To Do When Sick

If staff, students or other persons in the school setting are having symptoms of illness, such as COVID-19 or gastrointestinal illness, they should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities. Staff, students and other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (ie: allergies) or

symptoms have improved enough to where you feel well enough to return to regular activities and any fever has resolved without the use of medication. If you are not sure about your symptoms, call 8-1-1 or use the BC self assessment tool/When to get tested COVID-19 resource. Rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 are available at all pharmacies for free. When in doubt, take a test.

If You Test Positive

Follow the guidance on the BCCDC website. If you test positive, you should isolate a minimum of 5 days (even if you feel better) or until your symptoms pass, whichever is longer. A doctor's note is not required to return to school after having COVID-19.

If You Develop Symptoms At School

Anyone who develops symptoms of sickness at school should be supported to go home until their symptoms have improved. Appropriate infection control precautions will be taken while the person is preparing to leave the school, including the use of hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. Masks should be used if they are experiencing any respiratory symptoms.

Hand Hygiene

Everyone should still be practicing rigorous hand washing with plain soap and/or using an effective hand sanitizer- this reduces the spread of illness. Touchless taps and sanitizer stations have been put in place to help promote proper hand hygiene in the school.

Respiratory Etiquette

Parents and staff can teach and reinforce proper respiratory etiquette practices among students such as:

- cough/sneeze into their elbow or tissue. Throw away used tissues(into proper receptacles) and immediately perform hand hygiene
- Refrain from touching eyes, nose, mouth with unwashed hands
- Refrain from sharing food, drinks, unwashed utensils etc.

Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings

Wearing a non-medical face mask is the choice of the individual (as it is no longer required by public health). The choice of staff and students to choose to wear one should be respected. Information on non-medical masks is available from <http://www.bccdc.ca/>

Ventilation and Air Exchange

Ventilation, mechanical heating, air conditioning (HVAC) are designed, operated, and maintained and working properly (as part 4 of OHS REgulation). Open windows when 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.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Regular cleaning and disinfection prevents the spread of communicable diseases. All high

touch surfaces will be cleaned frequently in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty.

Gatherings and Events

School extracurricular, social gatherings/events (including those between and within schools), no matter the location, will occur in line with this document (recommendations from BCCDC) as well as any applicable local, regional or provincial health recommendations/orders.

Space Arrangement

Classroom and learning environment configurations and activities will be used that best suit the learners needs and preferred educational approaches. No restrictions for social distancing or spacing (personal preference used/respected).

Transportation

Buses will follow normal seating and onloading/offloading practices.

Visitors and Community Use of Schools

Normal practices for welcoming visitors and community use of schools.