

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

November 18, 2022



Step 1: Understanding the Risk:

*Excerpted from Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools: August 25, 2022

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 document supports reducing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases, including COVID-19 and will be modified as needed.

At St. Joseph's, over the course of the year, the principal will continue to monitor changes in the level of risk through the following means: the weekly Deputy Minister's Bulletin and special bulletins; the weekly Superintendent's Bulletin and special bulletins; media sources; BCCDC information. As changes are warranted, the principal will update the Communicable Disease Prevention Plan and inform staff, students and parents/caregivers of the changes.

Step 2: measures, practices and policies to reduce the risk:

The school will create a supportive environment through the following:

- The staff will model appropriate behaviours that reduce the risk.
- Information that is shared with parents, caregivers and students will be taken from reliable sources, such as the BCCDC and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer
- Safety measures will be promoted through visual aids and signage
- Staff will ensure individual choices for personal practices are supported and treated with respect

All eligible members of the community (staff, parents/caregivers, eligible students) are encouraged to ensure that they are up to date with all recommended vaccines for other communicable diseases, including COVID-19 vaccines.

Staff, visitors, parents, caregivers or students should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities.

In addition, the following measures will continue:

- People will be reminded about the importance of doing daily health checks

- Students will be reminded both verbally and through visuals that they must respect others' personal space
- One stairway will be designated as UP and the other as DOWN
- School gatherings and events will occur in adherence with the current guidelines from the PHO and BCCDC
- If a student develops symptoms while at school, the student will be brought to the front hall and parents will be called to pick up their child and bring them home right away; those who test positive for COVID-19 must follow the current isolation requirements as prescribed by the PHO
- If a staff member develops symptoms while at school, he or she will go home right away; those who test positive for COVID-19 must follow the current isolation requirements as prescribed by the PHO
- Disposable masks will continue to be available at the school office for those who wish to wear them and forget them at home
- Staff, students and visitors may make their own personal choices about mask wearing
- Classroom configurations and activities will be in alignment with best educational practices
- Students will continue to use hand sanitizer upon entry to the school in the mornings
- Portable hand washing stations are available in addition to existing sinks.
- Students will wash their hands with soap and water before eating.
- Students will use proper cough and sneeze etiquette: cough or sneeze into elbow, sleeve, or a tissue; throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene
- Signs are posted beside sinks and handwashing stations to remind of proper handwashing technique

Cleaning

The school uses commercial disinfectant products as per directives from Health Canada. The school is cleaned according to the procedures outlined in the BCCDC Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document. Our school custodian has been informed of the Worksafe BC protocols and is trained in cleaning and disinfecting practices. The school is cleaned and frequently touched surfaces are disinfected at least once in 24 hours. Throughout the day, any surface that is visibly dirty or has been potentially infected by body fluids will be disinfected.

Ventilation

- Air purifiers with HEPA-13 filters have been installed in all classrooms and communal areas (Learning Commons, computer room, office areas, staff room)

When new guidance is given from the BCCDC or the PHO, changes will be made to the protocols and all stakeholders will be informed appropriately.

Step 3: Communication

The school will continue to communicate appropriate messaging from the BCCDC to parents, reiterating the protocols and the need to follow them.

Parents and caregivers will receive updates over the course of the year, as the school receives updated information from the PHO and BCCDC.

Step 4: Monitoring and Updating the Plan

The principal and staff meet regularly to evaluate the measures, practices and policies in place. Walk-throughs are done regularly by the principal to ensure that measures are functioning properly, followed and maintained. The principal checks in regularly with the custodian. Health and Safety is the first topic on the agenda of the weekly staff meetings. Staff members are encouraged to share any concerns with the principal, either during staff meetings or privately. Any concerns raised will be followed up and reported on. Guidance, notices, orders and recommendations from the PHO will be monitored and plans will be adjusted accordingly.