

Bear Valley School

Stewart, BC

Communicable Disease Prevention Plan (Updated January 7, 2022)

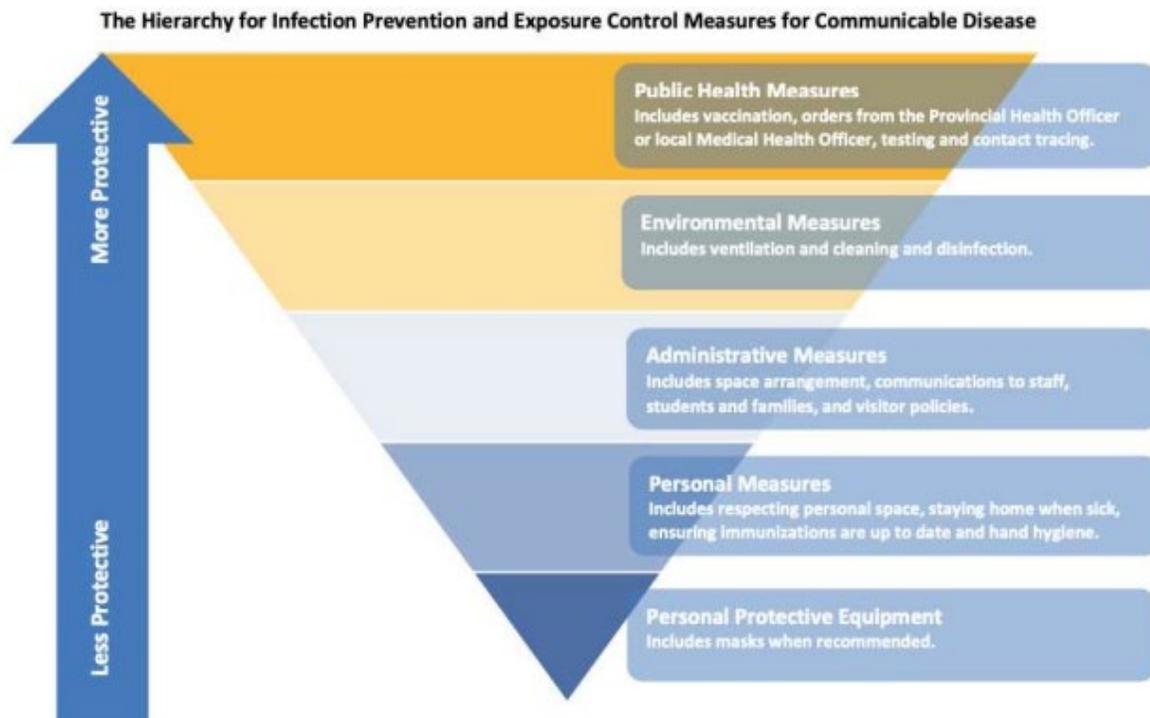
Bear Valley School is following the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings to ensure our schools are safe places for students and staff. The guidelines are built upon the Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools developed by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) to ensure schools have effective measures in place to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.

These guidelines are intended to support K-12 education employees, students, parents, caregivers, administrators and school community members to:

- Be informed about public health measures and how they support a safe school environment;
- Understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting safe and healthy schools.

INFECTION PREVENTION AND EXPOSURE CONTROL MEASURES

Infection prevention and exposure control measures help create safe environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19. These measures are very effective in schools where there is relatively consistent groupings of people and multiple measures put in place such as not going to school sick, practicing hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette and other environmental measures. The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes the measures to take to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in schools. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of COVID-19 is greatly reduced.



SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

Bear Valley School can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours.
- Share reliable information, including from BC Centre for Disease Control and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer, to parents, families and caregivers.
- Promoting required safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids and signage.

BVS staff will utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventative practices and will not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature. Staff will use trauma informed lens when planning school activities (e.g. gatherings and events) and interacting with other staff and students, including respecting others' personal space.

VACCINES

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 infected and are less likely to spread COVID-19 than unvaccinated people 12 and older. Public health encourages all eligible students and staff to be fully vaccinated (i.e., receive 2 doses) against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them, including those not eligible to be vaccinated. BVS will share evidence-based information (e.g., from BCCDC or ImmunizeBC) and details on how and where people can be vaccinated with staff, students and families throughout the school year.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Although Public Health no longer recommends physical distancing of 2M as a communicable disease measure in the K-12 setting, the following strategies are used:

- Remind students and staff about respecting others' personal space using visual supports, signage, prompts, etc.
- Use available space to spread people out, both in learning environments and for gatherings and events, where possible.
- Take students outside more often.

STAFF ONLY SPACES

Use the following practices:

- Use signage to prevent crowding in staff only areas.
- For gatherings like meetings or professional development, respect room occupancy limits, use space available to spread people out.

SCHOOL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

School gatherings and events may occur, including inter-school events, in line with relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders and any related WorkSafe BC guidance.

- Respect student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space.
- Respect room occupancy limits, use space available to spread people out (Learning Common has 2 zones – computers and library, and they are limited to one class each).
- Assemblies will be held in the gym where more distancing can occur.

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF WORKING WITH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES WHERE PHYSICAL CONTACT MAY BE REQUIRED.

- When staff are working with a student indoors and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, staff must wear a non-medical mask, face covering, or a face shield with a non-medical mask. Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used as part of personal care routines.
- If students need to see facial expressions and/or lip movements, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, options include having the staff member wear a mask with a transparent section to let students see the mouth.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Regular cleaning and disinfecting are essential to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. School facilities will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC CDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings document. Practices are in place to clean and disinfect any surface a person's body fluids have contacted after they have displayed symptoms of illness.

FREQUENTLY TOUCHED SURFACES

Frequently touched surfaces include:

- Items used by multiple students and staff including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, manipulatives and toys.
- Students will be able to use water fountains.
- Hand hygiene will happen before and after use.
- There will be no restrictions with use of washrooms or other spaces to support student learning and wellbeing. Schools will return to full operation of all spaces in alignments with protocols outlined in this document.
- Shared equipment (computer keyboards and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for science labs, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing equipment for home economic programs, PE/sports equipment, music equipment, etc.,) will be cleaned after each use.
- 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 (office service window, library circulation desk). Frequently touched items like toys and manipulatives that may not be cleaned often (e.g. fabrics) can be used but hands must be cleaned before and after use. Carpets and rugs can be used.

NOTE: There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19. Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., children’s books or magazines) and items with 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.

VISITOR ACCESS/COMMUNITY USE

- Front doors are unlocked for visitor access, but appointments are encouraged.
- School will inform visitors of health and safety requirements and will remind them to perform a daily health check before entering school.
- School will have information on communicable disease protocols and requirements for visitors by school entrances, on school’s website, and included in all communications with students and families.
- Schools will have sign in/sign out at front entrance for all visitors and staff who are not typically on site. Schools will keep list of the date, name and contact information of these people who entered the school over the past 45 days.
- All visitors will wear a non-medical mask when inside school. Exceptions are listed under Masking Protocols section.
- Visitor access is limited to those areas required for purpose of visit (e.g. school office for drop off/pick up of items, gym for school sports, etc.,) and parents/caregivers will drop-off and pick-up students outside.
- Parents/caregivers and other visitors will respect others’ personal space while on school grounds, including outside.

After hours community use of facilities is allowed in alignment with other health and safety measures:

- Must occur in line with those activities permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Order.
- Prior approval of group’s Communicable Disease Plan
- Diligent hand hygiene.
- Respiratory etiquette.
- Ensuring participants stay home if feeling ill.
- Limit building access to only those areas required for purpose of activity. Community users are responsible for collecting names and contact information of participants to support contact-tracing by the local health authority.

ILLNESS & SELF-ASSESSMENT PROTOCOLS 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/or students can use the provincial K-12 Health Check (app or web version). <https://www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca/healthcheck?execution=e1s1>

SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY

- Signage will be posted on entrance doors to remind staff and other adults that they are responsible to complete daily health check before entering the school/worksite and to stay home if sick.
- Frequent clear communication with staff to complete daily health check and stay home if sick.
- Frequent clear communication with families that they need to complete daily health check with child and keep them at home if sick.

If student or staff member becomes sick at school, they will:

- Be sent home as soon as possible,
- Go to safe, comfortable place that is separated from others,
- Be provided with non-medical mask,
- Be supervised (if child) until pick up possible.

Surfaces and/or equipment which the person's bodily fluids may have been in contact with while ill (desk, bathroom stall, etc.,) will be cleaned and disinfected before being used again. No health-care provider note is required for students or staff to return to school.

STAY HOME WHEN REQUIRED TO SELF-ISOLATE

Students, staff and other adults must stay home if required to self-isolate. Additional information on self-isolation requirements and support is available from BCCDC.

SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS AND RETURN TO SCHOOLS

Students, staff or other adults must stay 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 use the K-12 Health Check app or online version.
- Staff and other adults can refer to BC CDC's When to get tested for COVID-19
- Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC's online Self-Assessment Tool, call 8-1-1 or their health care provider. <https://www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca/healthcheck?execution=e1s1>

When a staff, student or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced (as indicated in K-12 Health Check app and BCCDC "When to get tested for COVID-19") and if COVID-19 test is recommended, and the type of illness they had.

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (like allergies) can attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as usual. They do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and will not be required to provide a health-care provider note. If they experience any new or unusual symptoms, they need to seek assessment by a

health-care provider. Students and 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 a household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school.

HAND HYGIENE

Rigorous handwashing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.

- Washing hands with plain soap and water (water temperature does not change effectiveness) for at least 20 seconds is one of the most effective control measures.
- If sinks are not available (e.g. students and staff are outdoors), use alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol and meets Health Canada's requirements.
- Hand washing or sanitizing upon arrival at school. Hand washing stations are located at the school entrances
- Encourage appropriate hand hygiene throughout the day.
- Regularly remind staff and students about the importance of diligent hand hygiene.
- Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.
- Ensure hand washing supplies are always well stocked including soap, paper towels and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Staff will assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- Students may bring own sanitizer if they are on list authorized by Health Canada.
- If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub may not be effective at eliminating microbes. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty. If it's not available, use an alcohol-based hand wipe followed by alcohol-based hand rub.

Students will perform hand hygiene:

- When they arrive at school
- Before and after any breaks
- Before and after eating and drinking (not drinks kept at desk or locker)
- Before and after using indoor learning space used by multiple classes with shared equipment
- After using toilet
- After sneezing and/or coughing into hands
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

Staff will perform hand hygiene:

- When they arrive at school
- Before and after any breaks
- Before and after eating and drinking
- Before and after handling food or helping students with eating
- Before and after giving medication to student or self
- After using toilet
- After contact with bodily fluids
- After cleaning tasks
- After removing gloves
- After handling garbage

- Whenever hands are visibly dirty

RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE Students and staff will:

- Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- All K-12 staff are required to wear non-medical masks indoors in schools. All students in grades K-12 are required to wear a mask indoors in schools.
- Staff will use positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in the use of masks and will not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature.
- Non-medical masks will be available for students and staff, including those who become sick while at school.
- All visitors must wear masks.

Exceptions for students and staff

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 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 educational activities 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.

GENERAL VENTILATION & AIR CIRCULATION

- All HVAC systems are operated and maintained as per standards and specifications, and are working properly.
- Portable air conditioners and fans are only used in ventilated spaces, with air moved from high to low.
- Risk mitigation strategies are identified for excessive heat events or times of poor air quality.

EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION DRILLS

Bear Valley School will continue to practice emergency and evacuation drills, including the 6 required annual fire drills, and will modify drill procedures to adhere to our health and safety guidelines (e.g. providing additional muster spots to prevent crowding/congregating).

Other protocols:

- Staff notified in advance of drills (no surprise drills).
- Ensuring drills to be “total evacuation fire drills” involving all occupants as per BC Fire Code.

FIELD TRIPS Follow existing policies and procedures as well as guidance in this document. Additional measures specific to field trips must be taken, including:

- Follow student transportation guidance in this document.
- Alignment with relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders, including for international travel.
- For overnight camps, guidance from BCCDC and BC Camps Association must be followed when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

FOOD/CULINARY PROGRAMS Schools can include food preparation as part of learning programs for students. The following guidelines must be followed:

- Food safety for food and culinary programs.
- Follow normal food and safety measures and requirements
- Implement cleaning and disinfecting measures outlined in the Cleaning & Disinfecting section of this document. FOODSAFE Level 1 is a helpful resource to ensure food safety and worker safety.
- Hand Hygiene and Cleaning Protocols
- Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with soap for at least 20 seconds.
- Students and staff practice diligent hand hygiene in alignment with normal food safety measures and requirements.

FOOD SERVICES

- Schools can continue to provide food services, including for sale.
- Schools can continue to accept food donations to support learning and the delivery of meal programs, breakfast clubs and other food access initiatives.
- School meal programs should follow regular operating practices.
- Food and beverages are not to be shared.

FUNDRAISERS Schools can continue to offer fundraisers that can be implemented in line with guidelines outlined in this document. If fundraisers involve the sale of food items, they must align with the Guidelines for Food & Beverage Sales in BC Schools.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM AND ENTRY

- Information about communicable disease prevention measures will be communicated to families and students prior to school start.
- Parents/caregivers must follow visitor guidelines outlined in this document.
- Teach students to learn and practice respecting personal space, recognizing they are unlikely to do this at all times.
- Use gentle reminders and encourage students to kindly support one another.
- Frequently touched items can be used, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after.
- Carpets and rugs may be used.

MUSIC PROGRAMS

- All K-12 staff and students in grades K to 12 must wear masks when indoors and a barrier is not present.

- Masks can be 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 cleaned and disinfected according to Cleaning and Disinfecting Guidelines.
- Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g., instrument music pieces) must be cleaned and disinfected between uses.
- Music education will be delivered in line with Guidance for Music Classes in BC During COVID19 developed by BC Music Educators' Association and the Coalition for Music Education in BC.

PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION(PHE)/OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

- Create space between students and staff and encourage outdoor activities and programs as much as possible.
- K-12 staff and students in grades K to 12 must wear masks during PHE/outdoor programs when they are indoors, and a barrier is not present.
- Students do not have to wear a mask during high-intensity activities (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer); mask use during these times left to student's personal choice.
- Move high-intensity physical activities outdoors if possible.
- For low-intensity physical activities (e.g. yoga, walking), students must wear mask if indoors and no barrier present.
- Shared equipment can be used provided it is cleaned and disinfected
- Students will use proper hand hygiene before and after using frequently touched pieces of equipment and will practice proper respiratory etiquette.
- Equipment that touches mouth should not be shared (water bottles).

PLAYGROUNDS

- playgrounds are a safe environment. There is no current evidence of COVID-19 transmission in playground environments. The following measures will be used:
 - Wash hands before and after outdoor play.
 - Try to minimize direct contact between students.
 - Sand and water can be used; students must wash hands before and after play.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES / LEARNING COMMONS

- At this time, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.
- Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., children's books or magazines) and items with covers (e.g., DVDs) are low risk items.
- Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as normal.
- 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.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES Extracurricular activities (in and out of school) and special interest clubs will occur in alignment with the guidelines in this document and requirements of relevant local, regional, provincial public health recommendations and Orders for community gatherings and events.