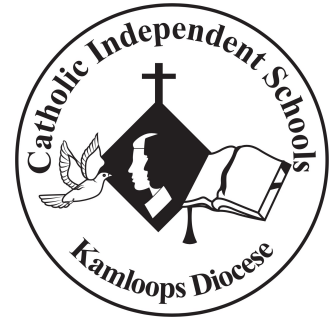


# Communicable Disease Prevention Plan



**Catholic Independent Schools Kamloops Diocese**



# Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

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## **Introduction**

On August 24th 2021, the Ministry of Education introduced the *Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for the K-12 Settings*. As of March 10, 2022, the Ministry of Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control have reintroduced [this plan](#) as the province shifts from a pandemic response to communicable disease management. K-12 students will participate in full-time, in-class instruction while following these communicable disease management guidelines, as part of their regular school culture going forward.

## **Key Principles**

- All schools within the Catholic Independent Schools of the Kamloops Diocese (CISKD) are required to have Communicable Disease Prevention plans in place, which focus on reducing the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.
- Controls for Communicable Disease Prevention continue to be:
  - Hand Hygiene
  - Health Awareness: Daily Health Checks
  - Regular Cleaning and Disinfection
  - Optional use of Non-Medical Masks
  - Vaccinations
- Schools continue to be low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission even while COVID-19 continues to circulate in our communities.

## **Regional Difference**

CISKD will comply with all orders (provincial, regional and local) issued by a Medical Health Officer. These orders or guidelines may augment the Provincial COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for K-12 settings based on epidemiological data. Regional or local orders would consider:

- Increased community transmissions
- Communities with low vaccination uptake
- Local epidemiology

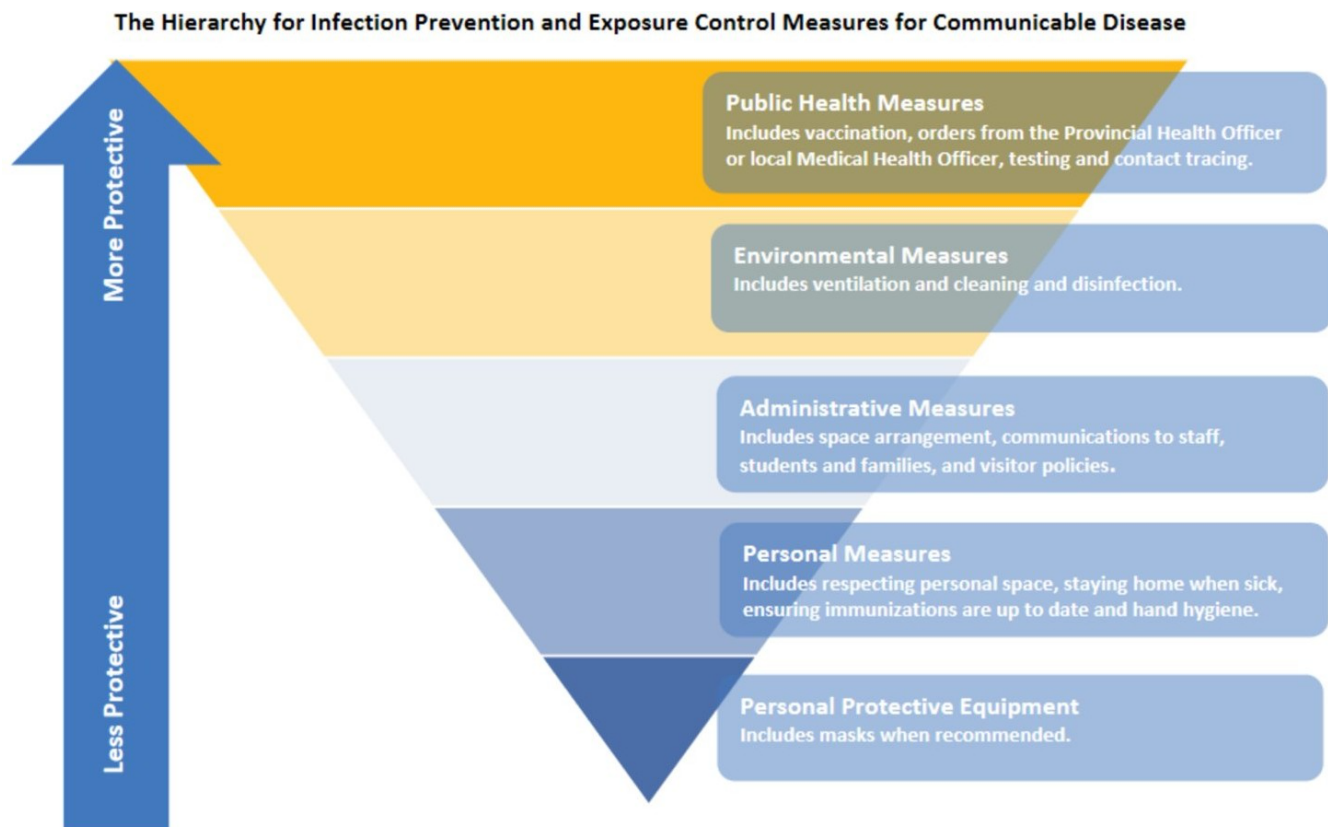
These orders may be issued as part of a local or regional strategy, but may also be issued to an individual school, a grouping of schools, all schools within the health authority region, or some combination thereof, during times of elevated risk. These measures may include:

- limits on gatherings and events
- reconfiguring room arrangements or incorporating more activities that maximize space between people and reduce face-to-face contact
- limiting visitors
- recommending increased mask use

## Infection Prevention & Exposure Control Measures

Infection prevention and exposure control measures (also called communicable disease measures or health and safety measures) help create safe environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases like COVID-19. Schools provide a controlled environment in which access to the public is restricted. As such, these environments allow for greater use of administrative measures as all individuals present, are part of the school environment.

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken 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 substantially reduced.



## **Supportive School Environments**

Schools can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours.
- Promoting safety measures in the school using visual aids like signage and posters
- Direct instruction
- Sharing reliable information from the BCCDC and PHO

CISKD will share all links to reliable COVID-19 Information on our website to provide information to parents, families and caregivers. Additional information that CISKD receives from

our Regional Medical Health Officers or Interior Health may be distributed to parents, families and caregivers by CISKD or local school administrators.

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

Students and staff may choose to wear additional personal protective equipment in schools beyond the required circumstances outlined in this document, and those choices must be respected. School administrators are encouraged to review the information in this section with their school community, to increase awareness and support from staff, students and families.

## **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 (such as the Delta Variant). 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.

Public health strongly recommends adults working directly with children to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them including those who are not eligible to be vaccinated. People over 12 who are not vaccinated are at higher risk of getting and spreading COVID-19, with age the greatest factor of individual risk of severe illness. Most COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are now among unvaccinated adults.

CISKD will work with Public Health to:

- Share evidence-based information (e.g. from BCCDC and ImmunizeBC), and details on how and where people can get vaccinated, with staff, students and families; and
- Explore opportunities to establish school-based COVID-19 vaccination clinics to help increase community uptake. This includes provision of space within schools for public health nurses or other qualified health personnel to carry out their duties (including immunization).

## **Physical Distancing and Space Arrangement**

Schools can return to classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

- Remind students and staff about respecting others' personal space. Use visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- Use available space to spread people out, both in learning environments and for gatherings and events, where possible.
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times (focus on entry and exit areas, and other places where people may gather or crowd).
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

- Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. It is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure we adhere to fire code.

## **Staff Only Spaces**

K-12 schools and other worksites should implement the following strategies:

- Utilize floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding (e.g. in the break room, by the photocopier, etc.).
- For gatherings (e.g. meetings, pro-d, etc.), respect room occupancy limits, use available space to spread people out, and consider virtual options. Gatherings must also occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders and any related [WorkSafe BC guidance](#).

## **School Gatherings and Events**

School gatherings and events may resume as normal. School events with parents/visitors/sectators must operate at 50% capacity. Proof of vaccination is not required under the current PHO guidance. Schools may return to 100% capacity if the PHO Order is lifted April 7, 2022.

Field trip planning should be conducted through a trauma-informed lens and make every effort to be inclusive so that all students may participate.

## **Personal Items**

Staff and students may continue to bring personal items to school, but they are encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils, wind instruments, etc).

## **Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities and/or Receiving Health Services**

Most students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity are not considered at greater risk of experiencing severe illness from COVID-19. Refer to the [K-12 Recovery Plan](#) for students who have immune suppression.

CISKD is committed to accommodating our students with disabilities or diverse abilities and will work with families to ensure that students have access to learning supports. Parents and caregivers of children who are considered higher risk of severe illness due to COVID-19 are encouraged to consult with their health provider to determine their child's level of risk. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to contact their school administrator to discuss available options for their child. Students are not required to wear a mask or face covering when receiving services, though may continue to based on their or their parents/caregivers personal choice.

Schools within CISKD will continue to have non-medical masks available for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.

## **Student Transportation**



## **Buses**

Schools can return to normal seating, following the onloading/offloading and cleaning & disinfecting practices within this document.

Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. If a child has any symptoms, they must not take the bus or go to school.

Bus drivers, teachers and students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus.

## **Other Methods of Transportation**

Staff, students or visitors who take mass transit (such as BC Transit buses) hand hygiene should be practiced before and after trips. Riders should follow any other safety guidance issued by the transit operator.

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Regular cleaning and disinfecting can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty.

## **Visitor Access**

Schools can return to their normal practices for welcoming visitors.

## **Community Use**

Schools can resume regular community use practices.

## **Illness & Self-Assessment Policies and Protocols**

### **Daily Health Checks**

Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school. Parents, caregivers and students can utilize the provincial K-12 [Health Check app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms, or consult the [When to Get Tested for Covid-19 resource](#).

Staff and other adults are to review the posted list of symptoms and perform an active daily health check prior to entering the school. If there are any doubts, please use [the BC Self-Assessment Tool](#).

If a student, staff or other adult is required to self-isolate they must stay home and should not enter any CISKD school site. If as a CISKD staff member you are required by Interior Health to self-isolate, please contact your supervisor by phone immediately.

### **School Staff Responsibilities**

Ensure staff and other adults (e.g. parents, caregivers, visitors) entering the school/worksites are aware of their responsibility to complete a daily health check prior to entering the school/ worksite (e.g. emails/letters to parents and staff, orientation video, signage on doors) and to stay home if they are sick.

Clearly communicate with parents/caregivers their responsibility to complete a daily health check with their child, and keep them home from school if they are sick.

- Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work to be sent home as soon as possible.

- Some students or staff may not be able to be picked up immediately. As such, schools will have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably and is separated from others and should have a non-medical mask available for those experiencing respiratory symptoms who would like to wear one.
- Schools must provide supervision for younger children. Supervising staff can choose to wear a non-medical mask and/or face shield and should avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible and practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Staff responsible for facility cleaning should clean and disinfect the surfaces/equipment which the bodily fluids may have been in contact with while they were ill (e.g., their desk in a classroom, the bathroom stall they used, etc.) prior to the surfaces/equipment being used by others. Clean/disinfect in these circumstances.

CISKD schools will not require a health-care provider note (e.g. a status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practices).

### **Symptoms of Illness and Return to School**

Students, staff or other adults should stay at 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.

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g. seasonal allergies) may continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a healthcare provider.

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, and/or has tested positive for COVID-19, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. BCCDC has more information for those considered a [close contact](#) which are usually people in the same household.

### **Hand Hygiene**

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness (antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). CISKD schools will encourage students to make use of hand washing facilities and will promote the importance of this activity with signage and posters.

To be effective, hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Staff and students will make frequent use of hand washing facilities where available. Hand sanitizer should only be used in areas where hand washing is not readily available.

### **Respiratory Etiquette**

Control of coughs and sneezes is also an important tool in preventing the spread of [communicable diseases](#). Staff and students should cough or sneeze into their elbow, sleeve or tissue and direct cough and sneezes away from individuals wherever possible. Following a sneeze or cough, any tissue should be thrown away and hands should be washed.



Parents and Staff can teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices by:

- Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue
- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands, and wash hands again afterwards
- Refrain from sharing any food or drink items among multiple persons (for example, drinking from one shared bottle).

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Parents, students and staff may make the personal choice to continue wearing PPE based on their personal preference, however it is not longer a requirement. Their choice of any student or staff to continue mask use or additional personal protection measures should be supported and respected.

### **General Ventilation and Air Circulation**

Schools will continue to ensure local Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems are operating within normal parameters. These HVAC systems are maintained in accordance with best industry practice. Schools can open windows if it does not interfere with their functioning of their ventilation systems. Classes are no longer required to be taken outside beyond the usual practice.

### **Emergency and Evacuation Drills**

All emergency, safety and evacuation practices may resume as normal.

### **Communication and Training/Orientation**

CISKD is committed to assisting Interior Health, Northern Health & Regional Medical Health Officers and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) in communicating guidance, recommendations and orders.

CISKD will also continue to communicate to staff and parents about changes to COVID-19 in multiple formats for ease of understanding.

All CISKD schools will review the updated CISKD Communicable Disease Prevention Plan, School administrators should ensure all staff know how to report health and safety concerns and understand the protocols in place to keep them safe.

### **Curriculum, Programs and Activities**

All curriculum, programs and activities should operate in alignment with [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#), including school-led activities held off-campus (e.g. sporting events, community-based programs/courses).

Schools should continue to implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices (e.g. cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to the activity).

In general, these practices should include:  
cleaning/disinfecting equipment,  
hand hygiene practices specific to the activity,  
reducing the number of close face-to-face interactions

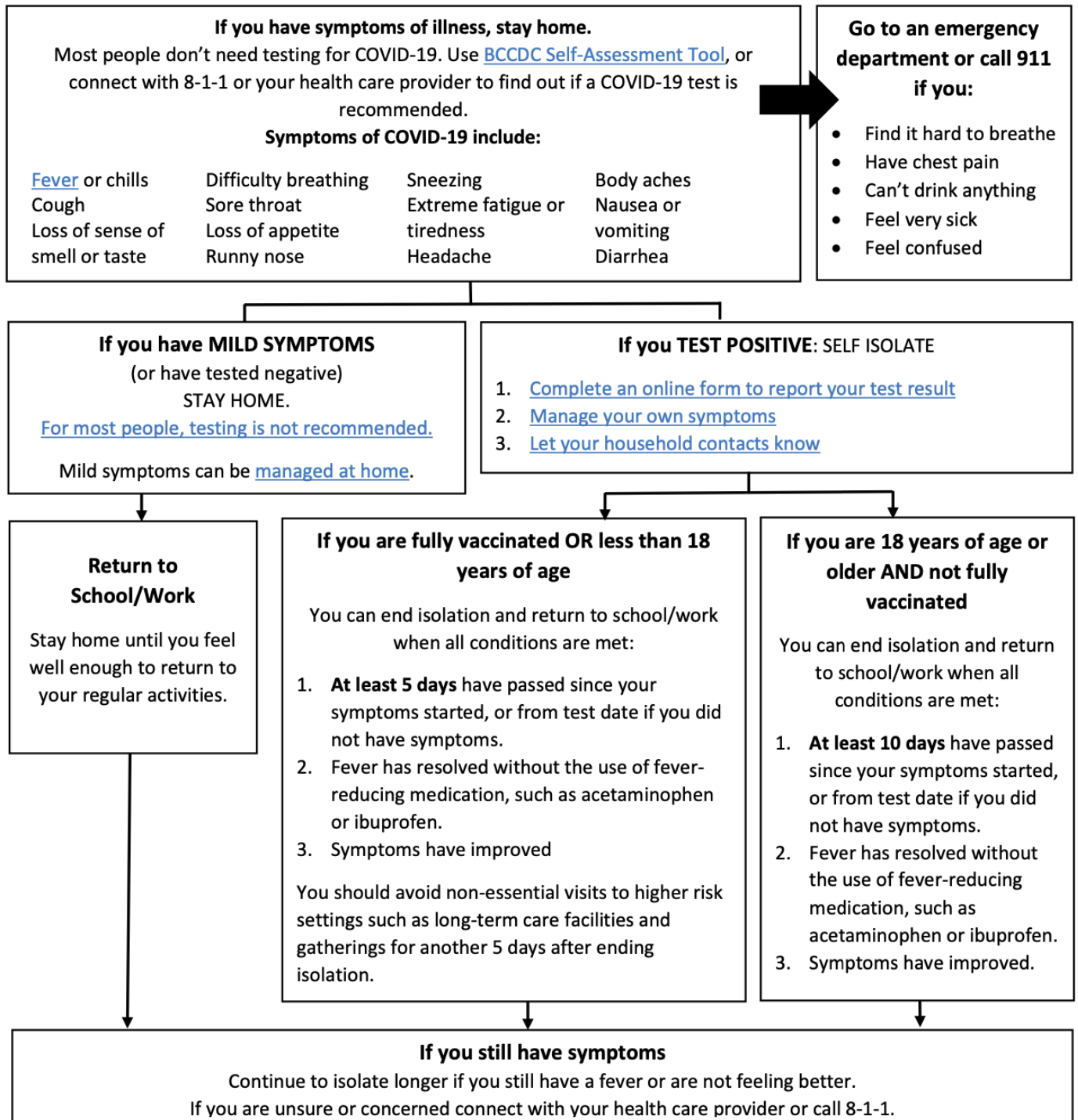
For more information on specific guidelines please see:

[Provincial Covid-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)

**Contractor Safety**

All contractors hired by CISKD or local schools will be required to complete a self assessment health check prior to entry into CISKD schools. Please refer to the local schools' health check protocols. This form will outline the controls in place to keep students safe and will outline the expectations for contractors within schools during the school year.

## Summary: What To Do When Sick



### What to do if someone is sick in your household:

You can continue to attend school if someone in your household is sick and/or self-isolating as long as you do not have any symptoms of illness and feel well. This includes if they have tested positive for COVID-19. Ensure you closely monitor yourself (or your child) for symptoms of illness and stay home if you feel unwell. The best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. Vaccines are available for anyone ages 5 and up. Register now at:

[Getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca](https://getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca)