

Dear Families,

All school districts in the province have received guidance from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) regarding recommended measures for preventing and controlling respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, in schools and childcare settings.

We are writing to inform you about these recommendations, to tell you how they are being implemented in our school district, and to let you know what steps you can take at home.

Prevention

There are two important ways to prevent and control respiratory viruses in school settings:

- The first is for students and staff who are ill with respiratory illness symptoms (fever, cough, fatigue, and/or muscle aches) to stay home from school. If your child is not feeling well, we ask that you keep them home so that they can rest and recover. As always, remember to inform the school of the absence.
- The second way to prevent and control respiratory viruses is the consistent practice of good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene. Good respiratory etiquette includes covering your mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow and disposing of used tissues, followed by hand hygiene. Hand hygiene is the washing of hands with plain soap and water, which is effective at removing visible soil as well as viruses.

Children should clean their hands:

- before leaving home and on arrival at school
- after using the toilet
- after breaks and sporting activities
- before food preparation
- before eating any food, including snacks
- before leaving school

The Burnaby School District encourages school staff to promote regular hand washing.

REMINDER: Masks are not necessary for people who are not experiencing symptoms. In children in particular, masks can be irritating and may increase touching of the face and eyes, which increases the risk of infection.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Regular cleaning of objects and high-touch surfaces – such as door handles and water fountain push buttons – helps prevent the transmission of viruses.

School district staff are cleaning all high-touch surfaces at all school sites daily. All disinfecting products used by the District meet the guidance provided by the BCCDC.

Although water fountain knobs and push buttons will be cleaned daily, consider providing your child with a filled water bottle so that they do not have to drink directly from the mouthpiece of the fountain.

Food Sharing

Students should not be sharing food, utensils, dishes, and water bottles or drink containers. This practice is important for reducing virus transmission between children.

Psychological Considerations

A new virus such as COVID-19 can create anxiety and be difficult for students to understand, especially if someone in their school or family is sick, or they see or hear troubling messages in the media. It is normal for children to feel worried or nervous and have questions.

Support your children by reassuring them that they are safe and there are many things they can do to stay healthy:

- Hand washing: Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially after coughing or sneezing.
- Cough and sneeze etiquette: Cough and sneeze into your arm or a tissue.
- Stay home when sick: If you're not feeling well let your parents or guardians know so you can stay home from school.
- Keep clean: Keep your hands away from your face and mouth.
- Stay healthy: Eat healthy foods, keep physically active, and get enough sleep to help your body stay healthy.

Regards,

Terry Gomez
Health and Safety Manager
Burnaby School District