

Burnaby Schools

Communicable Disease Prevention – Staff Handbook

Updated November 13, 2023

Burnaby School District Communicable Disease Prevention Staff Handbook

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Introduction

Purpose

This handbook represents the District's Communicable Disease Prevention Plan and is based on the most current information from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, BCCDC, Worksafe BC, and Fraser Health Authority.

Resources

The most current information provided here is based on resources from:

BC Public Health

[Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K - 12 Schools](#)

WorkSafeBC

[WorksafeBC: COVID-19 and communicable disease](#)

Ministry of Education

[Communicable Disease Prevention in K-12 Schools](#)

IMPORTANT

This handbook will be reviewed and updated to address changes in protocols and direction by the Ministry of Education, Worksafe BC, and Public Health. All staff questions regarding this plan should be directed to the Site Administrator or the District Administrator.

Document History

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SECTION A – Background

Communicable Disease Plan

Most communicable diseases experienced by students and staff within school settings can be managed by the individual and through routine preventive measures, such as staying home from school until well enough to participate in regular activities.

Information resources are available to support management of routine communicable diseases, including Health Link BC, the BCCDC Guide to Common Childhood Diseases, the Sneezes and Diseases website, and other school health resources hosted on health authority webpages (Vancouver Coastal Health; Fraser Health; Interior Health; Island Health; Northern Health).

Public health works closely with education partners to support the health and wellbeing of students and staff in school settings. Public health may become directly involved if certain reportable diseases, such as measles, are identified where there are effective interventions available to prevent further spread and protect against severe disease. Additional time-limited public health measures may also be implemented at the discretion of the Medical Health Officer or Provincial Health Officer in response to broader risk of communicable disease transmission in the community. School or District Administrators can contact Public Health if they have concerns about communicable disease transmission within the school setting and require additional support.

Vaccines

Vaccination protects from serious illness due to communicable diseases and is the most effective way to reduce the impact on our communities.

Employees who have health conditions that may place them at increased risk for more severe outcomes should speak with their health-care provider to determine their individual level of risk.

Students and staff are encouraged to ensure they are up to date on all recommended vaccines for communicable diseases.

As per Employment Standards, vaccine paid leave (up to 3 hours) is only available for employees to take when they have **their own** vaccine appointment. Child(ren) or family member appointments are not included in this benefit.

Supportive School Environments

Schools can support students to practice personal preventative measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviours,
- Sharing reliable information, including from the BC Centre for Disease Control and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer with parents, families, and caregivers,
- Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water or using an effective hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene and schools should facilitate regular opportunities for students and staff to wash their hands. To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the [How to clean your hands poster](#). Parents and staff can teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices among students, including:
 - Cough or sneeze into their elbow or a tissue. Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
 - Refrain from touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, or unwashed utensils. Staff, students, or other persons shall follow routine food safety practices, including diligent hand hygiene.

Staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in personal prevention practices aligned with existing professional practices to address behaviour. Approaches should not exclude students from participating in school activities or potentially result in stigma.

Students and staff may choose to wear masks, face shields, or other personal protective equipment in schools and those choices must be respected.

SECTION B – Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures

According to the BCCDC, the Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of diseases. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom.

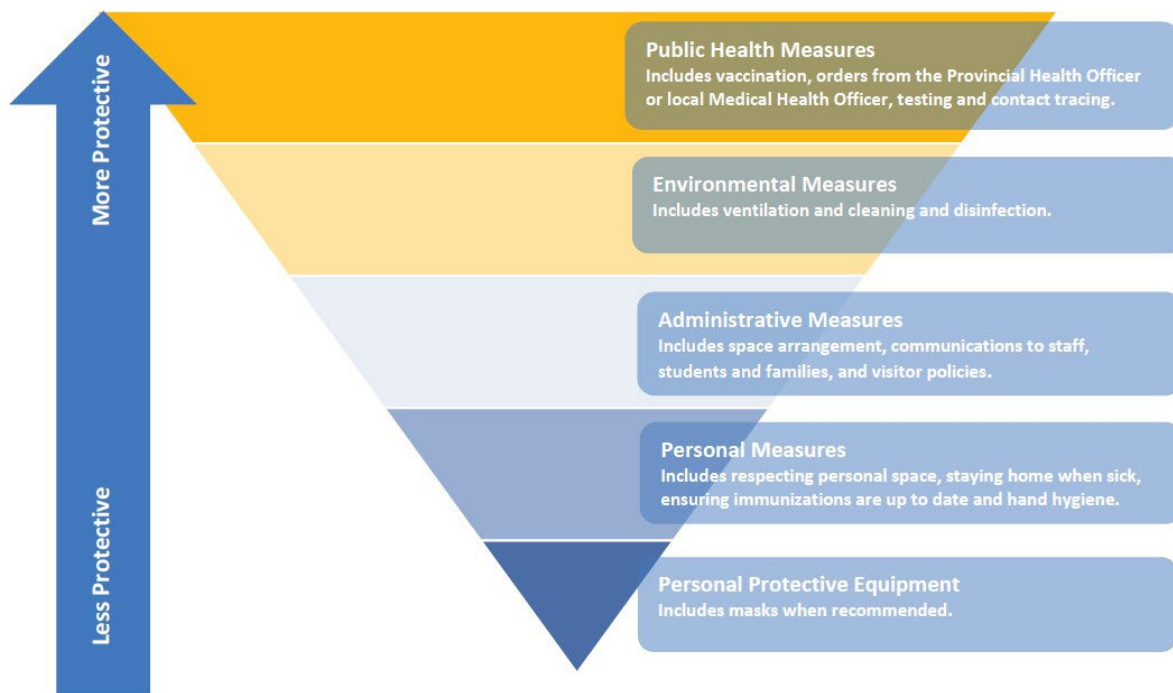


Figure 1 Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease

SECTION C – Health and Safety Planning

All Burnaby School District staff must follow the applicable guidelines in this handbook.

Access to the School / Sites

Schools shall follow normal practices for welcoming visitors and the community use of schools.

Staff and Student Health Assessment

Staff, students, or other persons who are exhibiting symptoms of illness, such as respiratory illness, should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities.

Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough to return to regular activities.

If you are unsure or concerned about your symptoms, connect with your health care provider, or call 8-1-1.

If a staff member, student, or other person develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they shall be supported to go home until their symptoms have improved or otherwise advised by a healthcare provider. Appropriate infection control precautions shall be taken while the person is preparing to leave the school premises, including use of appropriate hand hygiene and cleaning/disinfection of surfaces soiled with bodily fluids. They may use a mask if they are experiencing respiratory symptoms.

Schools shall not require a health care provider note (i.e., a doctor's note) to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The decision to wear a mask is a personal one, based on individual preference. Some students and staff may choose to wear a non-medical mask or face covering throughout the day or for certain activities. The choice of staff and students to choose whether they practice additional personal prevention measures shall be respected.

Cleaning Protocols

Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces shall occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty. Cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces should occur at least once in a 24-hour period and when visibly dirty.

General Ventilation and Air Circulation

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute to the spread of a communicable disease. The district is committed to ensuring that heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications to provide the best conditions for air quality, comfort, and control for staff and students.

- Schools with recycled/recirculated air system filtration, where applicable, have been equipped with filters that meet or exceed regulatory standards. The filters are scheduled for replacement 4 times per calendar year.
- Fresh air intake systems provide fresh air exchanges that meet or exceed ASHRAE Standards 241-2003.
- Windows may be opened when the weather permits if it does not impact the functioning of ventilation systems.