



**Communicable Disease Prevention Plan
Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry
January 2021**

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2021, the government of British Columbia directed all schools in the province to transition to a Communicable Disease Prevention Plan. Communicable disease prevention focuses on reducing the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, and includes both ongoing measures (e.g. hand hygiene) and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health. This document was created/updated based on policy and communiques including:

- [The December 29th Addendum to the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)
- [The Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#),
- [The BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#),
- [The K-12 Education Recovery Plan regarding education programs and supports](#), and
- [The COVID-19 Protocols for School & District Administrators and Staff](#) regarding the management of illness and exposures in school.

Employees, parents, and school visitors are to review this document and follow these operational guidelines when in **Vancouver Island School of Innovation and Inquiry** (VISII) in order to ensure the health & safety of self and others; everyone must do their part to help reduce the spread of the virus.

NOTE: This document will be updated as needed to reflect any new information from the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and WorkSafeBC.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Medical Health Officers continue to be able to place local Public Health Orders requiring additional health and safety measures beyond the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings. Local Public Health Orders may be placed for entire regions or communities, including schools, or for specific settings or activities within a health authority region. FOR SCHOOLS, the local Medical Health Officer may issue a recommendation for an individual school, groups of schools, district, etc.

VACCINE

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 variants of concern. 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.

Proof of Vaccination is NOT required for schools for staff, students, or visitors.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND SPACE ARRANGEMENT

- In all situations, maximize space between individuals to avoid unintentional physical contact
- Use available space to spread out people, both in learning environments and for gathering and events where possible, including emergency and evacuation drills
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop off times
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible

STAFF ONLY TIMES

- Staff-only gatherings (e.g., Staff meetings, in-service, and professional development activities) will be held virtually

SCHOOL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

School events (Field trips) must respect student and staff spacing

- Use all available space to spread out.
- Respect room occupancy limits to prevent physical contact between individuals (for January and February of 2022, only outdoor field trips are planned).
- Be mindful of others' personal space.

PERSONAL ITEMS

- Continue to bring personal items to school

- Students and staff should not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils, wind instruments)
- Encourage use of cubbies

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

- All staff are required to wear masks or a mask and face shield indoors
- All students are required to wear masks indoors
- All visitors to the school must wear a mask when they are inside the school

Exceptions for staff, students and visitors (regarding PPE)

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 the 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 an educational activity 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
- in particular circumstances while providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (see below).

HAND HYGIENE

Careful hand hygiene is known to reduce the spread of communicable diseases. Staff, students, and visitors to VISII will practice good hand hygiene by washing their hands:

- upon arriving at school
- before and after eating
- after using the bathroom
- when coming in from the playground
- before and after using frequently shared items
- at the end of the school day before returning home

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES

Supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student.

- When indoors, and the services cannot be provided from behind a barrier, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, face covering, or face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield).

- When working with students when seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, options include having the staff member wear a mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

- Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least once in a 24-hour period.
- Visibly dirty surfaces will be cleaned as well as disinfected.
- Garbage containers will be emptied daily.
- Carpets/rugs/and frequently touched items, may be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.
- Students will be encouraged to wipe kitchen counters, microwave buttons, and microwave door handle after warming their lunch/snack.

STAFF AND STUDENT ATTENDANCE DAILY HEALTH CHECKS

- Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school. Please use the K-12 Health Check app (<https://www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca/>). If sick, children must remain home.
- Staff and other adults should complete a daily health check prior to entering the school. If sick, they must remain home and not enter the building.
- Doctor's notes are NOT required to confirm health status

VISITORS

- Visitors are encouraged to make appointments to come into the school.
- Visitors are to complete a daily health check prior to entering the school. If sick, they must not enter the building.
- Visitors are to be aware of the communicable disease protocols and requirements.
- Visitors must sign in/sign out.
- Visitor access is limited to those areas required for the purpose of the visit.
- Parents/caregivers/visitors are encouraged to drop-off/pick up students outside the school.
- Parents/caregivers/visitors are to respect others' personal space while on school grounds.

STAYING HOME, SELF-ISOLATION AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL

- Students and staff are to stay at home when sick.
- Students and staff must stay home if required to self-isolate.
- Students and staff can return to school after illness:

- After Covid-19 or other communicable disease, return following the advice of a health practitioner.
- For other illnesses, when the symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough to participate in all school activities.
- If you are unsure, call 811.
- A doctor's note is NOT required.

VENTILATION AND AIR CIRCULATION

- Open windows weather permitting.
- Fans must not direct air into faces/breathing zones of staff or students.
- Move activities outdoors when possible.

CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIVITIES

- Equipment that touches the mouth should not be shared unless disinfected between use
- Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after using frequently touched equipment

FIELD TRIPS

- Field trips and overnight camps should follow existing policies and required guidelines (including regional differences)

FOOD/CULINARY INQUIRIES

- Food safety should continue to follow normal food safety measures and requirements
- Implement the required cleaning and disinfecting measures
- Practice diligent hand hygiene by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds
- Where food is prepared by students, it may be consumed only by those who prepared it.

FOOD SERVICES

- Food sales, hot lunch programs, and fundraisers are permitted.
- Once distributed, food and beverages must not be shared.

MUSIC

- K-12 staff and K-12 students must wear masks when indoors and a barrier is not present. Masks may be temporarily removed while playing a wind instrument, but must be worn while singing.
- Shared equipment must be disinfected between different individual use and proper hygiene should be practiced.

PE PROGRAMS/ACTIVE BODY BREAKS

- Spread students and staff out in available space, outdoor activities are encouraged.
- Staff and students are required to wear mask during PE class while indoors (and a barrier is not present).
- Students are NOT required to wear masks during high-intensity physical activities (e.g. stationary bike, weightlifting, basketball, soccer) but may choose to do so.
- Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per guidelines.
- Students are encouraged to wash their hands before and after using frequently touched items.

PLAYGROUNDS

- Practice proper hand hygiene before and after outdoor play.
- Minimize unintentional physical contact between students.
- Sand and water can be used (for play) provided students wash their hands before and after play

SCHOOL LIBRARY/LEARNING COMMONS

- There is no need to clean, disinfect, or quarantine laminated or glossy paper-based products

THEATRE, FILM, AND DANCE PROGRAMS

- Shared equipment such as set pieces, props, cameras, etc. should be cleaned and disinfected between use.
- Proper hand hygiene should be practiced before and after use of high frequency touched equipment.

Epiphyte Educational Society

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