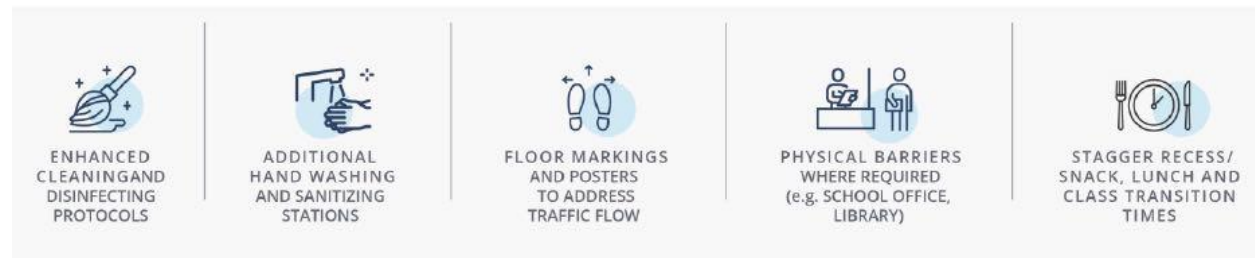




As we return to school in September, our priority remains fulfilling our purpose and mission of enabling all learners to succeed and contribute to their full potential to the future while at the same time ensuring a healthy and safe environment for all students, families and employees.

Stage 2: Health and Safety Measures

To support the return to school, a comprehensive suite of safety measures is being implemented at our schools to help protect students and staff from the risk of COVID-19.



Students and staff will be required to clean their hands frequently, cover their faces when they cough/sneeze and not share food, school supplies or equipment. They will also be required to stay home when sick.

Many changes are being implemented at our schools to help ensure a safe return for staff and students. We encourage you to read about these health and safety measures below.

Learning groups

- Students and staff will be organized into learning groups to help reduce their number of interactions and potential exposure to COVID-19.
- Under [Stage 2 of the Ministry's Five Stage Framework for K-12 Education](#), if students are with their learning group, minimized physical contact is required, but physical distancing does not need to be maintained at all times.
- In elementary schools, students can socialize with their peers in different learning groups only if they are outdoors and can minimize physical contact, or if they are indoors and can maintain physical distance. Elementary-aged students are less able to consistently maintain physical distance. Outdoors is a lower-risk environment than indoors.

- In secondary schools, students can socialize with peers in different learning groups only if they can maintain physical distance. Secondary school students are expected to be capable of consistently maintaining physical distance when it is required.
- Where it is not possible to keep staff in one learning group, they will need to practice physical distancing.
- Schools will keep lists of all members of learning groups to share with public health should contact tracing need to occur. Watch this short video from the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) to learn more about contact tracing: <https://youtu.be/LE9Mhll30Ks>
- If we move into Stage 3 or 4 of the Framework, cohorting into learning groups and class density limits of 50% and 25% respectively would take effect.

Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols

- General cleaning of the premises will take place at least once every 24 hours. This includes items that only a single student uses, like an individual desk or locker.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently-touched surfaces will take place at least twice every 24 hours. This includes door knobs, light switches, hand railings, faucet handles, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students, keyboards and toys.
- Any visibly dirty surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected, and garbage containers will be emptied daily.
- The school district has hired additional custodial staff to ensure we can maintain the enhanced cleaning protocols.

Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette

- Students and staff will be asked to wash their hands frequently throughout the day (preferably with soap and water for at least 20 seconds), including before coming to school.
- Additional hand washing stations are being installed throughout the district including at entrances from elementary school playgrounds where possible.
- Extra hand sanitizer dispensers can now be found at entrances, exits, the school office and common areas.
- Hand sanitizer and disinfectant will be available in all classrooms.
- Reminders about respiratory etiquette - the importance of coughing or sneezing into their elbow or a tissue - will be shared frequently with students and included in lessons.
- Students and staff will be encouraged to avoid touching their faces with unwashed hands.

Maximizing physical distancing and minimizing physical contact

- Directional signage, including floor markers and posters, is in place at all schools to help with physical distancing.
- Students will be prevented from gathering in hallways or other common areas.
- Some schools may implement one-way hallways or assign designated entrance/ exit doors.
- Schools may introduce staggered start/end times, and recess/lunch times to help with physical distancing.

- Physical barriers are being installed in places where physical contact cannot regularly be maintained and a person is interacting with numerous individuals outside of a learning group, for example, the school office or library.
- Maintenance teams have checked all ventilation systems and confirmed that our air filtration systems meet the provincial standards required. Our maintenance teams will ensure that schools' ventilation systems provide as much air exchange as possible.
- Masks will be required for staff and secondary students in high traffic areas in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained. Exceptions will be made for students who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons.
- Schools will ensure non-medical masks are available for staff and students.
- The decision to wear a mask in the classroom is a personal one that will be respected.

Changes to our school/classroom environments

- Classroom layouts will be organized to maximize physical distancing and consistent seating arrangements will be encouraged within learning groups.
- Schools will incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage greater space between students and staff as much as it is practical to do so.
- Students will be provided with more outside learning activities where appropriate, but there will not be any physical contact sports.
- Playgrounds will be sectioned off with two learning groups per section. This ensures we keep within the maximum learning group size of 60 students.
- Students will be reminded to maintain physical distancing and minimize physical contact, and to avoid hugs, high fives and handshakes.
- Students can continue to bring personal items to school, but they should be encouraged only to bring items that are necessary (e.g. backpacks, clothing, school supplies, water bottle). Please ensure your child's supplies are labelled to discourage accidental sharing.
- Lockers will not be available for students' use.
- Students will not be allowed to share food, school supplies or equipment. This includes birthday treats, bake sale items etc.
- Students using playgrounds will be encouraged to minimize direct contact between one another, and to practice hand hygiene before and after outdoor play.
- School gatherings will occur within learning groups. Schools will seek virtual alternatives for larger gatherings and assemblies.
- Access to schools will be limited to staff and students. Other visitors including parents will need to request an appointment through the school office, and will be asked to assess their personal health before entering the building.

School buses

- Buses used for transporting students will be cleaned and disinfected after every run, in accordance with the BCCDC's guidelines.
- Bus drivers will clean/sanitize their hands often, and wear a non-medical mask and face shield when loading and unloading buses.
- An empty seat will be left between the driver and students for appropriate distancing.

- Seating will be assigned, taking family connection, learning group and individual student needs and health conditions into consideration. Seats will be labelled with the names of the students that are assigned to them
- Buses will be loaded from back to front, and offloaded from front to back.
- If space is available, students will have their own seat and be seated beside the window.
- Secondary school students are required to wear non-medical masks when they are on the bus, whereas non-medical masks are not recommended for elementary school students.
- Where students should be wearing a mask as per the PHO guidelines, but are unable to do so for various reasons, the specific circumstances associated with the student's difficulty with wearing a mask will be reviewed and supported.
- Windows will be kept open on the bus throughout the year to the extent that weather conditions allow.
- Each bus will have an attendant on board during the trip to take daily attendance and offer hand sanitizer to students as they board the bus.

Families' role in keeping our school communities safe

- 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 and not to send them to school if they are sick.
- Anyone who is sick will not be allowed in school.
- If you are unsure about sending your child to school, please refer to the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#), or contact 8-1-1, or the local public health unit to seek further input.
- If your child does become sick while at school, they will be isolated and you will be notified and asked to pick up your child as soon as possible.
- Parents should ensure that their child washes his/her hands before school and when they return home.
- Parents may need to remind children to minimize physical contact with their friends.
- Please send proper clothing for all kinds of weather, as we will spend time outdoors when possible.
- Apply sunscreen to your child before they arrive at school, or send sunscreen if they are able to apply themselves (teachers will not be permitted to apply sunscreen to your child).

Our health and safety measures are based on the standards and guidelines issued by the BCCDC, WorkSafe BC and the province*. To see these guidelines, please click on the links below:

- [BC Centre for Disease Control Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)
- [WorkSafe BC Guidelines](#)
- [Provincial K-12 Health and Safety Guidelines](#)
- [B.C.'s K-12 legislative framework and core policies](#)

**Please note: School districts follow the direction of the Provincial Health Officer. If new guidance is issued in the coming days and weeks, there may be additions or changes to the above measures.*

**"This is not forever, but it is for now"
- Dr. Bonnie Henry**

