



# School District 60 Peace River North

## Communicable Disease Prevention

2023 / 2024

**Acknowledgment:**

This document is based on guidance provided by the Provincial Health Officer, BC Communicable Disease Control, The Ministry of Education, WorkSafeBC, and Northern Health Authority.

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Administrators and Supervisors ..... 15  
Employees..... 15  
Staff and Student Awareness ..... 15

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this prevention plan is to provide SD60 staff, students and visitors with

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Indigenous student supports and collaboration with local First Nations, Indigenous and education partners. Boards/authorities are expected to collaborate with local First Nations, and other Indigenous partners, on any changes/updates to the delivery of any programs including "Indigenous language and culture programs, Indigenous support services, and other approved Indigenous programs."

Communicable disease outbreaks and pandemics have a disproportionate impact on First Nations and Indigenous communities. Schools will identify First Nations and Indigenous learners whose educational outcomes may be negatively impacted during periods of increased risk in communities and make accommodations to ensure these students are supported. The needs of First Nations and Indigenous learners who require additional supports will be planned for and prioritized in partnership with parents/caregivers and communities.

As per the [BC Tripartite Education Agreement \(BCTEA\)](#), Boards of Education are also expected to engage with First Nations to identify the transportation needs of First Nations learners living on reserve. Collaboration between boards and First Nations is necessary to ensure there are equitable and safe transportation opportunities for students.

Additional considerations for boards/authorities include:

- Collaboration between educators and Indigenous support staff on the development of Indigenous students' learning plans, including ensuring the integration of language and culture into these plans.

- Awareness and sensitivity regarding the complex and devastating history that pandemics have had on many First Nations and Indigenous communities.

- Understanding that some First Nations families and communities may continue to take increased safety measures, which may mean that some students will not attend in-person instruction during periods of increased risk in communities.

Communication

Boards/authorities have an obligation to work with the First Nations they serve regarding learning plans for Nominal Roll students, Enhancement Agreement goals, Local Education Agreements, Joint Transportation Plans and Equity in Action Plans.

Trauma-informed practice is a compassionate lens of understanding what is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events.

Trauma-informed practice includes:

- Providing inclusive and compassionate learning environments.

- Understanding coping strategies.

- Supporting independence.

- Helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual needs of students and staff.

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Educators and support staff should be aware of changes in student behaviour, including trauma-related behaviours which may include fear, hyperactivity, aggression, body aches and pain, depression, self-harming behaviours, excessive shyness, or withdrawal. To support educators and staff in identifying and responding to the needs of students who have experienced trauma, the Ministry has created [trauma-informed practice resources](#) that are available on the [erase \(Expect Respect and a Safe Education\) website](#).

## Regulatory Compliance

School Districts have transitioned to communicable disease prevention plans. 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, cleaning) and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health.

School District 60 has referred to the following Authorities to ensure that all components of a comprehensive prevention plan have been captured in this document and implemented in all schools / buildings:

[WorkSafeBC](#)

[Province of British Columbia COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)

[BCCDC COVID19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#)

[Ministry of Education – COVID-12 Safe Schools](#)

## WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC is a provincial agency dedicated to promoting safe and healthy workplaces across BC. They partner with workers and employers to prevent work-related injury, disease, and disability. Their services include education, prevention, compensation and support for injured workers, and no-fault insurance to protect employers and workers. WorkSafeBC has developed [Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#) . This guide describes a four-step process to help employers reduce the risk of communicable disease in their workplace, which involves understanding the level of risk in the workplace, application of the fundamentals and implementing appropriate measures, communicating policies and protocols to all workers, and updating measures and safeguards as required.

## Communicable Disease Prevention Plan

Communicable disease prevention plans focus on reducing the risk of transmission of communicable diseases (including COVID-19). The prevention plan will be available on the District website ( [www.prn.bc.ca](http://www.prn.bc.ca) ), in all offices and posted on each safety board in all locations.

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## **Transmission Risk Assessment**

The District has identified general areas in schools where surfaces and other materials are touched often by staff and students, including toys, tech devices and high touch points throughout the building.

## **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. These are more effective in settings such as schools where there is a relatively consistent grouping of people and multiple measures of various effectiveness can be routinely implemented, including:

- Robust illness policies for students and staff.

- Reinforcement and adoption of effective personal practices (e.g. hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette).

- Various environmental measures (e.g., enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, ensuring HVAC systems are operating properly, etc.)

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of communicable disease in schools. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of

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## **Controls Measures and Protocols in Place to Reduce Risk**

This section outlines the measures in place to reduce the risk of transmission of communicable disease in the school environment.

The 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 will 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.

## **Access to Buildings**



Schools do not need to monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness.

### Masks & Face Coverings

The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors. A person's choice should be supported and respected. Masks will be available at the office should a person choose to wear one.

### Hand Hygiene

Hand washing with plain soap and water or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness. Staff, students and visitors will be encouraged to practice frequent hand hygiene. To learn how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to Appendix A.

### Respiratory Etiquette

Staff and students will be encouraged to practice good respiratory etiquette.

Staff have been provided the following direction:

- Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve, 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, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, or vaping devices.

### Personal Space

Staff and students will be encouraged to respect others' personal space.

### Sharing Items

Staff and students are encouraged to not share food, beverages & other items that touch the mouth. Items, such as instrument mouth pieces, must be cleaned and disinfected between use by different individuals.

## Illness Practices / What To Do When Sick

Staff, students, or other persons who are exhibiting new symptoms of illness (including symptoms of COVID-19 or gastrointestinal illness) should stay home and follow the guidance outlined on [BCCDC website](#).

Those unsure or concerned about their symptoms should refer to the information on BCCDC website or connect with a health care provider or call 8-1-1. Staff, children, or other persons in the school setting should follow the guidance on the [BCCDC website](#) as to how long they should stay home. They can return to school when they no longer need

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to self-isolate as long as symptoms have improved, and they are well enough to participate in regular activities.

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

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 enough to where they feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen). Information specific to COVID-19 is available from [BCCDC](#).

Students, staff, and other adults should follow public health guidance, BCCDC guidance, and/or the recommendation of their health care provider when they are sick.

If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school,

Schools will:

Continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who would like to wear one (for both the person who is sick and for those who may be assisting them).

Make arrangements for the student/staff to go 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 are separated from others

- Younger children must be supervised when separated. Supervising staff can wear a non-medical mask, and should avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible and practice diligent hand hygiene.

Clean and disinfect the areas the student/staff used.

Request that the individual stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.

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Schools providing food services will continue to adhere to the required measures under the Food Premises Regulation.

### **Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities**

The District has implemented health and safety measures that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities. Most students with disabilities/diverse abilities or medical complexity are not considered at greater risk of experiencing severe illness from communicable diseases.

#### **Guidelines for Staff and/or Those Working with Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities, Complex Behaviors, Medical Complexities, or Receiving Delegated Care Where Physical Contact May Be Required**

Staff and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct or delegated care, or with disabilities and diverse abilities who are in close proximity to a student should follow routine infection control practices and care plans for the child, if applicable.

Those providing health services in schools may receive guidance related to PPE from their regulatory college or employer. Health service providers are encouraged to work with their employer to confirm what PPE is recommended for the services they provide in school settings.

Parents and caregivers of children who are considered at higher risk of severe illness due to communicable disease (including COVID-19) are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine their child's level of risk. Students are not required to wear a mask or face covering when receiving services, though may continue to base on their or their parent/caregiver's personal choice.

### **Buses**

Buses used for transporting students will be cleaned and disinfected according to the guidance provided in the Cleaning and Disinfecting section of this document. Bus drivers and passengers will practice diligent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette while on the bus.

Bus drivers and passengers may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus.

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

The District must follow WorkSafeBC communicable disease prevention guidance and must provide communication, training and orientation to ensure the health and safety of their workers.

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## Administrators and Supervisors

Following guidelines outlined by both WorkSafeBC and the Ministry of Education, Administrators and Supervisors of SD60 have the following responsibilities:

- Education of proper hand hygiene
- Education of proper respiratory etiquette
- Increase and maintain required cleaning and disinfecting practices
- Promote employee vaccinations
- Encourage and promote employee health and well being
- Follow absenteeism guidelines when over 10%

Administrators are to communicate the information provided in this plan and the District safety protocols with all staff on an ongoing basis.

NOTE: If there are site specific tasks or processes that are identified as a possible risk to staff that has not been identified in the District plan, Administrators will be required to investigate and conduct a risk assessment (with their JHSC) of those tasks or processes to determine if additional controls or measures need to be implemented.

## Employees

Employees of the District are responsible to:

Follow expectations set out by the District, Administrator or Supervisor

Practice proper hand washing procedure and proper respiratory etiquette.

Stay home when sick or displaying symptoms of illness

School based staff – instruct students with age-appropriate techniques, on the proper procedures for washing hands as well as proper respiratory etiquette.

Employees have three key rights:

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## **Workplace Monitoring**

The District will continue to update staff and student

# **Administrator Protocols for Managing Communicable Disease Activity at School**



## Appendix: A Key Contacts, Additional Resources & Links

Board of education questions regarding collective agreements or employment related matters can be directed to the [BC Public School Employers' Association Office of the Provincial Health Officer](#)

Medical Health Officer Contact Information by Health Authority (general inquiries):

[Island Health](#) T: 1 800 204 6166

[Fraser Health](#) T: (604) 918-7532

[Northern Health](#) T: (250) 565-2000

E:[healthyschools@northernhealth.ca](mailto:healthyschools@northernhealth.ca)

[Interior Health](#) T: (250) 469-7070 (ext. 12791)

[Vancouver Coastal Health](#) T: (604) 527-4893

[First Nation Health Authority](#) T: (604) 693-6500

[Special Educational Services: A Manual of Policy, Practices and Guidelines](#) (point of reference providing legislation, policy and guidelines to support the delivery of inclusive education supports and services)

[Resources for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities and diverse abilities Provincial Outreach Programs](#) are available to support boards/authorities through professional learning, resources, consultation and training during recovery.

[Indigenous Education in British Columbia](#)

[Indigenous Education Teaching Tools and Resources](#)

[BC Tripartite Education Agreement \(BCTEA\)](#)

[Métis Nation BC Chartered Communities](#)

[WorkSafeBC Communicable disease prevention \(G-P2-21\)](#)

[WorkSafeBC Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#)

[WorkSafeBC Communicable disease prevention webpage](#)

[Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal - webinar](#)

[Linda O'Neill – Trauma Informed in the Classroom 15](#)

[MCFD: Healing Families, Helping Systems: A Trauma-Informed Practice Guide for Working with Children, Youth and Families](#)

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