

Health and Safety Measures in Schools - Frequently Asked Questions

Will there be a strict adherence to physical distancing?

Always strive to maintain physical distancing, however, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels. For example, younger students should be supported to have minimized physical contact with one another, while older (adolescent) students should seek to maintain a safe physical distance whenever possible. The risk increases with the frequency of contacts as well as the duration of contacts. Therefore, reducing the frequency and duration of contacts is more realistic than the expectation of a strict adherence to physical distancing.

What will staggered drop off and pick up plans look like?

Drop offs and pick up plans will be determined by each site Administrator in consultation with the site Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC).

Can we have students lined up at different doors to avoid large crowds of people waiting to enter the school?

Yes, details regarding entry points are to be determined by each site Administrator in consultation with the site JOHSC. General site entry guidelines are specified in the Staff and Student Safety Plan in the 'Site Entry Protocol' section.

Do we need markings on the floor to direct traffic flow?

Managing travel in common areas such as hallways will be determined by each site Administrator in consultation with the site JOHSC.

What material can we mark the floor with that won't ruin the floors?

If floor markings have been identified as a strategy, the site Administrator will consult with the site's Custodial Contact Person for the preferred type of marking(s).

Should staff and students wear masks?

The District takes guidance from the BC Center for Disease Control (BCCDC). Currently, the BCCDC states that the use of medical grade, cloth or homemade masks in school settings is not required beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work. However, staff and students choosing to wear one is a personal choice and should not be discouraged.

Are we allowed to ask students to wear a mask?

No. Asymptomatic students cannot be asked to wear masks.

Will plexiglass be installed in schools?

Plexiglass is not being recommended for school settings that follow Public Health guidelines. Plexiglass barriers will be offered at locations where the public (parents, visitors, delivery personnel, etc.) may be interacting with the staff. Currently, office receptions will be offered plexiglass barriers.

Will we use lockers, or will students keep all of their personal items in their own space in the classroom?

The expectation is for both staff and students to pack in a minimal amount of personal items that can be kept at the person's workstation or desk. Items should be labeled with person's name.

What will the washroom protocols be for the students to maintain physical distancing while handwashing?

Washroom protocols will be determined by each site Administrator in consultation with the site JOHSC. General shared spaces guidelines are specified in the Staff and Student Safety Plan in the 'Shared Spaces' section and in Appendix 5.

Will there be someone monitoring the entry to washrooms?

Washroom protocols will be determined by each site Administrator in consultation with the site JOHSC.

Will there be someone monitoring the hallways?

Hallway protocols will be determined by each site Administrator in consultation with the site JOHSC. General hallway etiquette is specified in the Staff and Student Safety Plan in the 'Hallway Etiquette' section and in Appendix 5.

Are school playground structures going to be open?

Yes, in collaboration with our municipal partners, school playgrounds will be opened on June 1. Per the Provincial Health Authority, playgrounds are a safe environment and students will follow appropriate personal hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play.

What is the plan for hand sanitization and bathrooms for students and teachers who are in the portables?

Portables and other outbuildings without hand washing facilities will be provided with hand sanitizers. However, hand sanitizers do not replace regular handwashing with soap and water. Regular hand washing should still occur. Classes in portables should build regular handwashing breaks into their schedule.

What is the plan for recess, lunchtime?

Breaks will be staggered. This will be determined by each site Administrator in consultation with the site JOHSC.

What if symptoms are due to allergies?

If the symptoms are at the same time of year, typical allergy symptoms for this person, and relieved with antihistamine or other allergy medications then no specific action is needed. Otherwise a doctor's note is required indicating the individual is fine to attend the site.

How will First Aid be performed?

Designated First Aid Attendants should follow their OFA training and also refer to the newly released WorkSafeBC Guide. If no critical interventions are required and the patient can self-treat, the attendant is to remain at a distance (>2 meters) and direct the patient to self-treat per the OFA protocol. Scenarios are provided in the WorkSafeBC guide.

Can First Aid rooms be used as isolation rooms?

No. First Aid rooms must not be used as isolation rooms as per WorkSafeBC requirements.

Can paper based educational resources and/or books be shared?

The BCCDC has stated: *"There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19."*