

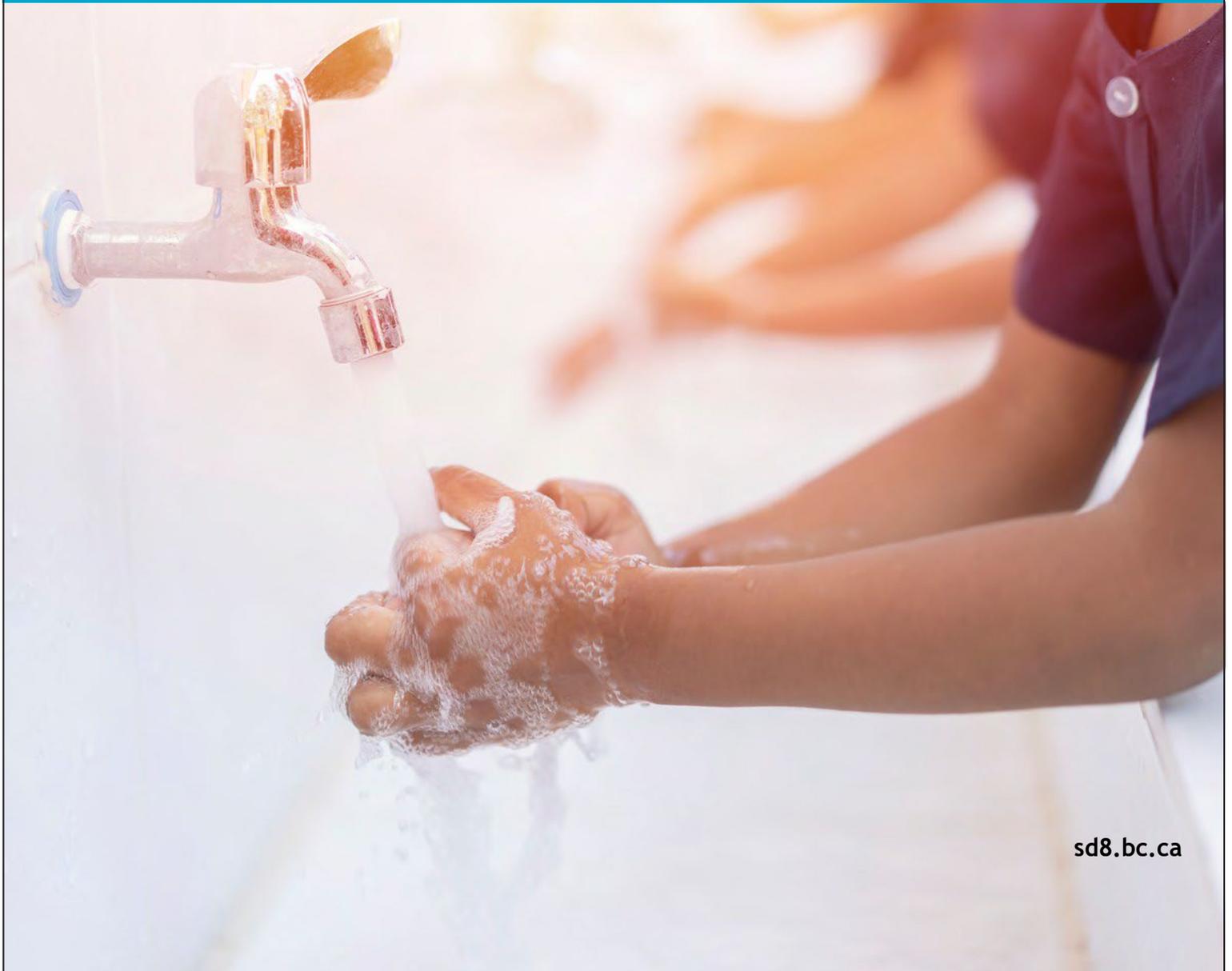


School District 8
Kootenay Lake

Communicable Disease Plan - Addendum 21-A - COVID-19

Information for Students, Parents and Staff

March 2022



sd8.bc.ca

Table of Contents

Introduction	page 2
Key Principles	
Regional Differences	
Infection Prevention & Exposure Control Measures	page 3-7
Supportive School Environments	
Vaccines	
Physical Distancing and Space Arrangement	
Staff Only Spaces	
School Gatherings and Events	
Personal Items	
Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities	page 7
Student Transportation	page 8
Cleaning & Disinfecting	page 9
Visitor Access	page 10
Community Use	page 10
Illness & Self-Assessment Policies and Protocols	page 11-12
Daily Health Checks	
Symptoms of Illness and Return to School	
Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette	page 13
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	page 14
General Ventilation and Air Circulation	page 14
Emergency and Evacuation Drills	page 14
Communication and Training/Orientation	page 15
Curriculum, Programs and Activities	page 15
Appendix A: Safe Work Procedures	
Isolation of Ill Students	
Procedure for Ill Staff	
Washing Masks	
Appendix B:What to Do When Sick	

Introduction

In March 2022, the Ministry of Education updated the Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for the K-12 Settings. Based on guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control, K-12 students can participate in full-time, in-class instruction in accordance with current public health guidelines for schools. These new guidelines outline a return to school that all school districts in British Columbia are expected to implement.

- All school districts are required to have Communicable Disease Prevention plans in place, which focus on reducing the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases.
 - This document is a addendum to this plan to specifically address the period of elevated risk of COVID-19 Transmission
- Controls for Communicable Disease Prevention continue to be:
 - Hand Hygiene,
 - Ventilation,
 - Health Checks,
 - Increased Cleaning and Disinfection, and;

Regional Differences

SD8 will comply with all orders (provincial, regional and local) issued by a Medical Health Officer. These orders or guidelines may augment the Provincial COVID-19 Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings based on epidemiological data. Regional or local orders would consider:

- Increased community transmissions
- Communities with low vaccination uptake
- Local epidemiology

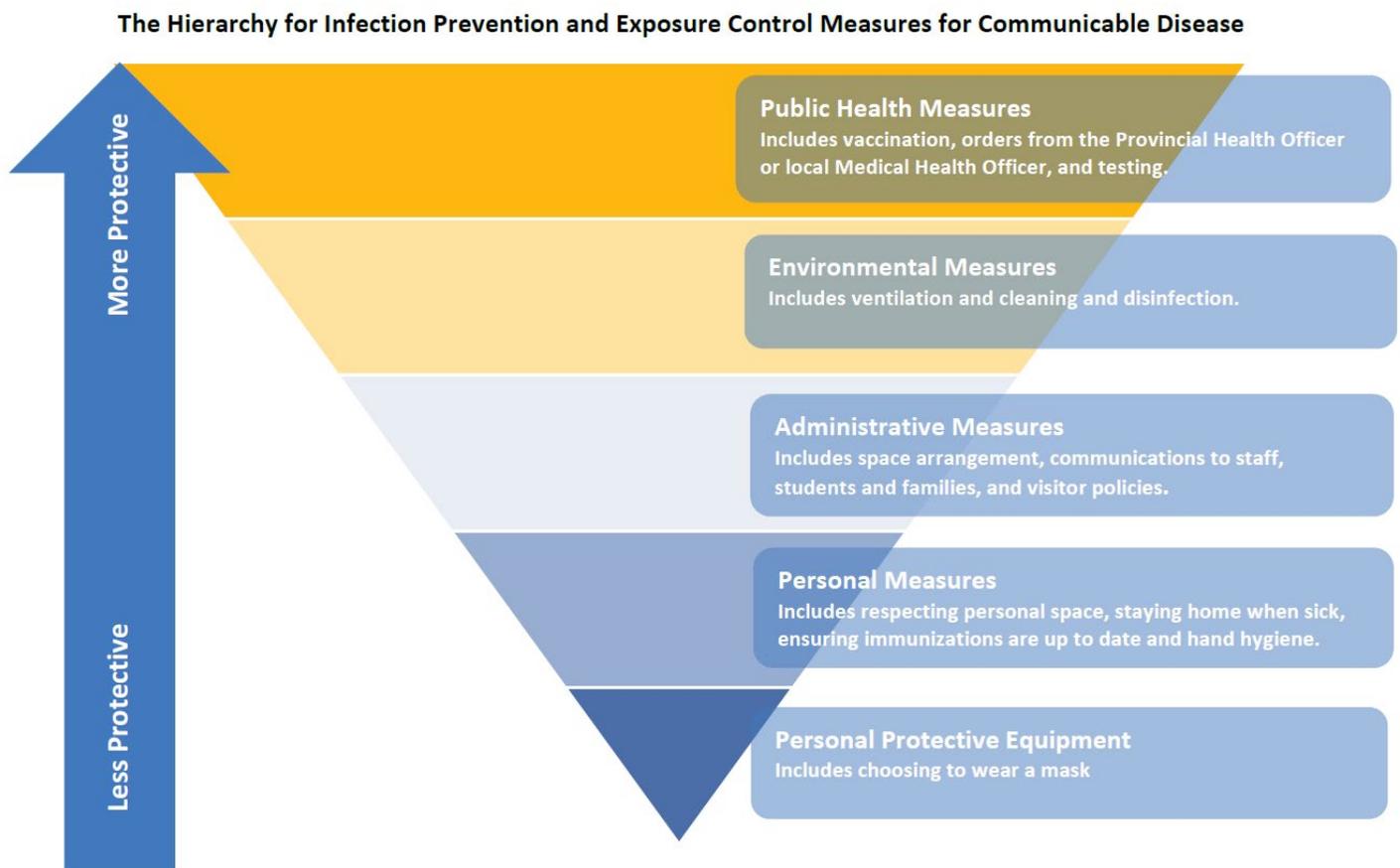
These orders may be issued as part of a local or regional strategy, but may also be issued to an individual school, a grouping of schools, a school district, all schools within the health authority region, or some combination thereof, during times of elevated risk. These measures may include:

- limits on gatherings and events
- reconfiguring room arrangements or incorporating more activities that maximize space between people and reduce face-to-face contact
- limiting visitors
- recommending increased mask use

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 like COVID-19. Schools provide a controlled environment in which access to the public is restricted. As such, these environments allow for greater use of administrative measures as all individuals present, are part of the school environment.

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of COVID-19 in schools. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.



Supportive School Environments

Schools can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model these behaviors.
- Promoting safety measures in the school using visual aids like signage and posters

SD8 will share all links to reliable COVID-19 Information on the district website to provide information to parents, families and caregivers. Additional information that SD8 receives from our Regional Medical Health Officers or Interior Health may be distributed to parents, families and caregivers by the School District or Individual School Administrators

School staff will utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventive practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature.

Staff should 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.

Students and staff may choose to wear additional personal protective equipment in schools beyond the required circumstances outlined in this document, and those choices must be respected. School administrators are encouraged to review the information in this section with their school community, to increase awareness and support from staff, students and families.

Vaccines

Vaccination protects from serious illness due to COVID-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities. All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including from the Omicron variant.

Public health strongly encourages all eligible students and staff to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them including those who are not eligible to be vaccinated.

SD8 will work with Interior Health to:

- Share evidence-based information (e.g. from BCCDC and ImmunizeBC), and details on how and where people can get vaccinated, with staff, students and families prior to the start of the school year; and
- Explore opportunities to establish school-based COVID-19 vaccination clinics to help increase community uptake. This includes provision of space within schools for public health nurses or other qualified health personnel to carry out their duties (including immunization).

While COVID-19 is present in our communities, there will continue to be COVID-19 exposures in schools involving students and staff.

Physical Distancing

Public health no longer recommends learning groups or physical distancing of 2M as communicable disease measures for the K-12 setting. There are a number of strategies that schools can consider to help create space between people and to support students and staff in returning to school using a trauma-informed approach:

- Remind students and staff about respecting others' personal space. Use visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- Consider strategies to create space between people, where it doesn't interfere with learner needs and preferred educational approaches.
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
 - Focus on entry and exit areas, and other places where people may gather or crowd.
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and around lockers, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.
 - Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. It is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure the fire code is adhered to.

Staff Only Spaces

Transmission between adults within the school environment is also an important transmission route to control in the school environment.

Within these spaces, WorkSafeBC Guidelines should be used to determine what measures should be in place.

Within non-student areas within schools, additional precautions should be put in place including:

- Rules and procedures to prevent crowding at gathering areas (such as the break room or photocopier)
- Occupancy limits
- Virtual options of meetings when reasonable.

School Gatherings and Events

For school gatherings and events that bring together multiple classes or other groupings of students (e.g., school assemblies, multiple classes doing a single activity, etc.) from the same school (but members of the school community beyond staff, students and necessary volunteers are not attending), there is not a specific capacity limit.

On March 10th 2022, the Provincial Health Officer announced the Gathering and Events Order requiring proof of vaccination for certain community-led gatherings and events would be lifted end of day on April 7th, 2022.

While that Order is in place, indoor school extracurricular and social gatherings and events that bring together members of the school community beyond staff, students and necessary volunteers (e.g., an arts club performance, community fair, etc.), or that occur between schools (e.g., a music festival, a sports game or tournament, etc.) should not exceed 50 people or 50% operating capacity (whichever is greater) and proof of vaccination requirements should not be implemented.

When the Gatherings and Events Order requiring proof of vaccination for community-led gatherings and events is lifted, all school gatherings and events can return to 100% capacity.

Organizers will apply a trauma-informed lens to their planning, including consideration of:

- respecting student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space;
- using space available to spread people out as much as possible, respecting room occupancy limits, and ensuring enough space is available to prevent involuntarily physical contact between attendees (e.g., overcrowding); and
- gradual transitions to larger gatherings (e.g. school-wide assemblies), including starting with virtual or smaller in-person options, shorter in-person sessions, etc.

Examinations or assessments are not considered school gatherings; however, they must still follow all normal COVID-19 requirements.

Personal Items

Staff and students can continue to bring personal items to school, but they should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices, wind instruments).

Supporting 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 COVID-19. Refer to the [K-12 Recovery Plan](#) for students who have immune suppression.

SD8 is committed to accommodating our students with disabilities or diverse abilities and will work with families to ensure that students have access to learning supports. Parents/Caregivers of students with disabilities/diverse abilities are encouraged to contact their school administrator to discuss available options for their child (including ensuring appropriate preventative measures are in place).

Guidelines for Staff Working with Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities, Complex Behaviors, Medical Complexities, Or Receiving Delegated Care Where Physical Contact may be required

Additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used as part of the personal care routine normally encountered in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting). Those providing health services in schools may be receiving different 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 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 non-medical mask or face covering when receiving services, though may continue to based on their or their parent/caregiver's personal choice.

Student Transportation

Buses

Bus drivers have received instruction on SD8 cleaning and disinfecting procedures. All touch points will be disinfected after scheduled bus runs. In addition, hand sanitizer dispensers are mounted in the stairwell of every bus for student use upon entry to the bus.

Transportation assistance for students requiring accommodations are in place. Students will spread out within the bus when empty spaces are available. Whenever weather permits, windows will be open to allow for increased ventilation of the bus.

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. If a child has any symptoms, they must not take the bus or go to school.

Students should clean their hands before they leave home to take the bus, when they leave school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home. Where possible, bus line up areas should be set up to prevent crowding and students should put on their masks prior to boarding the bus.

Carpooling

When staff, students or others carpool as part of SD8 activities, the following protocols should be followed:

- Weather permitting, all windows should be opened.
- If the weather is poor, the vehicle's ventilation should be turned on and set to bring in fresh outside air. Do not use air recirculation.
- Travel with the same people whenever possible.
- Spread out within the vehicle as much as possible.
- All vehicle occupants should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after trips
- Clean frequently touched surfaces within the vehicle regularly.

SD8 encourages families and staff who carpool outside of school hours to follow the same protocols where possible.

Other Methods of Transportation

Staff, students or visitors who take mass transit (such as BC Transit buses or any of the inland ferries within SD8) should wash their hands following trips and ensure they are following any other safety guidance issued by the transit operator.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces.

Frequency of Cleaning and Disinfecting

SD8 will continue to perform daily general cleaning of all sites. Frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least once in a 24-hour period. These frequently touched surfaces include:

- Items used by larger numbers of students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles.
- Shared equipment (e.g. computer keyboards and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for science labs, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing machines and sewing equipment for home economic programs, PE/sports equipment, music equipment, etc.)
- Appliances (staff and students can share the use of appliances and other objects, but treat items like microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers or laminators as frequently touched surfaces)
- Service counters (e.g., office service window, library circulation desk)

Areas that are not used in a day will not require cleaning.

Cleaning of Teaching Materials, Fabrics and Other Materials

When using teaching materials, toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g. fabrics) or at all (e.g. sand, foam, playdough, etc.), may be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use. Carpets and rugs (e.g. in Kindergarten and StrongStart classes) can also be used.

No cleaning or additional hand washing is required when handling:

- Textbooks, papers or other paper-based products;
- Laminated or Glossy Paper-based products (e.g. Children's books or magazines) and;
- Items with plastic covers (DVDs)

Cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids will be conducted in accordance with SD8 procedures for universal precautions and bodily fluid cleanup.

Staff or students doing laundry should ensure hand washing is practiced after loading a laundry machine. Dirty items should not be shaken, and plastic liners should be used in the laundry basket when collecting items to be washed.

Visitor Access

Schools can leave front doors unlocked for visitor access. All visitors to SD8 sites are encouraged to make an appointment if they wish to meet with any SD8 staff.

Information on communicable disease protocols and requirements for visitors will be posted by the entrance to the school, on the school's website and included in communications to students and families.

Parents/caregivers and other visitors should respect others' personal space while on school grounds, including outside

Community Use

After hours community use of facilities is permitted in alignment with other health and safety measures. The school administrator will ensure that community groups have a communicable disease plan in place that ensures:

- Diligent hand hygiene
- Respiratory etiquette
- Ensuring participants stay home if they are feeling ill
- Where possible, limiting building access to only those areas required for the purpose of the activity

Illness & Self-Assessment Policies and Protocols

Daily Health Checks

Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school. Parents, caregivers and students can utilize the Daily Health Check & What to Do When Sick resource (<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/bulletin/20220121/daily-health-check---jan-2022.pdf>) for daily assessment of symptoms.

Staff and other adults should review the posted list of symptoms and perform an active daily health check prior to entering the school. If there are any doubts, please use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool (<https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>)

If a student, staff or other adult is required to self-isolate they must stay home and should not enter any SD8 site. If as a SD8 staff member you are required by Interior Health to self-isolate, please contact your supervisor by phone immediately.

School Staff Responsibilities

- Ensure staff and other adults (e.g. parents, caregivers, visitors) entering the school/worksites are aware of their responsibility to complete a daily health check prior to entering the school/worksites (e.g. emails/letters to parents and staff, orientation video, signage on doors) and to stay home if they are sick.
- Clearly communicate with parents/caregivers their responsibility to complete a daily health check with their child, and keep them home from school if they are sick.
- Follow the applicable safe work procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work to be sent home as soon as possible.

Schools and districts should not require a health-care provider note (e.g. a status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practices).

Symptoms of Illness and Return to School

Students, staff or other adults should stay at home when sick, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction to and the spread of COVID-19 in schools. The following resources provide guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness:

- BC CDC Information on when to get a COVID-19 Test (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/testing/when-to-get-a-covid-19-test>)
- Daily Health Check & What To Do When Sick Tool (Included in this document)
- BC CDC Self Assessment Tool (<https://bc.thrive.health/>)

Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g. seasonal allergies) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a healthcare provider.

Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness and/or has tested positive for COVID-19, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. BCCDC has more information for those considered a close contact, which are usually people from the same household (<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/self-isolation/close-contacts>).

A health-care provider notes (i.e. a doctor's note) is not be required to confirm the health status of any individual.

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Rigorous handwashing with plain soap and water or hand sanitizer is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness (antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19). SD8 schools will encourage students to make use of handwashing facilities and will promote the importance of this activity with signage and posters.

To be effective, hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. Staff and students should make frequent use of handwashing facilities where available. Hand sanitizer should only be used in areas where hand washing is not readily available. Hand sanitizer should not be used when hands are visibly dirty.

When to Perform Hand Hygiene

When Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When they arrive at school and before they go home.• Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch).• Between different learning environments (e.g. outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).• Before and after eating and drinking.• After using the bathroom.• After handling common resources/equipment/supplies or pets.• After sneezing or coughing into hands.• Whenever hands are visibly dirty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When they arrive at school and before they go home.• Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch).• Between different learning environments• (e.g. outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom).• Before and after eating and drinking.• Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating.• Before and after giving medication to a student or self.• After using the bathroom.• After contact with body fluids (i.e. runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).• After cleaning tasks.• After removing gloves.• After handling garbage.• Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Respiratory Etiquette

Control of coughs and sneezes is also an important tool in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Staff and students should cough or sneeze into their elbow, sleeve or tissue and direct coughs and sneezes away from individuals wherever possible. Following a sneeze or cough, any tissue should be thrown away and hands should be washed.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Masks are no longer required within SD8 schools and buildings. The decision to wear a non-medical mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors. A person's choice should be supported and treated with respect.

SD8 will continue to have non-medical masks on and for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one, or who become ill at school.

Masks are not a replacement for any other control and should not be used by an individual displaying COVID-19 symptoms to report to work or school.

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 the virus. Good indoor air ventilation alone cannot protect people from exposure to COVID-19; however, it may reduce risk when used in addition to other preventive measures.

SD8's Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems are operating in compliance with Part 4 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. These HVAC systems are maintained in accordance with best industry practice. SD8 is working to identify areas where systems can be upgraded or run at increased capacity to increase the number of air exchanges.

Staff and students should not use portable air conditioners or fans in unventilated spaces.

Emergency and Evacuation Drills

It is critical that emergency and evacuation drills continue even during the COVID-19 pandemic. School administrators will continue to conduct fire drills and other emergency drills. School administrators will ensure that muster points for emergency drills are also spaced to ensure that classes make use of the space available to them to muster.

Communication and Training/Orientation

SD8 is committed to assisting Interior Health Regional Medical Health Officers and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) in communicating out guidance, recommendations, and orders. SD8 will also continue to communicate to staff and parents about changes to COVID-19 protocols using various means including:

- Emails,
- Letters,
- School and district websites,
- Staff meetings,
- Memos, and
- Orientations

All staff will be updated on any changes to the COVID-19 Safety Plan and Communicable Disease Plan. School administrators should ensure all staff know how to report health and safety concerns and understand the protocols in place to keep them safe.

School Based Joint Health and Safety Committees will need to discuss Communicable Disease Protocols monthly.

Curriculum, Programs and Activities

All curriculum, programs and activities should operate in alignment with [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#), including school-led activities held off campus (e.g. sports academies, community-based programs/courses).

Schools should continue to implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices (e.g. cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to the activity.

In general, these practices should include:

- cleaning/disinfecting equipment,
- hand hygiene practices specific to the activity,

For more information on course specific guidelines please see the [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)

Isolation of Ill Students

Purpose: This safe work procedure establishes how to safely move a student to the designated sick area if they become ill.

Steps:

1. If a student becomes ill, schools should have a space available where the student can wait comfortably and is separated from others, and should have non-medical masks available for those experiencing respiratory symptoms who would like to wear one
2. Escort the student to the isolation room. Ensure the student is supervised until picked up.
3. Inform the Principal on site.
4. Collect the student's personal items.
5. The Principal on site will phone the parent/guardian or emergency contact and have them pick up their child. Note the time the child was picked up.
6. After the child has left, close the door to the isolation room, and do not allow anyone entrance to the room. Post a sign indicating that the room requires modified cleaning procedures. Inform the custodian as soon as possible.
7. The Principal on site will phone the SD8's Health and Safety Officer and Superintendent and inform them of what has occurred.
8. A cleaning protocol under the direction of the Health and Safety Officer will be implemented.

Procedure of Ill Staff

Purpose: This safe work procedure establishes how staff should leave the school/site if they begin to develop symptoms while at work.

Steps:

1. Inform/text the Principal/your Supervisor immediately. Schools should have a space available where the staff can wait comfortably and is separated from others, and should have non-medical masks available for those experiencing respiratory symptoms who would like to wear one.
2. If unable to immediately leave site, Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others to wait until they are able to leave the site. Otherwise, staff should leave the site and head home.
3. Once symptomatic staff leave site, the area they waited in should be cleaned and disinfected.
4. Once the staff member leaves the site, clean and disinfect any areas they were in.
5. The Principal or Supervisor on site will phone the SD8's Health and Safety Officer and Superintendent and inform them of what has occurred.

Appendix A: Safe Work Procedures cont.

Washing Masks

Purpose: This safe work procedure is to direct staff in how to wash their reusable non-medical masks.

Steps:

If used, Masks should be washed after each use at the end of the day. The two primary methods of washing are:

A) Washing Machine/Dryer

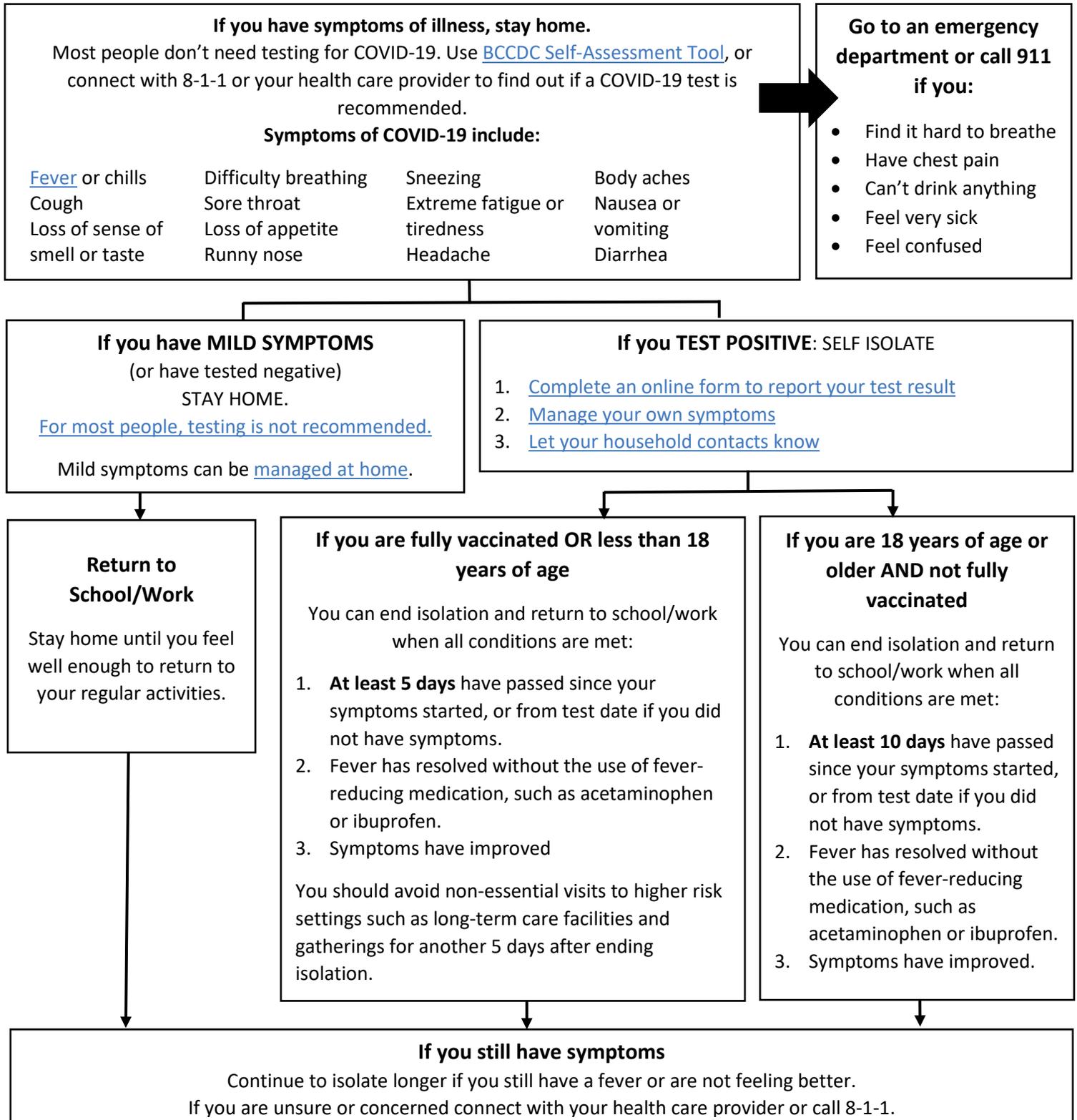
1. You can include your mask with your regular laundry.
2. Use regular laundry detergent and the cold water setting to avoid shrinking cotton masks.

B) Tumble dry on the low heat setting.

1. Handwashing
2. Wash the mask thoroughly using soap and cold water.
3. Allow the mask to dry completely before reusing it. If possible, place the mask in direct sunlight to dry.

Appendix B:What to Do When Sick

Summary: What To Do When Sick



What to do if someone is sick in your household:

You can continue to attend school if someone in your household is sick and/or self-isolating as long as you do not have any symptoms of illness and feel well. This includes if they have tested positive for COVID-19. Ensure you closely monitor yourself (or your child) for symptoms of illness and stay home if you feel unwell. The best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. Vaccines are available for anyone ages 5 and up. Register now at: Getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca