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# **School District #62 (Sooke)**

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# **COVID-19**

## **Health and Safety**

## **Information for**

## **Parents/Guardians**

**\*Please note this document is subject to change please view most current version on the SD62 website: [SD62 Website](#)**

## **Purpose**

The intent of this handbook is to inform School District #62 Sooke (SD 62) families regarding the Health & Safety precautions for SD 62 sites during COVID-19.

## **Background**

The BC Center for Disease Control has published the following information in its July 29, 2020 COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings,

- In BC, less than 1% of children have been COVID-19 positive (ages 0-19).
- Based on published literature to date, most cases in children have been linked household transmission by droplet spread from a symptomatic adult family member.
- There is no conclusive evidence that children who are symptomatic or asymptomatic pose a risk to other children or to adults, though it is hypothesized to exist.
- Children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in schools or community settings.
- For younger children maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead.
- For school-age children, the focus is on maintaining cohorts (learning groups), or, if not possible, physical distancing, if that is not possible, wearing of masks.

## **Transmission mitigation strategies**

- If ill, staff and students must be excluded from work/school and stay home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have resolved.
- The consistent practice of good respiratory etiquette, physical distancing (2 meters) and hand hygiene.
- Non-medical masks can be used when physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained and the person is interacting with people outside of their cohort (learning group) for an extended period of time (e.g. on a school bus for middle and secondary students, etc.).
- Follow the guidelines from the Health Minister and Self-Isolate, when required.
  - Contact 811 for guidance or
  - Complete the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool
- Do not share office equipment like pens, scissors, staplers, etc.
- Do not share food (fruit trays, deli trays, etc.)
- No skin to skin contact with others (handshaking, hugging, etc.)
- Avoid touching your face with your hands
- Whenever possible, relocate to another workspace or location to maximize physical distancing
- Avoid close greetings (e.g. hugs or handshakes). Regularly remind students to keep 'hands to themselves' (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).

## **Cohorts (Learning Groups):**

### ***Description:***

- Reducing the number of in-person, close interactions an individual has in a day with different people helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This can be accomplished in K-12 school settings through two different but complementary approaches: cohorts and physical distancing.
  - A cohort is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term.
    - Physical distancing will not be the focus for these groups, the focus will be on limiting physical contact.
  - Physical distancing is maintaining a distance of 2 meters between two or more people (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).

### ***Cohort (Learning Groups) Sizes:***

- Elementary School and Middle School: A cohort can be composed of up to 60 people. The cohort can be composed of students and staff.
- Secondary School: A cohort can be composed of up to **120** people. The cohort can be composed students and staff.
- Cohorts are smaller in elementary and middle schools due to the recognition that younger children are less able to consistently implement personal measures such as hand hygiene, reducing physical contact and recognizing and articulating symptoms of illness (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).
- Cohorts are larger in secondary schools due to the increased ability of children in that setting to be able to consistently minimize physical contact, practice hand hygiene, ensure physical distance where necessary and recognize and articulate symptoms of illness (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).

### ***Additional Cohort Information:***

Students from different cohorts may be required to be together to receive beneficial social supports, programs, or services (e.g., meal programs, after school clubs, etc.). Within these supports or services, it is expected that cohorts and physical distance are maintained as much possible while still ensuring the support, program, or service continues. This does not apply to extracurricular activities where physical distance between cohorts must be maintained (WorkSafeBC, August 11, 2020).

Cohort composition can be changed at the start of a new quarter, semester or term in the school year. Outside of these, composition should be changed as minimally as possible, except where required to support optimal school functioning. This may include learning, operational or student health and safety considerations (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).

## **School Environment**

The following are considerations for classrooms and other SD 62 buildings,

- Sufficient ventilation in classrooms that meets WorkSafeBC legislative requirements and building standards.
- Where possible, natural ventilation should be maximized by opening the doors and windows to periodically change the air.
  - As per WorkSafeBC legislative requirements (OHSR 4.79) if air quality concerns are brought forward, they will be investigated accordingly.
- In classrooms,
  - Arrange desks so students are not facing each other and
  - Use consistent assigned seating arrangements (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, August 17, 2020).

- It may be helpful for classrooms to be decluttered with non-essential items and furniture removed to allow for efficient and effective ongoing and nightly custodial cleaning and disinfecting.
- Classrooms with students and staff within a cohort will allow for 100% classroom occupancy.
- Hand wash stations will have liquid soap (NO bar soap) and paper towel.
  - If no handwashing sink is located in the classroom, students and staff will have access to designated handwashing stations or washrooms or hand sanitizer dispensers.
- Mass Gatherings:
  - The Provincial Health Officer’s Order for Mass Gathering Events, prohibiting the gathering of more than 50 people for the purpose of an event, does not apply to schools.
  - Schools should continue to exercise caution in gathering large groups of people together, particularly those from different cohorts.
  - No gathering should exceed the maximum cohort size in the setting, plus the minimum number of people (e.g. school staff, visitors, etc.) to meet the gathering’s purpose and intended outcome. Additional people should be minimized as much as practical to do so.
  - These gatherings should happen minimally.
    - Schools should seek virtual alternatives for staff meetings, assemblies and other gatherings (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).
- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is transmitted via text books, paper or other paper-based products therefore there is no need to limit these items.
  - Laminated paper-based products need to be cleaned and disinfected, as per the Enhanced Cleaning SWP COVID-19, daily if they are touched by multiple people.
- The sharing of personal items between students and staff (e.g. electronic devices, pens, etc.) should be limited (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, August 17, 2020).
  - If electronics are to be shared they must be cleaned between users.
- If lockers or cubbies are to be used, they must not be shared.

## **Instructional Time**

Strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times will be implemented.

- Where possible, staggered recess/snack, lunch and class transition times will occur to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.

## **Specialty Teaching Areas**

No additional cleaning procedures are needed when different cohorts use the same space (e.g. classroom, gym, arts room, home economics or science lab) (BC CDC, July 29, 2020). Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, August 17, 2020).

Extracurricular activities including sports, arts or special interest clubs can occur if physical distance can be maintained between members of different cohorts and reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same cohort.

Inter-school events (competitions, tournaments and festivals) are not permitted to occur at this time (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).

## **School District Transportation/Buses:**

- 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.
- 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.
- Middle and secondary students should wear non-medical masks or face coverings.
  - These should be put on before loading and taken off after offloading (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, August 17, 2020).

## **Handwashing Facilities:**

- Hand hygiene stations at each school entrance and portable entrance will available for students and staff to use upon entry.
  - They will either be a hand sanitizing station or a portable hand washing sink.
- Soap (NOT bar soap) and water are the preferred method for cleaning hands.

### ***Handwashing is required for students,***

- When they arrive at school and leave school.
- Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).
- Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student's desk or locker).
- Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple cohorts (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.).
- After using the toilet.
- After using the gym.
- After sneezing or coughing into hands.
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty.
- Before touching face (nose, eyes or mouth)
- Before and after use of play structure/playground
- After handling common resources.

## **Illness**

Any student experiencing symptoms of illness should not return to school until they have been assessed by a health-care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases AND their symptoms have resolved.

### ***Daily Self-Assessment for Illness:***

- If a student is ill, with any common cold, influenza or COVID-19 like symptoms, parents/guardians must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have resolved.
- Parents/guardians 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 go to school.***
- Those unsure of if a student should self-isolate or be tested for COVID-19 should be directed to use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool.
  - They can also be advised to contact 8-1-1, a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.
  - If concerned, they can be advised to contact the local public health unit to seek further guidance.

- Students may still attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms, provided the student/staff is asymptomatic. It is expected the symptomatic household member is seeking assessment by a health care provider.
- Students who experience *seasonal allergies or other COVID-19-like symptoms that are related to an existing condition* can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. If they experience any change in symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health care provider.

***If students become ill while on site:***

- Any student exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms must move to the supervision area.
- Parents / caregivers must be notified and advised to pick-up the child immediately.
- Students will have a non-medical mask or face covering available should they become ill while at school.
- Except for the designated site-manager or principal/vice-principal, there must be no access to the supervision area when it is occupied.
- There must be no access to the room after a child is picked-up until cleaning and disinfecting has been performed by custodial staff as per the Enhanced Cleaning SWP COVID-19.
- Students will have a non-medical mask available should they become ill while at school.

**Arrival procedures:**

- Parents/guardians must remain outside of the school to drop off their children. They must not enter the school.
- Physical distancing of 2 metres between adults and students must be maintained while students are being dropped off or picked up, unless within cohort.

**Site-Specific Building Access Protocol:**

- **Parent/guardians and visitors must not enter the school/site building. Only SD 62 staff and students may enter.**
- If an approved visitor is granted access to an SD 62 site, the site-manager or principal/vice-principal must ensure the visit is logged in the “Visitors Check-in” site.
  - Visitors should be prioritized to those that benefit student learning and wellbeing (WorkSafeBC, August 11, 2020).
  - All visitors must confirm they have completed the daily self-assessment for illness before visiting the site (WorkSafeBC, August 11, 2020).

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**

- Non-medical masks can be used when physical distancing cannot be consistently maintained and the person is interacting with people outside of their cohort for an extended period of time (e.g. on a school bus, etc.) (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).
- Students may choose to wear non-medical masks while interacting within their cohort.
- No student is required to wear a non-medical mask if they do not tolerate it (WorkSafeBC, August 11, 2020).

## **Cleaning and Disinfecting:**

- All disinfectants, detergents, hand sanitizers must be safely stored out of reach of children.
- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises at least once in a 24-hour period.
  - This includes items that only a single student uses, like an individual desk or locker.
- In addition, to the cleaning and disinfecting of the premises, cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces at least twice in 24 hours.
  - These include door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students, keyboards and toys (BC CDC, July 29, 2020).
  - Including at least once during regular school hours (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, August 17, 2020).
- Custodians will check supplies (paper towel and soap) in the school daily.
- Garbage must be emptied daily.
- Building access protocols will be followed to ensure custodial staff are aware of areas that have been occupied for cleaning and disinfecting purposes.

### ***Toys and Sports Equipment:***

- SD 62 staff will select the minimum number of toys and sports related equipment required. Selected items must be easily cleaned. Stuffed toys or porous items should be avoided.
- Parents/guardians must not allow students to bring toys from home, **unless approved by administration.**
- Playground use is permitted within cohorts, hands must be washed before and after use. Students should avoid touching face (nose, mouth and eyes) when using the equipment and line up and wait their turn to avoid congestion. If the playground is to be used between cohorts, physical distancing should be maintained.

## **Food:**

- No food sharing for students.
- Parents should not send food for sharing, eg.cupcakes for birthday celebrations.

## **Behaviour Support Plans, Personal Care Plans and Worker Safety Plans**

Student plans to support specific needs are reviewed on a case-by-case to determine necessary levels of support required to safely support students within the school environment. Any support plans will be provided to the site-based Administrator.

### **References**

- Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, August 17, 2020.*  
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines.pdf>
- BC CDC, COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings, July 29, 2020.*  
[http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID\\_public\\_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf)
- WorkSafeBC, August 11, 2020.*  
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/education>
- Guidance for Music Classes in BC During COVID-19 June 26, 2020.*  
<https://engage.sd62.bc.ca/system/files/uploads/documents/COVID%2019%20Guidance%20for%20Music%20Class.pdf>