



School District #62 (Sooke)

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 Sept. 11, 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

- Parents/guardians must conduct a Daily Health Check before sending their child to school and follow the process detailed in the Daily Health Check, as per the appendix.
- 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 (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 2020).
 - **Cohort** is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term. Cohort reduce the number of in-person, close interactions an individual has in a day

with different people helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 2020).

- **Physical distancing is maintaining** 2 meters of distance between two or more people (BC CDC Sept. 11, 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, Sept. 11, 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, Sept. 11, 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, Sept. 11, 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 create space between staff/students as much as possible:
 - Configure classroom and learning environment differently to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
 - For middle and secondary schools, consider arranging desks/tables so students are not facing each other and using consistent seating arrangements (BC CDC Sept. 11, 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, 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, Sept. 11, 2020).
 - When meetings occur in-person, physical distance (2m) must be maintained.
 - 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 (BC CDC Sept. 11, 2020).
 - 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.
- For library books, laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g., magazines and children's books) and items with plastic covers (e.g., DVDs) do not require libraries to quarantine or disinfect their loaned items can be contaminated.
 - The risk of transmission between users of borrowed items is very low (BC CDC Guidance for Public Libraries during the COVID-19 Pandemic).
 - Students and staff should wash hands before and after using the library.
- 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, September 3, 2020).
 - If electronics are to be shared they must be cleaned between users, as per process below.
- If lockers or cubbies are to be used, they must not be shared.
- Water fountains can continue to be used, as access to water should not be restricted. Students and staff should be encouraged to use personal water bottles. If using water fountains, students and staff should practice hand hygiene before and after use, and should not place their mouth on the fountain. Water fountains should be cleaned as a frequently touched item (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 2020).
 - Water fountains where a person drinks directly from the spout should be used minimally, and only if no other means of water access are available. Hand hygiene should be practiced before and after use (BC CDC Sept. 11, 2020).

Instructional Time

- Consider strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
- Where possible, stagger recess/snack, lunch and class transition times 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, Sept. 11, 2020). Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 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.

Interschool Events:

- Inter-school events (competitions, tournaments and festivals) are not permitted to occur at this time (BC CDC, Sept. 11, 2020).

School District Transportation/Buses:

- Parents/guardians must conduct a daily health check before sending their child to school and follow the process detailed in the Daily Health Check.
- 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.
 - These should be put on before loading and taken off after offloading (BC CDC, Sept. 11, 2020).

Handwashing Facilities:

- Hand hygiene stations at each school entrance and portable entrance will be 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

Parents/guardians must conduct a Daily Health Check before sending their child to school and follow the process detailed in the Daily Health Check located in the appendix.

Daily Self-Assessment for Illness:

Principals/Vice-Principals or Site-Managers must ensure school staff, students and other adults (e.g. parents, caregivers, visitors, etc.) entering the school are aware of their responsibility to perform a daily health check before entering the site.

- Parents/guardians must conduct a daily health check before sending their child to school
 - **If a child is sick they should stay home.**
- Those unsure 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 811, a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.
 - If concerned, they can be advised to contact the local public health unit to seek further guidance.
- There is no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health-care professionals.
- If a student becomes ill while on site, they must follow the process below “If students become ill while on site.”
- Students may still attend school if a member of their household has cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms, provided the student is asymptomatic. As per public health guidance, it is expected the symptomatic household member is seeking assessment by a health care provider.
 - If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student on self-isolation and when they may return to school (BC CDC Sept. 11, 2020).

If a student becomes ill while on site:

- Any student who becomes ill while on site must move to the supervision area.
- Parents/guardians must be notified and advised to pick-up the child immediately.
- Student will wait in supervision area until parent/guardian comes to pick them up.
- Staff supervising symptomatic children must use strict hand washing techniques and maintain physical distancing (2 m).
 - If not possible, staff must wear a non-medical mask.
- Student will have a non-medical mask available should they become ill while at school.
- There must be no access to the supervision area after a child is picked-up until cleaning and disinfecting has been performed by custodial staff (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 2020).
- A health-care provider note should not be required for students or staff to return (BC CDC, Sept. 11, 2020).

Arrival procedures for students and families:

- 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:

- If an approved visitor or contractors 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 and BC CDC Sept. 11, 2020).
 - All visitors or contractors must confirm they have completed the daily self-assessment for illness before visiting the site (WorkSafeBC, August 11, 2020).
 - Adult visitors must wear a non-medical mask when on site when unable to maintain physical distance (2 m) (BC CDC Sept 11, 2020).
 - Site-manager or principal/vice-principal must ensure that visitor and contractors are aware of health and safety protocols and requirements prior to entering the school (e.g. maintaining physical distance, requirement to wear a non-medical mask in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained.) (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 2020).

Access Control:

- **Parent/guardians and visitors must not enter the school/site building. Only SD 62 staff and students may enter.**
- If an approved visitor or contractors 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 and BC CDC Sept. 11, 2020).
 - All visitors or contractors must confirm they have completed the Daily Health Check 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 (e.g. on a school bus, etc.) (BC CDC, Sept. 11, 2020).
- Students may choose to wear non-medical masks while interacting within their cohort.
- Students will not be required to wear a non-medical mask due to medical or disability reasons (BC CDC Sept. 11, 2020).
- Students in Middle and Secondary school are required to wear non-medical masks in high traffic areas such as buses and in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 2020).
- Non-medical masks are not recommended for elementary-aged students due to the increased likelihood they will touch their face and eyes, as well as require assistance to properly put on and take off their mask (requiring increased close personal contact from school staff) (BC CDC Sept. 11, 2020).

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- All disinfectants, detergents, hand sanitizers must be stored safely 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, but not limited to, door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks and chairs used by multiple students (BC CDC, Sept. 11, 2020).
 - Including at least once during regular school hours (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, September 3, 2020).
- Custodial staff will keep spray bottles with Percept cleaner (or equivalent) and paper towels readily accessible for WHMIS trained SD 62 staff to clean their work area and IT equipment. If required, staff may request a bucket with Percept solution for disinfecting toys or other items.

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 staff or students.
- Parents should not send food for sharing, e.g. 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, September 3, 2020.

<file:///X:/School%20Board%20Office/Health%20And%20Safety/Communicable%20diseases/Coronavirus/4%20August%202024-September%207,%202020%20updates/k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines%20Sept%203,%202020.pdf>

BC CDC, COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings, Sept. 11, 2020.

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>

BC CDC Guidance for Public Libraries During the COVID-19 Pandemic

<http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID-19-Guidance-Libraries.pdf>

Appendix – Daily Health Check – Parents/Guardians

Daily Health Check			
1. Key Symptoms of Illness	Does your child have any of the following symptoms?	Circle One	
	Fever	Yes	No
	Chills	Yes	No
	Cough or worsening of chronic cough	Yes	No
	Shortness of breath	Yes	No
	Loss of sense of smell or taste	Yes	No
	Diarrhea	Yes	No
	Nausea and vomiting	Yes	No
2. International Travel	Have you returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	Yes	No
3. Confirmed Contact	Are you a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	Yes	No

If you answered “YES” to one of the questions included under ‘Key Symptoms of Illness’ (excluding fever), the student should stay home for 24 hours from when the symptom started. If the symptom improves, the child may return to school when they feel well enough. If the symptom persists or worsens, seek a health assessment.

If you answered “YES” to two or more of the questions included under ‘Symptoms of Illness’ or the child has a fever, seek a health assessment. A health assessment includes calling 8-1-1, or a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner. If a health assessment is required, the child should not return to school until COVID-19 has been excluded and their symptoms have improved.

When a **COVID-19 test** is recommended by the health assessment:

- If the COVID-19 test is **positive**, the child should stay home until you are told by public health to end self-isolation. In most cases this is 10 days after the onset of symptoms. Public health will contact everyone with a positive test.
- If the COVID-19 test is **negative**, the child can return to school once symptoms have improved and they feel well enough. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless they develop a new illness.
- If a COVID-19 **test is recommended but is not done** because you choose not to have the test, or you do not seek a health assessment when recommended, and the child's symptoms are not related to a previously diagnosed health condition, you should stay home from school until 10 days after the onset of symptoms, and then the child may return if they are feeling well enough.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, the child can return to school when symptoms improve and they feel well enough. Testing may not be recommended if the assessment determines that the symptoms are due to another cause (i.e. not COVID-19).

If you answered “YES” to questions 2 or 3, use the COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool to determine if the child should seek testing for COVID-19.

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

PARENTS CONSENT OF UNDERSTANDING:

I have read and reviewed the Daily Health Check and understand I must complete this daily for my child before they arrive on-site. I will review this checklist daily when assessing my child.

Once you have reviewed this document, please consent as per school’s process confirming that you understand this and that you will assess your child daily for symptoms.