



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 Feb. 4, 2021, COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings,

- Children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in schools, community settings or households.
 - Based on published literature to date, the majority of cases in children are the result of household transmission from an asymptomatic adult family member with COVID-19. Within households and family groupings, adults appear to be the primary drivers of transmission. Older children are more likely to transmit than younger children.
- Schools do not appear to result in significant increases in community transmission of COVID-19.
 - Increasing evidence supports that widespread asymptomatic transmission is not driving transmission in schools.
- For adults working within schools:
 - **Transmission from staff to staff is more likely than among staff to students, students to staff, or students to students.**
 - There does not appear to be a higher risk of COVID-19 at school than in the community or in their household.

Transmission mitigation strategies

- Parents/guardians must conduct a daily health check before sending their child to school and follow the process detailed in Appendix A.
 - **If a child is sick they should stay home and not ride the bus.**
- All middle and secondary school students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a nonmedical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their cohort except when:
 - sitting in (or standing at) their seat or desk/workstation (including shared tables) in a classroom/learning environment;
 - While this exception applies regardless of the physical distance between students or their specific seating configuration, schools should configure classrooms and learning environments to maximize distance between students and avoid face-to-face seating arrangements where possible.
 - there is a barrier in place;
 - eating and drinking; or
 - outdoors (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
 - Middle/secondary students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses. (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- Elementary students are not required to wear a mask in schools or on school buses. Elementary students' mask use should be based on their personal or parent/guardian choice, and their choices must be respected.

- Masks are not required for elementary school students based on international evidence regarding younger children’s capacity to comply with the correct use of masks (e.g. frequent touching/removal of mask, wearing mask incorrectly, etc.), and potential impact of mask wearing on learning and development (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- The consistent practice of good respiratory etiquette, physical distancing (2 meters) and hand hygiene.
- 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
- Avoid close greetings (e.g. hugs or handshakes). Regularly remind students to keep ‘hands to themselves’ (BC CDC, Feb. 4, 2021).

Cohorts (Learning Groups):

Description:

- **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, Feb. 4, 2021).
- **Physical distancing** refers to a range of measures aimed at reducing close contact with others.
 - Within cohorts, physical distancing should include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available.
 - Middle and secondary students - when interacting students and staff outside of their cohort, students should maintain 2 m.

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 (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- Cohorts are larger in Middle and Secondary school due to the students capable of consistently maintaining physical distance, when it is required, should be expected to do so. If a student is unable to physically distance, the student should socialize within their cohort or where they can be supported to physically distance (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

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 are maintained, and physical distancing is practiced between cohorts, as much

as is practical to do so while still ensuring the support, program or service continues (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

Cohorts can change at start of new term or for learning, operational or student health and safety needs (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

School Environment

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

- 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 (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
 - As per WorkSafeBC legislative requirements (*OHSR 4.79*) if air quality concerns are brought forward, they will be investigated accordingly.
- Sufficient ventilation in classrooms that meets WorkSafeBC legislative requirements and building standards.
- Where possible, opening windows if weather permits and HVAC system function will not be negatively impacted (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021). Please note, ventilation systems in good operation do not require windows and doors to be open.
- 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).
 - Seating arrangements where students directly face on another should be avoided where possible, particularly for middle and secondary schools.
 - Use consistent or assigned seating arrangements where practical (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- 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, Feb. 4, 2021).
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products (BC CDC Feb. 4, 2021). As such, there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students.
 - 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.
 - 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, Feb. 4, 2021).
 - 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.
- Students and staff should be encouraged to bring an individual, filled water-bottle or other beverage container to school each day for their personal use to support hydration needs.
 - Re-filling water stations can be used to re-fill personal containers (these should not include washroom sinks or other water sources not typically used for drinking water).
 - 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 (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- Access to water and to washrooms should not be restricted (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

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 or equipment. Always wash hands before and after handling shared objects (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

Extracurricular activities and special interest clubs should occur if:

- Under Stages 2 to 4, physical distance can be maintained between members of different cohorts; and
- Under Stage 2, reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same cohort and adequate space is provided to avoid crowding.

Non-educational activities such as student dances, performances, and in-person celebrations are considered to be events and must adhere to the requirements of the PHO Gathering and Events Order.

Inter-school events (competitions, tournaments and festivals) are not permitted to occur at this time (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

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/secondary students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
 - Non-medical masks should be put on before loading.

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 they leave home to take the bus and, when they leave school prior to taking the bus, and when they get home.
- 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

Students should stay at home and self-isolate if they are sick **OR** travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days **OR** were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak by their local health authority (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

- Parents/guardians should conduct a daily health check before sending their child to school and follow the process detailed in Appendix A.
 - **If a child is sick they should stay home and not take the bus.**
 - Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the provincial [K-12 Health Check app](#) for daily assessment of symptoms.

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 supervisor, site-manager, 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 (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
 - All visitors or contractors must confirm they have completed the daily self-assessment for illness before visiting the site (WorkSafeBC, February, 2021).
 - Adult visitors must wear a non-medical mask when inside the school, not be required to self-isolate and maintain physical distance (2 m) (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- All staff and permitted visitors are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their cohort, except when:
 - sitting in (or standing at) their desk/workstation, or while maintaining physical distance (2 m) in a classroom/learning environment;
 - there is a barrier in place;
 - eating and drinking; or

- outdoors.
- In staff only spaces, staff are required to wear masks when indoors, unable to maintain physical distance (2 m), and a barrier is not present.
- Bus drivers can remove mask when driving or able to maintain physical distance (2m) (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- All middle and secondary school students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a nonmedical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in schools - both within and outside of their cohort except when:
 - sitting in (or standing at) their seat or desk/workstation (including shared tables) in a classroom/learning environment;
 - While this exception applies regardless of the physical distance between students or their specific seating configuration, schools should configure classrooms and learning environments to maximize distance between students and avoid face-to-face seating arrangements where possible.
 - there is a barrier in place;
 - eating and drinking; or
 - outdoors (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
 - Middle/secondary students are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) on school buses. (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- Exceptions will also be made for students, visitors and staff who cannot tolerate masks (e.g. health or behavioural reasons). Schools must not require a health-care provider note (i.e. a doctor's note) to confirm if a student cannot wear a mask (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).

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, including at least once during regular school hours (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
 - Frequently touched surfaces include,
 - Items used by multiple students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, manipulatives and toys.
 - 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.) (Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021).
- 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, 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, Feb. 4, 2021.

[k-12-covid-19-health-safety-guidelines Feb. 4, 2021 MOE.pdf](#)

BC CDC, COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings, Feb. 4, 2021.

[Guidance-k-12-schools BC CDC Feb. 4, 21.pdf](#)

WorkSafeBC, February, 2021.

[Education \(K-12\): Protocols for returning to operation - WorkSafeBC](#)

Appendix A – Daily Health Check – Parents/Guardians

Daily Health Check			
1. Key Symptoms If yes to 1 or more: Stay home and get a health assessment. -Contact a health care provider or 8-1-1 about your symptoms and next steps.	Does your child have any of the following symptoms?	Circle One	
		Fever higher than 38 °C	Yes
	Chills	Yes	No
	Cough	Yes	No
	Loss of sense of smell or taste	Yes	No
	Difficulty Breathing	Yes	No
2. Secondary Symptoms -If yes to 1: Stay home until you feel better. -If yes to 2 or more: Stay home for 24 hours. -If symptoms don't get better or get worse, get a health assessment; contact a health care provider or 8-1-1 about your symptoms and next steps.	Sore Throat	Yes	No
	Loss of Appetite	Yes	No
	Extreme Fatigue or tiredness	Yes	No
	Headache	Yes	No
	Body Aches	Yes	No
	Nausea and vomiting	Yes	No
	Diarrhea	Yes	No
3. International Travel -If yes: Self isolate for 14 days	Have you returned from travel outside of Canada in the last 14 days?	Yes	No
4. Confirmed Contact -If yes: Follow Public Health advice.	Are you a confirmed contact of a person confirmed to have COVID-19?	Yes	No

Please note, [K-12 Health Check app](#) can be used to complete the daily health check.

If you have any **concerns** or **questions** about your health, you may contact 8-1-1 at any time.

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).

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

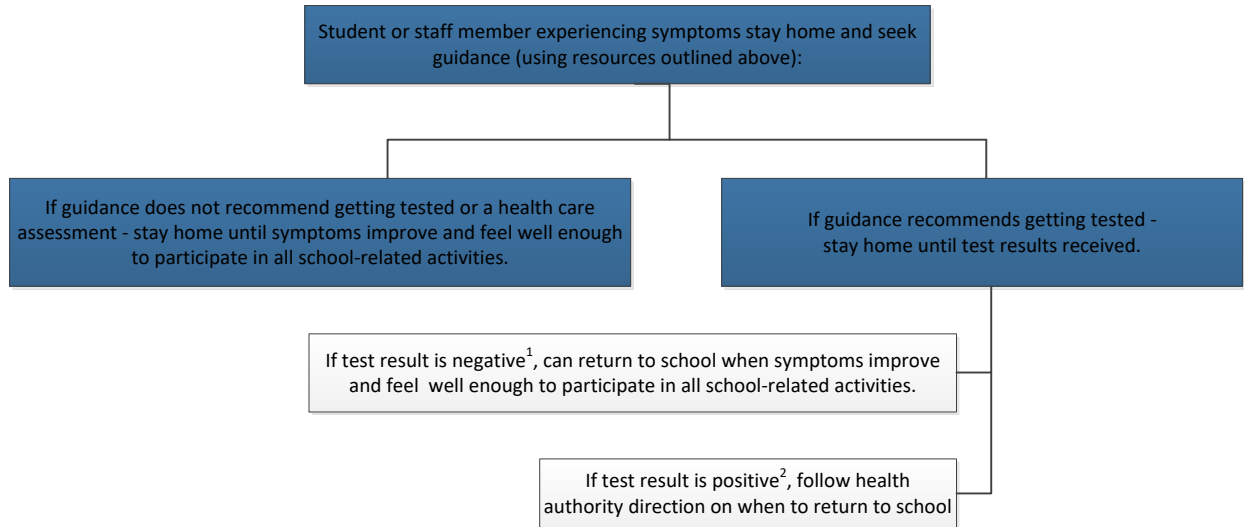
PARENTS CONSENT OF UNDERSTANDING:

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.

COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing & Return to School

When a student, staff or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced and if a COVID-19 test is recommended. See the [K-12 Health Check app](#) and BCCDC “[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)” resource for specific guidance. Staff, students and parents/caregivers can also use the BCCDC online [Self-Assessment Tool](#), or call 8-1-1 or their health care provider.



1. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless the person develops a new illness. [BCCDC](#) has information on receiving negative test results.

2. Public health will contact everyone with a positive test. Visit the BCCDC website for more information on [positive test results](#).

Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety guidelines for K-12 Settings, Feb. 4, 2021