

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

Updated October 22, 2024

School supports students in developing their potential and acquiring the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need for lifelong success. In-person learning, as part of a student's education, provides the opportunity for peer engagement, which supports social and emotional development, as well as overall wellness. It also provides many students access to programs and services that are integral to their overall health and well-being.

Based on guidance from the BC Centre for Disease Control and experience to date within B.C. and other jurisdictions showing schools as low-risk sites for COVID-19 transmission, even with increased risk of COVID-19 in some communities, K-12 students can participate in full-time, in-class instruction in accordance with current public health guidelines for schools.

This Communicable Disease Plan for St. Francis Xavier Elementary School was created in consultation with the CISVA Superintendent's Office, the CISVAAA and St. Francis Xavier Elementary School administration and staff. The guidelines contained herein are intended to support St. Francis Xavier Elementary School staff, students, parents, caregivers, administrators, and community members to:

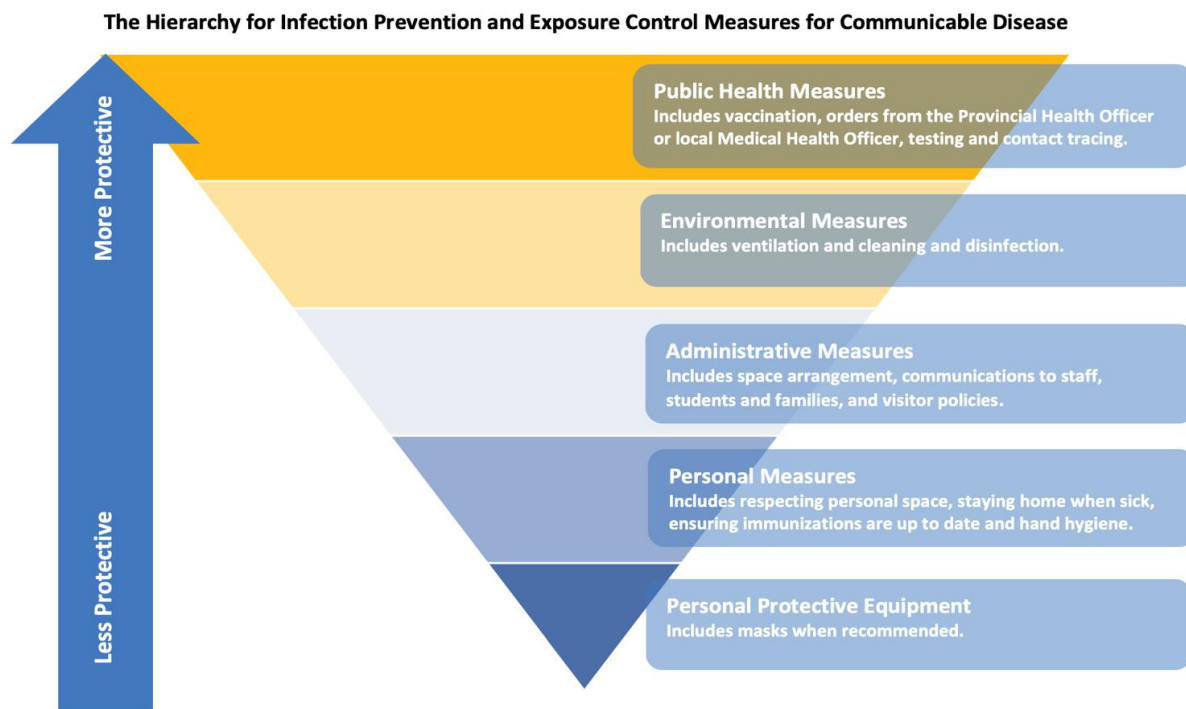
- be informed about communicable disease measures at St. Francis Xavier Elementary School and how they support a safe school environment.
- understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting a safe and healthy school.

This document was created with guidance from the following documents and has been updated effective October 22, 2024.

- The Deputy Minister's Covid 19 Update: December 2022
- http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE RISK

Preventing communicable disease involves taking ongoing measures to reduce the risk for communicable disease transmission in school. Additional measures will be implemented when advised to do so by Public Health during periods of elevated risk. The level of risk of certain communicable diseases, including COVID-19, may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis.



The school principal is responsible for regularly monitoring and reviewing the communicable disease-related information that is provided by our Regional Medical Health Officer (Fraser Health) and the Provincial Health Officer. This includes all the orders, guidelines, notices, and recommendations that are issued by them. In addition, we follow the guidelines that are provided by our CISVA Superintendent. This information is regularly communicated to staff to understand and minimize risk for communicable disease transmission in our school.

STEP 2: IMPLEMENT MEASURES, PRACTICES, AND POLICIES TO REDUCE THE RISK

Ongoing measures – always maintain: Implement policies to support staff who have symptoms of communicable disease so they can avoid being in the workplace when sick.

- Policies are implemented to support staff who have symptoms of communicable disease so they can avoid being in the workplace when sick. This includes policy 310, Employee Leaves of Absence which provides a number of options for staff members who may require to take a leave due to illness.
- A student absentee policy is available and reminders of procedures for “when your child is sick...” are printed in the parent handbook, student agenda and school newsletters.
- Additional considerations may be implemented by the principal, PEC, joint health and safety committee, and pastor, if applicable.
- Refer to “resources for employers supporting workers working from home” where appropriate (pg. 2 step 3) if needed.
- Policies are reviewed regularly in staff meetings and documented in minutes.
- Staff, students, and parents are trained in school policies and procedures.
- Measures are in place, where feasible, to minimize crowding and to use all space available to spread people out.
- Schools can return to classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.
- Whole school recess and lunch play periods times will resume.
- School assemblies and Masses will be held in person. Students will be spaced accordingly to maximize space.
- The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for everyone. This choice should be supported and treated with respect.
- Visitors will be permitted in the school. Visitors will be aware of communicable disease protocols and requirements and will ensure they have completed a daily health check, prior to entering the school. Routine sign in/sign out practices for visitors and staff not typically onsite will be followed.
- Parents are welcome to attend school events in person.
- Students will be taken outside as often as possible, weather permitting.
- Field Trips are permitted with appropriate safety measures in place.
- Extra-curricular activities, including sports, will continue according to the guidelines set by CISVA Elementary Athletic Commission.

Provide hand-hygiene facilities and appropriate supplies. Use policies and signage to remind students and staff to wash their hands and to cover coughs and sneezes.

Handwashing:

- Regular hand washing will be encouraged before and after eating. Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Antibacterial soap is not needed.
 - ⇒ If sinks are not available (e.g., students and staff are outdoors), use alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - ⇒ If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based sanitizer may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty.
 - ⇒ Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.

Respiratory Etiquette:

Students and staff should:

- ⇒ Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue.
- ⇒ Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.
- ⇒ Refrain from touching their eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- ⇒ Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils.
- ⇒ Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

Staff are encouraged to teach and reinforce both handwashing and respiratory etiquette regularly throughout the day. Classrooms and public areas have posters for handwashing, and respiratory etiquette.

Maintain a Clean Environment through routine cleaning processes that are appropriate for school practices.

Cleaning Practices:

- We have reviewed the information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Cleaning supplies are provided for every classroom and common rooms.
- Our school has enough handwashing/sanitizing stations on site for all staff and students.
- We have policies that specify when staff and students must wash their hands, and we have communicated good hygiene practices to parents, students and staff. Instructional posters are posted in each classroom, washroom, and common rooms. We have implemented cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces.
- Workers who are cleaning have adequate training and materials.
- Cleaning staff are provided with substances for cleaning and disinfecting and with gloves.
- Cleaning staff have been instructed to wash their hands after cleaning.
- Frequently touched surfaces are disinfected at least once a day (doorknobs, toilet handles, faucets, tables, desks, chairs), by the custodian.

- Evening workers clean classrooms every day.
- Classroom teachers are responsible for disinfecting visibly dirty surfaces in their classrooms such as desks, tables and sinks during the day.
- Use commercial-grade cleaning products and follow the label
- Classroom teachers are provided with cleaning products for their classrooms.
- All cleaning products must be kept out of reach of their students.
- There is no evidence that the virus can be spread by paper products. Paper and books can be given to students. Students can submit paper assignments to teachers.
- Custodian will empty garbage once a day.
- Staff will wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine). Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- To decrease high touch surfaces, doors to classrooms, library, gym, office, staff room, etc. will be open as often as possible.
- Clean and disinfect any areas where a student who has been identified as unwell or sick.
- Parents will label all personal items coming from home including water bottles, lunch kits and containers, backpacks, clothing and all school supplies. Students are encouraged to bring labeled water bottles to school.

Ventilation and Air Circulation:

- Air conditioning filters are cleaned/replaced on a regular basis.
- Custodians are familiar with the document '[Prevent the spread of communicable disease: ventilation and circulation](#)'.
- Principal or designate does a walk-through regularly to ensure standards are being met.

Masks

- We understand the limitations of masks to protect the wearer from respiratory droplets.
- We have trained workers in the proper use of masks.
- Masks are optional. The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice both for students and staff. A person's personal choice is to be supported and respected.
- We will continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one, or for those who become ill at school.

Additional Measures If/When Needed

When a medical or provincial health officer provides guidance/new information about a risk or how to reduce it, our health and safety team will be contacted, assembled, and meet with administration/health officials to discuss risk and establish plans and steps for response and implementation.

Depending on the severity of risk, formal meeting with stakeholder groups will be conducted. Consultation with the Superintendent's office will occur as needed. Plans will be documented. If needed, a report will be created to outline strategies for additional measures. Reporting out will occur with stakeholders: PEC, staff, parents, student, parish in a timely manner. Consider the use of rapid communication protocols, such as fan out, for emergencies as warranted.

STEP 3: COMMUNICATE MEASURES, PRACTICES, POLICIES

To ensure everyone that enters St. Francis Xavier Elementary School receives information about our measures, practices, and policies we have instituted the following:

- Provided all employees with information of policy 310 (Employee Leaves of Absence) and local school policies, re: staying home when sick.
- Posted signage on entry doors and throughout the interior of the school to support the measures we have in place.
- Provide information to make sure all stakeholders are knowledgeable about the practices that are in place at our school.
- All workers are aware of the policy for staying home when sick.
- We have posted signage in the school, including effective hygiene practices.
- Administrators have been trained on monitoring workers and the workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.
- Communication with staff is conducted through in person or virtual meetings and emails.
- Train staff on workplace policies and procedures:
 - ⇒ Administration will field questions and concerns about the Communicable Disease Plan and adjust if needed.
 - ⇒ Changes/adjustments to the Communicable Disease Plan will be updated accordingly and communicated to all stakeholders.
 - ⇒ Communicable Disease Plan is posted on the school website.
- All staff received information about staying home when sick.
- All staff are required to complete a daily health check to assess symptoms of communicable disease.
- Administration will monitor safety measures in the school.
- Administration will send staff emails regarding updates to policies, procedures, ministry documents or developments from Fraser Health Authority.

STEP 4: MONITOR YOUR WORKPLACE AND UPDATE PLANS AS NECESSARY

- Things may change as school year progresses. New areas of concern will be monitored, identified, and adjusted, as necessary.
- Procedures and policies will be updated, as necessary.
- Protocol is in place, so workers know who to go to with health and safety concerns.
- When resolving safety issues, proper authorities (Ministry of Education and Childcare, Provincial Health Officer, WorkSafe) will be consulted.
- Joint Occupational Health & Safety meet regularly and participate in identifying and resolving worker health and safety issues. (May include walk-throughs as needed).
- Administration will review the Communicable Disease Plan regularly and update as needed.