

St. Andrew's Elementary School

Communicable Disease Prevention Plan – September 2022



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Introduction:

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable diseases that may circulate in the workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza. The level of risk of certain communicable diseases may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis.

This Communicable Disease Plan for St. Andrew's Elementary School was created in consultation with the CISVA Superintendent's Office and with guidance from Vancouver Coastal Health, BC Centre for Disease Control and the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care.

- BCCDC COVID-19 Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools (August 25, 2022 update): http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf
- Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings (August 25, 2022 update): <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 Covid-19 Safe Schools: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-safe-schools>
- Vancouver Coastal Health K-12 Schools and Child Care Communities: <http://www.vch.ca/covid-19/k-12-schools>

This Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is intended to support St. Andrew's Elementary School staff, students, parents, caregivers, administrators, and community members to be informed about communicable disease measures at the school and how the school supports a safe school environment as well as to help each school member understand his/her role and responsibility in maintaining and promoting a safe and healthy school.

Understanding the Risk

The principal is responsible for regularly monitoring and reviewing the communicable disease-related information that is provided by Vancouver Coastal Health or the Provincial Health Officer. This includes all issued orders, guidelines, notices, and recommendations. In addition, staff follow the guidelines that are provided by the school and CISVA Superintendent's Office. This information is regularly communicated to staff to understand and minimize risk for communicable disease transmission in our school.

Implementing Measures, Practices, and Policies to Reduce the Risk

Ongoing Measures – Policies to support staff who have symptoms of a communicable disease are in place so they can avoid being at the workplace when sick. This includes CISVA Policy 310, Employee Leaves of Absence. Measures, practices and policies are regularly reviewed in staff meetings and documented in minutes.

Supportive School Environment

- Staff will model personal practices (ex. Hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) and assist younger students if needed
- Administration will share reliable information including information from the BC Centre for Disease Control, Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and Vancouver Coastal Health with staff, parents, and families.
- Personal practices will be promoted in the school (ex. posters, verbal reminders)
- Individual choices for the personal practice of wearing a mask or face covering will be supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

Health Screening

- Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school. They can utilize the "BC COVID-19 Self Assessment Tool" (updated September 8, 2022) which can be found at <https://covidcheck.gov.bc.ca/>
- Staff and other adults should complete a daily health check prior to entering the school.
- If a student, staff, or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school. There are no current restrictions on healthy visitors in the school. The "When to Get Tested for COVID-19 Resource" produced by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and found at <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid->

[19/testing/when-to-get-a-covid-19-test](#) provides more information on whether a person should get tested for COVID-19.

- Staff, children, or other persons in the school who test positive for COVID-19 will be directed to follow the guidance on the BCCDC website as to how long they should self-isolate. They can return to school when they no longer need to self-isolate as long as symptoms have improved and they are well enough to participate in regular activities.
- If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school:
 - They will be separated from their classmates or colleagues
 - Separated students will be supervised and cared for
 - The student's parent or guardian will be contacted and asked to pick up the child as soon as possible
 - Staff will be asked to go home as soon as possible
 - Janitorial staff will be responsible for facility cleaning and disinfecting
- Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (ex. 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.

Hand Hygiene

- Rigorous hand-washing with plain soap and water or an effective hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness. Diligent hand hygiene will be encouraged and regular opportunities for students and staff to wash hands will be facilitated. Hand washing/sanitizing will be encouraged before entering the school building, before and after breaks, after using the washroom, and before consuming food.
- Hand washing supplies will be readily available and well-stocked including soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizing solution with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Staff will assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- Students may bring their own sanitizer or plain soap if they are on the list authorized by Health Canada or have a medical condition that requires specialized soaps.
- Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty. If it is not available, then alcohol-based hand wipes and hand sanitizer will be used.

Respiratory Etiquette and Personal Space

- Staff will teach and reinforce respiratory etiquette amongst students: cough or sneeze into the elbow sleeve or a tissue; throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene; refrain from touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed

hands; refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes or vaping devices.

- Staff and students will be encouraged to respect others personal space.
- Staff and students will be encouraged not to share items that come in contact with the mouth (ex. food, drink, etc.)

Masks

- The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for everyone. This choice will be supported and treated with respect.
- The school office will continue to have and distribute non-medical masks for those who have forgotten theirs and would like to wear one.

General Ventilation and Air Circulation

- Mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specification for ongoing comfort of workers (Part 4 of the OHS Regulation) will continue to be used.
- When weather permits, windows will be opened if it doesn't impact the functioning of ventilation systems.
- Taking students outside more often is no longer necessary for communicable disease prevention.
- When using air conditioners and fans in ventilated spaces, air should be moved from high places to lower places instead of blowing air directly from one person's breathing zone to another's. Horizontal cross breezes will be avoided.
- Natural ventilation (operable windows) will be considered in regularly occupied classrooms that do not have mechanical ventilation systems.
- Use of portable air conditioners and fans in unventilated spaces with doors and windows closed should be avoided, except when necessary (ex. during high or excessive heat events).

Space Arrangements

- St. Andrew's Elementary will use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

Visitor Access/Community Use

- St. Andrew's Elementary will follow normal practices for welcoming visitors and the community use of the schools.

- Visitors, including community groups using the school, should follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this document.

Field Trips

- When planning field trips, staff will follow existing policies and procedures as well as the guidance in this document.
- When school busses are hired, normal seating and onloading/offloading practices will be followed.

Music, Physical Education, Sports, Clubs and Extracurricular Activities

- Students will be encouraged to practise proper hand hygiene before and after shared equipment use.
- Equipment that touches the mouth (ex. instrument mouth pieces, water bottles, utensils) or has been in contact with bodily fluids will not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected between uses.

School Library

- Regular book borrowing and circulation process will occur as per routine practise.

Maintaining a Clean Environment

- Cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces will occur at least once in a 24-hour period and when visible dirty.
- Frequently touched surfaces are items touched by larger numbers of students and staff. They can include doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains and toilet handles, as well as shared equipment, appliances, and service counters, and may change from day to day based on utilization.
- Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (ex. fabrics) or at all (ex. sand, foam, playdough, etc.) can be used. Carpets and rugs can also be used.
- When cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (ex. runny nose, vomit, urine, stool) staff will use disposable gloves and will wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.

Communicating Measures, Practices and Policies

St. Andrew's Elementary School will support the implementation of personal prevention practices through:

- Providing regular reminders to students and families (weekly bulletin) and staff (staff meetings) about the importance of completing a daily health check, staying home when sick, and following public health recommendations.
- Having staff model and reinforce personal prevention measures at school (ex. hand hygiene)
- Sharing trusted information from the BC Centre for Disease Control.
- Signage posted throughout the school to support hygiene measures.

St. Andrew's Elementary School will continue to support personal prevention practices through positive and inclusive approaches aligned with existing professional practices to address non-compliant behaviour. Approaches will not exclude students from participating in school or which may potentially result in stigma. Our school will continue to utilize a trauma-informed lens when planning school activities (ex. gatherings or events), including considerations around respecting others personal space.

St. Andrew's Elementary School will notify public health, CISVA Superintendent's Office, and the school community if lower attendance than normal is observed, based on thresholds set by public health. Public health will then investigate to determine if additional action should be taken. Our local Medical Health Officer may issue a recommendation for an individual school, a group of schools, a school district or all schools within the health authority region to implement specific additional health and safety measures during times of increased risk.

WorkSafeBC communicable disease prevention guidance will be followed and communication, training and orientation will be provided to ensure the health and safety of all staff.

Monitoring School Environment and Updating Plan as Necessary

The principal will review the Communicable Disease Plan regularly and update as needed, particularly when recommendations are made by the BC Centre for Disease Control, the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care, and the CISVA Superintendent's Office.

The principal will also inform staff, students, parents and caregivers of any updates when they are made available.