

COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

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The following are health and safety policies, procedures, and guidelines that have been designed primarily in preparation for the stage 2 re-start of fall 2020.

STAGE 2

As announced by the Ministry of Education on July 29, 2020, stage 2 is a full return to in-class instruction for all students who are not ill, for the maximum time possible within **cohort** limits. Students with severe immune-compromised conditions should assess the risk and be in communication with school authorities, and health-care providers. International students who come from out of country must quarantine for 14 days prior to starting their schooling.

ILLNESS & RETURN TO SCHOOL AFTER ILLNESS

On September 11, 2020, the provincial health officer and the BCCDC issued the following guidance regarding illness:

- Parents and caregivers are responsible to complete a daily health check with their child(ren) for key symptoms of illness before sending them to school. (see Appendix I: COVID-19 Daily Health Check)
- Students and staff should stay at home when new symptoms of illness develop. The key symptoms to watch for are **fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.**
 - If students or staff show new symptoms while at school, they will be expected to go home as soon as possible.
 - If the staff or student (or their parent) indicates that the symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition and are not unusual for that individual, they may return to school. No assessment or note is required from a health care provider.
 - For mild symptoms without fever, students and staff can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to school without further assessment.
 - If symptoms include fever, or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain unchanged or worsen, seek a health assessment. A health assessment can include calling 811, a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner, or going to a COVID-19 testing centre.
- **When a COVID-19 test is recommended by the health assessment:**
 - **If the COVID-19 test is positive**, the person should stay home until they are told by public health to end their 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 person 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 the person develops a new illness. BCCDC has information on receiving negative test results.
 - **If a COVID-19 test is recommended but is not done** because the person or parent chooses not to have the test or a health assessment is not sought when recommended, and the person's symptoms are not related to a previously diagnosed health condition, they should stay home from school until 10 days after the onset of symptoms, and then may return if feeling well enough.
- If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, the person can return to school when symptoms have improved, 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 person with mild symptoms may elect to seek COVID-19 testing, even when this is not required according to the above guidance. Having a pending COVID-19 test result should not, by itself, be a reason to exclude a person from school if there are no other reasons to exclude them.
- Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. If the household member tests positive for

COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school. Most illness experienced in BC is not COVID-19, even if the symptoms are similar.

- Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. They do not require re-assessment by a healthcare provider and should not be required to provide a health-care provider note.

IF SYMPTOMS ARE EVIDENT AT SCHOOL

For students who show new symptoms or signs of illness at school, the following is expected:

- Student will be sent to the front office of the school
- Student will be isolated as appropriate
- Front office staff will communicate with the home and parents/caregivers will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible
- Disinfection of any area the student has been in will be implemented
- Students should return to school according to the guidance under the “ILLNESS & RETURN TO SCHOOL” sections of this policy

For employees who show symptoms or signs of illness, the following is expected:

- The principal or supervisor will be notified
- The employee will be isolated
- A decision will be made on how the employee will get home
- Disinfecting of the employees’ main work area will take place
- Staff should return to school according to the guidance under the “ILLNESS & RETURN TO SCHOOL” sections of this policy

IF COVID IS DIAGNOSED IN ACS COMMUNITY (STUDENTS OR STAFF)

- **If a staff or student is a confirmed case of COVID-19** through testing or investigation (i.e. case finding), public health will identify who that person has been in close contact with recently (i.e. contact tracing) to determine how they were infected and who else may have be at risk of infection.
- **If there was a potential exposure at a school** (i.e. a student or staff who has a confirmed case of COVID-19 AND attended school when they may have been potentially infectious), public health will work with the school to understand who may have been exposed, and to determine what actions should be taken, including identifying if other students or staff are sick (case finding) or have been exposed and should monitor for symptoms or self-isolate.
- **Public health will notify everyone who they determine may have been exposed**, including if any follow-up actions are recommended (e.g. self-isolate, monitor for symptoms, etc.). They will work with the school administrator to determine if additional notifications are warranted (e.g. notification to the broader school community).

HAND WASHING AND HYGIENE

- Effective hand washing procedures will be posted throughout the campuses.
- Hand washing will be encouraged for staff and students at the following times:
 - Upon first arrival to school
 - Before going home
 - Before eating or drinking
 - After using the restroom
 - After sneezing or coughing into hands or tissue
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
 - When moving between different learning environments (e.g. outdoor to indoor or gym to classroom transitions)

- Staff will assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- If a sink is not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer will be made available.
- Hand washing supplies will always be available.
- Hand hygiene stations will be set up at locations throughout the school as appropriate.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

FREQUENCY:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of all school premises will happen at least once during a 24-hour period.
- For all frequently used areas (see below), cleaning and disinfecting will happen twice in a 24-hour period.
- All garbages and recycling will be emptied once in a 24-hour period.

FREQUENTLY USED AREAS INCLUDE:

- Doorknobs, light switches, faucet handles, hand railings, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs used by multiple people, and water fountains.
- Water fountains will continue to be available, however students and staff will be encouraged to bring a personal water bottle that is not shared. Staff and students will be encouraged not to put their mouths on the surface of the water fountain.
- Shared learning items and manipulatives.
- Shared equipment (computer keyboards, tablets and/or mice, glassware and testing equipment for science classes, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing machines and equipment for textiles programs)
- Appliances (microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers, and laminators)

BODILY FLUID PRECAUTIONS (RUNNY NOSE, BLOOD, VOMIT, STOOL, URINE)

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning up body fluids
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing disposable gloves

COHORTS

Cohorts reduce the number of in-person, close interactions a person has in school, without requiring physical distancing to consistently be practiced. Cohorts can be composed of students and staff.

- In the **elementary and middle school**, a cohort will be composed of up to 60 people.
- In the **secondary school**, a cohort will be composed of up to **120** people.

Cohorts are smaller in elementary and middle school 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. Unless they are part of the same cohort, staff and other adults should always maintain physical distance of 2 metres from each other. This includes during break times and in meetings.

Students from different cohorts may be required to be together to receive beneficial social supports, programs, or services. Within these supports or services, it is expected that physical distances are maintained as much as is practical to do so, while still ensuring that the support, program, or service continues. This does not apply to extracurricular activities where physical distance between cohorts must be maintained.

SCHOOL GATHERINGS

School gatherings will occur within the cohort. Gatherings will not exceed the maximum cohort size in the setting, plus the minimum number of additional people required (e.g. school staff, visitors) to meet the gathering's purpose and intended outcome. Whenever possible, ACS will seek virtual alternatives for larger gatherings and assemblies.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING STRATEGIES

The following strategies will be implemented wherever possible:

- Avoid close greetings (e.g., hugs, handshakes).
- Students and staff will be encouraged not to touch their faces.
- People should spread out as much as is practical to do so.
- We will consider different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g., different desk and table formations).
- For middle and secondary, we will consider arranging desks/tables, so students are not facing each other and using consistent seating arrangements.
- There will be steps made to reduce crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
- We will attempt to stagger recess/snack and lunch, and limit class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- We will encourage staff to take students outside for learning activities more often.
- Playgrounds are a safe environment. We will ensure appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play.
- For elementary students, we will adapt group activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items.
- For middle and secondary students, we will minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- Sharing of food or drink will be prohibited.
- Parents, caregivers, health-care providers, volunteers, and other non-staff adults (e.g. visitors) entering the school will be prioritized to those supporting activities that are of benefit to student learning and well-being.
- All visitors will be required to sign in at the front office, provide appropriate contact information, and provide confirmation that they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.
- For any deliveries to the school, we will have designated delivery protocols and area signs posted.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Extracurricular activities in middle and secondary schools including sports, performing arts, or special interest clubs can occur if physical distance can be maintained between members of different learning cohorts and reduced physical contact can be practiced by those within the same learning cohort.
- Inter-school events like competitions, tournaments, and festivals **are not** permitted to occur at this time.

BUSING

Since our buses are not considered to be a controlled environment like our schools, ACS will adhere to the following for student transportation on school buses:

- Buses will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with BCCDC guidelines.
- Buses will be loaded from back to front and offloaded from front to back.
- If space is available, each student will have their own seat unless sharing with a member of their household.
- Middle and secondary students will wear masks to cover their mouth and nose.
- ACS will consider a transparent barrier to separate the driver from the students.
- Drivers will assign consistent and assigned seating whenever possible.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) / MASKS

Although ACS recognizes that masks are not required by the CDC during the pandemic, out of an abundance of caution and in order to allow for broader transitions in and out of cohorts for adults, **we are requiring all employees (and adults who enter the building) to wear PPE that protects/covers the mouth and the nose.**

- In a classroom setting, we will encourage staff to use PPE that does not cover the visibility of the face.
- PPE will not be required for students if they remain in their cohorts. For students who are required to transition outside of their cohort, there may be an expectation to wear PPE to cover the mouth and nose.
- We will be providing PPE for all staff and will have limited amounts available for students with approvals from parents/caregivers.

OCCUPANCY LIMITS

- ACS will require occupancy limits for most spaces being used at the campuses and provide clarity for staff and students at each of the campuses. These limits will be posted in the spaces and enforced by admin.
- Typical gathering areas in our schools include (but are not limited to): hallways, front lobbies, vending machines, gymnasiums, shops, music rooms, kitchens, office areas, and staff rooms.
- We will be addressing the staff rooms at each campus in terms of occupancy limits, food preparation, sharing of eating and drinking utensils, etc. As a rule, staff rooms will not be functioning like they were prior to the pandemic, and there will be strong encouragement to gather as staff in small numbers, within cohorts, and outside as much as possible.
- There will be multiple attempts made (staggered breaks, lunches etc.) to limit the amount of people in indoor spaces beyond the required occupancy limits.
- In the times when occupancy limits cannot be adhered to, there may be instances when students will be required to wear PPE over the mouth and nose.

MENTAL HEALTH

ACS understands the additional strain and stress that the pandemic has put us all under and is committed to providing ample mental health support for those who need it. Information regarding where to find mental health support will be provided by each of the campuses for both students and staff.

TRAINING

To ensure that ACS remains a safe and controlled environment for all students and staff, ACS staff will be adequately trained prior to school starting (and throughout the year as needed) on policy, procedures, and protocols specific to the COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan.

Students will receive necessary training from the staff during the first week of school, and then throughout the year, for them to thrive in school.

PREPARED FOR THE MOVEMENT OF STAGES

Recognizing that it may be necessary for ACS to move back to Educational Stages 3, 4, or 5 (as laid out by the BC Ministry of Education), ACS will be prepared to move to these stages as seamlessly as possible. We will set up our scheduling to allow for this potential reality and will require teaching staff to continue to provide some level of online presence (through our myLearning classroom sites) in each of the classes and cohorts, so as to allow for a relatively smooth transition, if required.

ACS HEALTH & SAFETY TEAM

ACS has a health and safety team in place for the following:

- To provide policy and procedures for things like a COVID-19 Health and Safety Plan
- To provide a place for staff to voice concerns
- To review and update policies and procedures as things change between stages

Members of the ACS Health and Safety Team include:

- Chair of the Human Resources (HR) Team
- The staff representative from the HR Team
- Members of the Crisis Management Team (one VP from each campus)

APPENDIX: COVID-19 DAILY HEALTH CHECK

The COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings have been updated to better give you an opportunity to assess when your child should stay home and when they can attend classes in-school. Parents and caregivers are responsible for assessing their children daily before sending them to school. Please complete a daily health screening before sending your child to school. Keep this information by your house entrance/exit door, on your fridge or somewhere where you will remember to use it. Thank you for doing your part in keeping our community healthy.

STAY HOME WHEN NEW SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS DEVELOP

Students and staff should stay at home when new symptoms of illness develop. The key symptoms to watch for are fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, loss of sense of smell or taste, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.

- If the staff or student (or their parent) indicates that the symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition and are not unusual for that individual, they may return to school. No assessment or note is required from a health care provider.
- For mild symptoms without fever, students and staff can monitor at home for 24 hours. If symptoms improve, they can return to school without further assessment.
- If symptoms include fever, or if after 24 hours, symptoms remain unchanged or worsen, seek a health assessment. A health assessment can include calling 811, a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner, or going to a COVID-19 testing centre.

DAILY HEALTH CHECK			
1. Key symptoms of illness*	Do you have any of the following new key 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 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), you should **stay home for 24 hours** from when the symptom started. If the symptom improves, you may return to school when you 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 you have a fever, **seek a health assessment**. A health assessment includes calling 811, or a primary care provider like a physician or nurse practitioner. If a health assessment is required, you should not return to school until COVID-19 has been excluded and your symptoms have improved.

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

- **If the COVID-19 test is positive**, you 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**, you can return to school once symptoms have improved and you feel well enough. Symptoms of common respiratory illnesses can persist for a week or more. Re-testing is not needed unless you 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 your 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 you may return if you are feeling well enough.

If a COVID-19 test is not recommended by the health assessment, you can return to school when symptoms improve, and you 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 you should seek testing for COVID19.

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