

Education Providers: Grades K – 12

This tip sheet is intended to help education providers and administrators develop policies and procedures when providing face-to-face instruction. This sheet contains tips primarily for staff, volunteers, and those working in the school.

Protecting Yourself and Others

- Follow guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada, local public health agencies, local government, and your school board. Recommendations may be based on current infection rates in your community, and public health guidance.
- Develop procedures to reduce the risk of exposure, communicate these actions regularly, and make sure all parties are aware of them.
- Understand that in some situations, recommendations and measures may change or vary depending on the current stage of the pandemic, as well as the child's age and their abilities.
- Individuals with symptoms, or who have been in contact with someone suspected or confirmed to have COVID-19, or who have recently travelled outside of the country must stay home and self-isolate for 14 days. Follow the Public Health Agency of Canada's steps for self-assessment: <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus> or use a self-assessment tool from your local public health agency.
- Develop protocols for isolating individuals who may become ill from COVID-19 while at the school.
- Consult with your local public health agency about occasional staff or volunteers that may work in multiple settings.
- Provide training on COVID-19 prevention, signs and symptoms, and procedures to follow including physical distancing, use of non-medical masks, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and other practices.
- Encourage everyone to report any health and safety concerns immediately to the appropriate individuals.
- Develop a business continuity plan to minimize disruptions including increased staff absenteeism, and procedures for periods of higher restrictions based on public health measures.
- Consider using non-medical masks, and teachers or staff may also opt for eye protection (such as face shields) when in close physical contact with students. Guidelines or recommendations from your local government or public health agency may also apply within the school.
- Promote mental health services for staff and students.



Education Providers: Grades K – 12

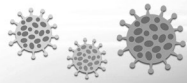
Considerations when assessing risk in a school setting

Schools must consider:

- situations that increase the risk of transmission – how many people are present, age of the students, how long they will be there, how close they will be to each other, and are there interactions in a crowded or confined indoor setting
- ability to provide flexible attendance, and alternative methods to attend classes
- frequent contact with high-touch surfaces or shared items such as door handles, chairs, tables, faucets, etc.
- ability of students to consistently follow public health measures, or if additional supervision is required
- availability of supplies and facilities necessary for frequent hand hygiene
- the ability for individuals or groups to follow the recommended measures based on their health, age, disability, developmental status, or other socio-economic and demographic circumstances
- risk of severe illness, or if they live with a person who belongs to a higher risk group
- how to provide meaningful school work and support to those students who are participating virtually
- maintaining confidentiality and privacy protection for the individual

Physical Distancing

- Maintain 2 metres (6 feet) of physical distancing wherever possible, including separating desks and limiting the number of people allowed in the same room.
- Seats should face in the same direction.
- Consider blended teaching methods using both distance learning and face-to-face instruction where appropriate.
- Hold lessons outdoors, if possible, while weather permits.
- Where possible, stagger the beginning and end of the school day, class schedules, recess, breaks and lunch to reduce groups of people from gathering.
- Consider using libraries, gyms, outdoors, portables, and other locations as additional classroom space.
- For younger students when physical distancing is more difficult, consider keeping the students in smaller groups or cohorts, and maintain 2 metres between the cohorts.
- For older students, consider having teachers rotate to classrooms instead of the students (e.g., have students remain as a cohort in one classroom for the day).
- Manage how individuals will use or travel through shared spaces, such as hallways and washrooms. Mark one-way routes, and use floor markings, signs, and other visual cues.
- Limit the number of users in common areas at the same time such as the washrooms, gym, library, or cafeteria.
- Postpone assemblies or other large gatherings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Disinfect or avoid climbing sports equipment, structures, shared swings, slides, and other equipment.
- Restrict non-essential visitors from entering buildings, including parents/caregivers and contractors, as appropriate.
- Maintain adequate supervision, especially for younger students.
- Allow administrative staff to work from home whenever possible.
- Consider creating additional break areas, including outdoors, for staff.
- Do not create new occupational hazards when implementing COVID-19 measures, such as propping fire doors open.



Education Providers: Grades K – 12

Use of Non-Medical Cloth Masks or Face Coverings

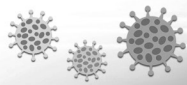
- Follow the recommendations for types of masks and ages as issued by your public health agency, school board, or other authority. The Public Health Agency of Canada recommends non-medical masks for individuals over 10 years.
- Masks should not be worn by anyone who is unable to remove the mask without assistance (e.g., due to their age, ability or developmental status).
- Wear the mask correctly, making sure the nose and mouth are covered. Do not touch your face and mask.
- Be aware that non-medical masks have limitations, and improper mask use and disposal can increase the risk of infection.
- Stay informed as guidance is evolving regarding the use of face shields.
- Acknowledge that individuals may choose to wear masks regardless if there is a formal requirement.
- Change your mask if it becomes wet or soiled. For example, you may wish to bring a second mask, and store in a clean paper bag, envelope, or container that does not trap moisture. Store reusable soiled masks in a separate bag or container. Do not touch the outside of the mask while removing it, and wash your hands when you are finished.
- For some students, not being able to see the teacher's face and mouth clearly may cause difficulties. Consider using a transparent mask or face shield.
- Do not allow the mask to be a hazard to other activities, such as getting caught on moving machinery or playground equipment.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Continue to use PPE for existing occupational safety hazards and emergencies, as directed by applicable laws and your employer.
- Situations where PPE may be considered for protection from COVID-19 include:
 - Wearing gloves when cleaning as recommended by the product's safe work instructions or safety data sheet
 - Wearing disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine)
- If workers will be required to wear PPE, they must be trained on how to wear, work with, care for the equipment, and understand its limitations.
- Clean and disinfect any shared personal protective equipment before you wear it.
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.

Personal Hygiene

- Promote physical distancing as much as possible.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use an at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water is not available.
- Cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hand. Dispose any used tissue right away and wash hands.
- Do not encourage sharing of items such as phones, tablets, equipment, belongings, books, or toys unless they can be cleaned or disinfected between users.
- Encourage individuals to bring their own pre-filled water bottle. Water bottles should not be shared.
- Post signs that are appropriate for age, ability, reading level and language preferences to remind individuals to practice good hand and respiratory hygiene.
- Provide adequate supplies for hand and respiratory etiquette such as soap, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol), paper towels, tissues, and no touch waste containers.
- Include infection prevention as part of daily lessons and activities, while making sure that content is age appropriate.



Education Providers: Grades K – 12

- Provide tissues and no-touch plastic lined garbage bins for their disposal.
- Regularly wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water:
 - at the start and end of the school day, or when re-entering the building
 - before eating or drinking
 - before preparing food
 - after cleaning up meal and snack times
 - after touching shared items
 - after using the washroom, and
 - after handling garbage.
- Hand wash stations or hand sanitizer should be close and accessible to each classroom.
- Discourage food and drink sharing.
- Designate a clean and disinfected area for storing food items brought from home.

Facility and Classroom Hygiene

- Develop a cleaning schedule and document when cleaning has taken place.
- Clean and disinfect washrooms frequently and stock with soap and paper towels.
- Clean and disinfect classrooms, washrooms, etc., and frequently touched surfaces such as computers, teaching and learning aids, tables, chairs, door and window handles, light switches, etc.
- Use a household or commercial disinfectant to destroy or inactivate the virus.
 - Use approved hard surface disinfectants with a Drug Identification Number (DIN). This number means that it has been approved for use in Canada.
 - Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).
 - If approved household or commercial disinfectant products are not available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of 5 mL of bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and 250 mL of water. Test surfaces before using a bleach solution. Bleach can be corrosive. Follow instructions for safe handling of bleach.
 - If liquids can be withstood, disinfect high-touch electronic devices (such as touch screens, keyboards, tablets, smartboards) with alcohol or disinfectant wipes.
 - Only use toys or equipment that can be easily cleaned and disinfected.
- Use disposable cleaning cloths and gloves.
- Open windows to increase fresh air flow and ventilation in the building and classrooms when possible and if weather permits.
- Safely dispose of garbage at least once a day.
- Provide custodians with adequate supplies, training on cleaning protocols, and personal protective equipment as needed.

Activities and Services

Physical education:

- Persons exerting themselves during fitness activities may not be able to wear a mask; in which case, consider using a face shield to contain respiratory droplets or maintain a larger distance apart.
- Allow adequate time between each group to minimize interactions between groups of people, for air exchange, and for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Consider creating dirty/clean or colour-coded signs to clearly indicate equipment status.



Education Providers: Grades K – 12

Music, Band, Theatre, and Choir:

- Singing indoors may transmit the virus. Keep a physical distance between each singer to at least 2 metres, or more if possible.
- Performers that are members of the same household would be at less risk and could sing or play music together while being distanced from others.
- Organize the choir or band formation so individuals are not facing each other directly or standing directly (less than 2 meters) behind each other.
- While more studies are needed, there is a possibility of virus transmission when playing wind or brass instrument (i.e., an instrument that is played by blowing air into it). Consider the length of the instrument and direction of airflow an extension of the individual and included when determining the spacing between musicians.
- Do not share equipment (e.g., mouthpieces, reeds, harmonicas, music stands, microphones, musical instruments, accessories, etc.), song books, sheet music or devices with electronic sheet music. If they are shared, disinfectant wipes or an adequately diluted bleach solution should be available for frequent cleaning and disinfection.
- Do not share props or items between members, unless the item can be cleaned and disinfected between each use. Wash hands promptly if a shared item must be touched.

Libraries:

- Limit the number of people in the library at one time to help maintain physical distancing.
- Minimize the use of computers and other shared items, excluded when possible, and clean between users.
- Consider putting shared items that are difficult to clean, such as books, on “hold” for at least 24 hours before being used by the next person.

Cafeteria and food services:

- Continue to practice physical distancing. Limit the number of people in the cafeteria at any given time.
- Allow people to eat meals in classrooms or outdoors, if appropriate.
- Increase staff-serving options. Do not use self-serve models or buffet style options. Remove shared food items, condiments and utensil stations.
- Package food if chosen by the individual.
- Use touchless payment options, if possible.
- Consider how meals will be provided to those students participating in meal programs, including during school closures or reduced programming.

Screening and Care

- Do not allow individuals to use group transportation or enter the school if they have symptoms, or have had exposure in the past 14 days.
- Use screening measures, including passive screening (e.g., posting signs to remind others to not enter if they feel ill), or active screening (e.g., asking questions about symptoms or using a self- assessment questionnaire).
- Keep records of attendance, both for students and staff. These records may be needed by local public health agencies for contact tracing if a case is identified.
- Should someone develop a cough, fever, or other symptoms, isolate them from others.
 - Consult the local public health authority for advice.
 - Provide medical masks (preferred, if available) or non-medical masks to the staff and the ill person if COVID is suspected and you are providing direct care. Only ask the ill person to wear a mask if they are comfortable wearing it and can remove it themselves without assistance.
 - Remain in a designated space until they can safely leave.
 - Contact their parent/caregiver to take them home immediately and to seek appropriate medical attention. In an emergency, individuals may need to be sent directly to the hospital.



Education Providers: Grades K – 12

- Continue to practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Provide tissues, and dispose of the tissue properly, and wash hands after coughing or sneezing.
- Do not encourage the use of public transit.
- Clean and disinfect the space or areas the person was in that day, and any shared items.
- If a person at the school is confirmed to have COVID-19, contact your public health agency for guidance.
- Make sure all quarantine procedures are followed for international students, individuals who have travelled, or if any inter-provincial or territorial guidelines exist.
- Continue to use appropriate precautions and procedures for safety, providing assistance for minor injuries, or emotional distress.

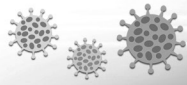
Transportation

Shared transportation such as busing can increase the risk of spreading the virus.

- Encourage alternative modes of transportation for those who have other options, such as parents/caregiver drop off, or walking (if safe and within close distance) to limit the number of people needing to use public transportation and school buses.
- Parents/caregivers should remain in their vehicles during drop-offs and pickups.
- Stagger start and end times to avoid congestion.
- Designate multiple pick-up and drop off areas at the school to assist with physical distancing.
- Have staff greet students as they arrive where needed, or add bus monitors to provide assistance.
- Work with your transportation provider to determine methods to help reduce the spread of the virus.
- Maintain 2 metres (6 feet) of separation between passengers when using public transportation and school buses when possible. Students from the same household may sit together if space is limited. Use of non-medical masks may also be requested or required.
- Frequent cleaning and disinfecting of buses is required, especially between groups of riders.
- Limit the number of people allowed on a bus. Assign or mark seats where people can sit to maintain physical distancing.
- Open windows, if possible and safe to do so.
- Consider installing physical barriers (e.g., plexiglass) for the bus driver when maintaining physical distancing is not possible.
- Consider having passengers use hand sanitizer when entering the bus.
- Control how passengers enter and exit to maintain physical distancing.

General Recommendations

- In the event of an emergency, follow established emergency response procedures.
- Perform regular inspections and hazard assessments to identify potential ways individuals may be exposed to COVID-19.
- Evaluate new COVID-19 preventative measures before using them to make sure new health and safety risks are not created.
- Make sure there are enough staff to support new measures.
- Regularly communicate COVID-19 news and measures to all parties to help manage stress and anxiety.
- Special considerations are required for individuals at higher risk (e.g., underlying medical conditions, immunocompromised, aged 65 and over, etc.).



Education Providers: Grades K – 12

Coping with Social Isolation, Microaggression or Stigma

- Keep parents/caregivers informed, and follow guidance from your local public health agency.
- Provide reassurance, listen to others and their concerns, address concerns and misunderstandings, and help explain the situation in a way that is suitable for their age and abilities.
- Understand that many people may be struggling to adapt to the new routines and requirements.
- When helping others, encourage them to talk to someone trained in mental health first aid, or someone else they trust about what they are experiencing.
- For an employee, ask them to contact their supervisor, employer, or employee assistance service, if available.
- Contact your local public health or community resources that offer mental health services.

Check out organizations online:

- Wellness Together Canada <https://ca.portal.gs/>
- Canadian Mental Health Association <https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health>
- Canadian Psychological Association <https://cpa.ca/psychologyfactsheets/>
- Kids Help Phone <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/were-here-for-you-during-covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>
- If you or someone you know is in crisis, please contact your local hospital, call 911 immediately, or contact a Crisis Centre in your area. <https://suicideprevention.ca/need-help/>

It is important that mental health resources and support are provided to all employees, including access to an Employee Assistance Program (EAP).



For further information on COVID-19, refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada
<https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

Note that this guidance is just some of the adjustments organizations can make during a pandemic. Adapt this list by adding your own good practices and policies to meet your organization's specific needs.