



November 17, 2021

*“Tenderness is the word that makes hope blossom in the world and relieves suffering. We need to overcome the temptation to be concerned only about our own problems; we need to grow tender. Let us bring hope to all with tenderness, without judgment. For there, with them is Jesus; because there, in them is Jesus, who awaits us.”*

*-Pope Francis*

It is hard to believe that we only have 22 days left before Christmas vacation!

First term highlights includes:

- Being able to have school masses in church
- the Grade 7 Girls Volleyball Team placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the whole of the CISVA
- Grades 3-7 have been able to go skating
- an online program called X-Movement (parents check out their website)
- Halloween Fun Day
- Christmas concert rehearsals are starting – look for more information to come

And so much more...

I am constantly grateful to the OLM staff and parents who give generously through their time, talents and treasures. I am appreciative that staff and families continue to be diligent in following health practices as outlined by the PHO and the OLM policies with regards to the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic.

### **Covid-19 Safety Measures in Schools – Q & A**

#### **My Family and I would like to travel outside of B.C. What are the rules?**

The opening of the U.S./Canada border and the upcoming Winter Break may have families considering international travel. Below are the **Federal Travel Guidance around COVID-19**, especially the restriction in attending school for unvaccinated students for 14 days following the international travel, including travel to the U.S. Unvaccinated students under the age of 12 have the **following restrictions** before returning to school:

Below are the instructions from the Minister of Health which are legally binding. For the next 14 days, the children **must**:

- not attend school, camp or daycare
- not attend large or crowded settings, indoors or outdoors, such as an amusement park or sporting event
- not take buses, subways, trains or other crowded transportation
- not attend a setting where they may have contact with vulnerable people (e.g. long term care facility)
- stay in a place that allows the child to avoid all contact with any person that:
  - has an underlying medical condition that makes the person susceptible to complications related to COVID-19
  - has a compromised immune system from a medical condition or treatment;  
or
  - is 65 years of age or older
- limit contact with others:
- remain with their fully vaccinated parent or guardian, as much as possible
- wear a mask and physically distance when in contact with non-household members

There is **no allowance** for unvaccinated students to return to school within 14 days following international travel, regardless of who they travel with or if they receive a negative PCR test result.

### **Can Students Come to School if they have Mild Symptoms?**

- All students and adults are expected complete a daily health check prior to entering the school and to follow the instructions provided based on their specific symptoms.
- Parents are to use the **Daily Health Check** on the OLM website or the K-12 Health Check app/government website
- Parents can refer to BCCDC's "[When to get tested for COVID-19](#)"
- Parents can also use the BCCDC online [Self-Assessment Tool](#) or call [811](#)
- Students must stay at home when sick, as this is one of the most important ways to reduce the introduction of germs and spread viruses including [COVID-19](#)

### **Why does CDC guidance keep changing?**

- CDC guidance changes because COVID-19 keeps changing and what we know about it continues to evolve. COVID-19 is still a new disease that CDC and others continue to study in order to provide the best guidance possible. CDC gives guidance based on the latest science to prevent and control disease, injury, and disability. All recommendations are based on available scientific data including outbreak investigations and tracking cases of COVID-19 in children. This means guidance will change as CDC learns more about what works best to reduce risk of COVID-19.

## **What is the Current Mask Mandate?**

As of Oct. 4, 2021 the Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance Protocols for K-12 Schools is as follows:

All staff, adult volunteers and visitors, and K-12 students in “bricks and mortar” schools are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering (a “mask”) at all times while indoors at school, subject to the following exemptions:

- If a person is unable to wear a mask because they don't tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons\*);
- If a person unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
- If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it;
- If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity, etc.); If a person is eating or drinking;
- If a person is behind a barrier (e.g., a divider, a cubicle, or in a room by themselves);
- While providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important.
- Staff at non-school sites (e.g., administrative offices, maintenance facilities, etc.) should continue to follow guidance from WorkSafe BC. If an activity cannot be implemented in line with this guidance, it should be adapted or another activity should be selected.

## **Do Masks Work?**

Yes, masks work. They limit the spread of germs from one person to another by blocking potential virus particles from entering the air. They also help protect the person wearing the mask because the mask can help block that person from breathing in potential virus particles in the air. For masks to work best, students, teachers, and staff need to wear a well-fitting mask consistently and correctly. Consistent and correct mask use is especially important indoors and in crowded settings when physical distancing is difficult. (CDC)

## **Does Wearing a Mask for a Long Time Pose any Risks to my Child?**

No, wearing a mask does not increase risk from germs or bacteria, and does not increase carbon dioxide levels for children. It is important to store your child's mask properly and wash it regularly to keep it clean. Consider having your child bring more than one mask to school to easily replace a dirty or wet mask with a clean one. (CDC)

## **How can I Help Keep my Child Healthy?**

The use of masks should not reduce or replace other more effective infection prevention and exposure control measures in schools, such as:

- ensuring students and staff are aware of their responsibility to perform a daily health check, and to stay home when they are sick or if required to self-isolate;

- hand hygiene
  - Washing your hands is one of the most effective ways to prevent yourself and your loved ones from getting sick, especially at key times when you are likely to get and spread germs.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
  - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol to clean hands
- daily cleaning and disinfection of frequently touch surfaces
- teach and reinforce respiratory etiquette

Covering coughs and sneezes and keeping hands clean can help prevent the spread of serious respiratory illnesses like influenza, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), whooping cough, and COVID-19. Germs can be easily spread by:

- Coughing, sneezing, or talking
- Touching your face with unwashed hands after touching contaminated surfaces or objects
- Touching surfaces or objects that may be frequently touched by other people

**To help stop the spread of germs:**

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze
- Throw used tissues in the trash
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands

Remember to immediately wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

These measures provide multiple layers of protection that reduce the risk of transmission.

**Do Adults have to Wear Masks Outside and Stay in the Parent Designated Zones?**

- Yes. While on the OLM property. We require parents and other adults to wear a mask and to keep within the designated zones. Please refer to the OLM Website.