

Our Lady of Mercy School

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION PLAN

(last updated September 13, 2023)

September 2023 Start of School

School supports students in developing their potential and acquiring the knowledge, skills and abilities they need for lifelong success. In-person learning, is a 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. (Excerpt taken from *Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings*)

This Communicable Disease Prevention Plan for Our Lady of Mercy School was created in consultation with the CISVA Superintendent’s Office, the CISVAAA, OLM administrators, teachers, support staff, PEC members, and custodial/caretaker staff. The guidelines contained herein are intended to support staff, students, parents, caregivers, administrators, and community members to:

- Be informed about communicable disease measures at Our lady of Mercy School and how they support a safe school environment;
- Understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting a safe and healthy school.

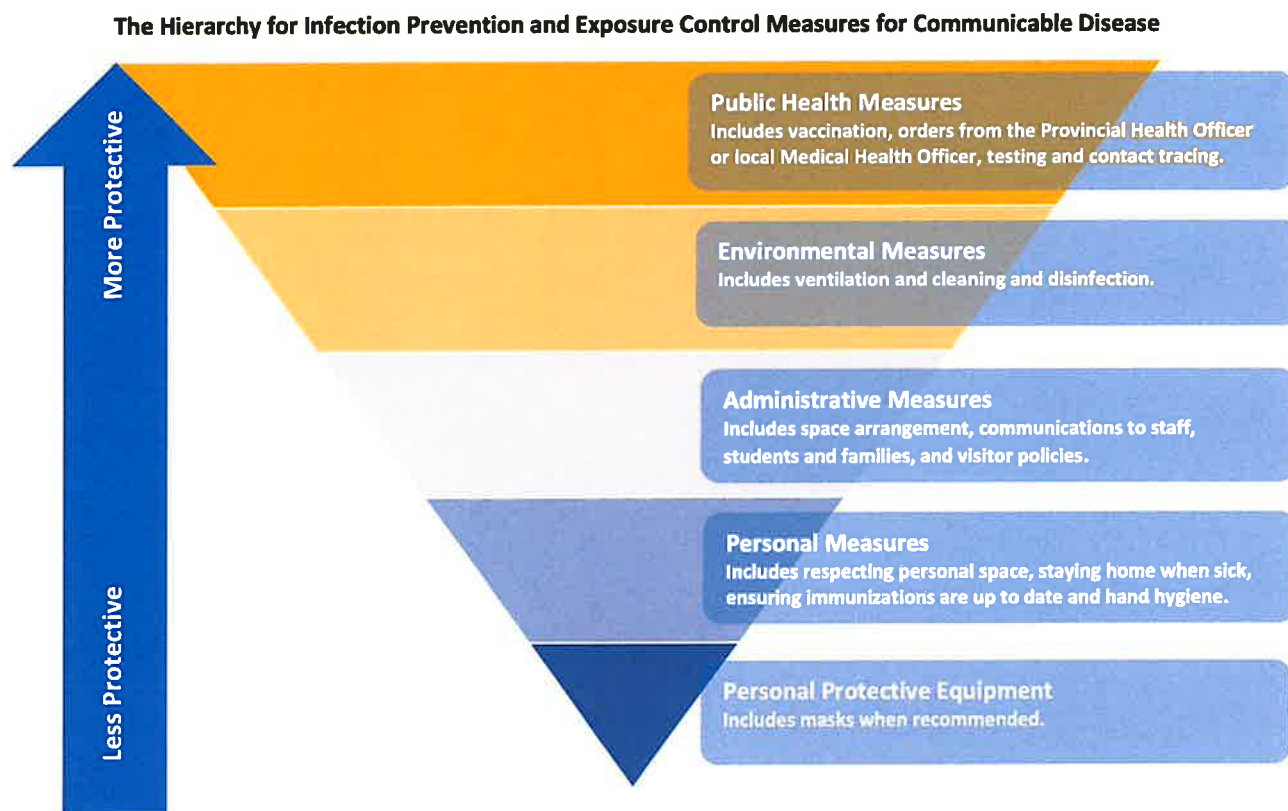
This document was created with guidance from the following documents:

[Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings,](#)

[BCCDC Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools,](#)

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 provided by our regional medical health officer (Fraser Health) and the Provincial Health Officer. This includes all of the orders, guidelines, notices, and recommendations that are issued by them. In addition, we follow the guidelines that are provided by our 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 – maintain at all times:

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; plans are in place in case of “health or functional closures”
 - A school closure MAY occur due to:
 - Health closure of a school, which is determined by the local health authority due to the COVID19 case count in, or related to, a school.
 - Functional closure of a school, which is determined by the school district due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial to ensure the health and safety of students. This would likely be due to a high absenteeism of staff and the inability to replace those absences.
 - A health or functional closure may vary in length but is intended to be temporary. It is not the same as a long term move to remote learning.
 - The school is committed to continue to deliver services and continuity of learning
 - Should a closure occur, students will take home what they need which may include school supplies, books and/or technology. A temporary closure will not replicate an in-school learning environment.
 - In the event of a closure, your child’s teacher(s) will be in contact to share a schedule with you. It may include both synchronous connections (i.e. video calls for small or large groups) as well as more independent learning opportunities. For students with additional support needs, the school team will work together to provide continuity of learning support.

- Additional considerations may be implemented by the principal, PEC, health and safety committee, priest, etc. aligned with PHO and MoE directives
- Said policies are reviewed regularly in staff meetings. Staff, students, and parents are trained in school policies and procedures.
- Measures are in place, where feasible, to minimize the crowding and to use all space available to spread people out.
- School assemblies can now be held in-person.
- School-wide Mass celebrations will take place in the church in-person at capacity; masks are now optional for all students and staff
- Screening forms for visitors to no longer required before entering the school
- Students still encouraged to be taken outside as often as possible, weather permitting, although no longer required

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

Handwashing:

- 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 rub containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub 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.
- Staff have posted [handwashing posters](#) by the classroom sinks and administration has posted posters in all bathrooms and above staff room and kitchen sinks.

When Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they arrive at school. • Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch). • Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student’s desk or locker). • Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple classes (e.g. the gym, music room, science lab, etc.). • After using the toilet. • After sneezing or coughing into hands. • Whenever hands are visibly dirty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they arrive at school. • Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch). • Before and after eating and drinking. • Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating. • Before and after giving medication to a student or self. • After using the toilet. • After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood). • After cleaning tasks. • After removing gloves. • After handling garbage. • Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

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, cigarettes, or vaping devices.
- 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

Teachers have posted posters in all classrooms. Administrators have posted in public areas.
[Respiratory Etiquette Poster](#)

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 room.
- Our school has enough handwashing facilities on site for all our 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 room.
- We have implemented cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces
- Workers who are cleaning have adequate training and materials.
- Hygiene Posters are posted in all classrooms and common areas
- [cleaning posters](#) are posted in upstairs and downstairs janitorial rooms.
- Cleaning staff are provided with substances for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Cleaning staff are provided with gloves.
- Cleaning staff have been instructed to wash their hands after cleaning.
- Custodial staff will do a deep clean at the end of each day
- Frequently touched surfaces are disinfected twice a day (doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets, cabinet handles, tables, desks, chairs, keyboards, communication devices)
- Custodial and school staff will clean high touch surfaces twice a day, as well as a deep clean in the evening
- Classroom teachers are responsible for disinfecting visibly dirty surfaces in their classrooms such as desks, tables and sinks during the course of 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 paper-covered books can be given to students. Students can submit paper assignments to teachers.
- Cleaning staff 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, keep doors to classrooms, library, gym, office, staff room, group bathroom doors open.
- Staff will disinfect tables before and after students eat lunch.
- Clean and disinfect first aid room cot prior to use and after it is used or soiled. Use single use only pillowcases and blankets and dispose of them immediately after single use. Where pillowcases and blankets are not single use, launder between each student. The cot in the sick room should not have any fabric on it. Clean the vinyl surface of the cot after the use of each student.
- **Student supplies and equipment:** Teachers will encourage staggered visits to lockers when needed. Teachers are encouraged to assign student supplies and learning materials that will only be used by them and are clearly labeled. **Parents must 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:

- Windows are opened in all classrooms and staff areas each day, every day, to ensure effective air circulation.
- HVAC system calibrated according to [Worksafe standards](#)
- HVAC filters upgraded to Merv-13 filters
- Building custodians are familiar with the document ‘Prevent the spread of communicable disease: ventilation and circulation’.
- Principal 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 now optional for all students and staff as well as visitors to the school
- If a student requires a mask and does not have one, the school will provide a disposable mask.

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.

STEP 3 – COMMUNICATE MEASURES, PRACTICES, POLICIES

To ensure everyone that enters Our Lady of Mercy 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
- Provided information to make sure all stakeholders are knowledgeable about the practices that are in place at our school. Parent meetings at the beginning of the year, email communication, classroom blogs, etc.
- All workers are aware of the policy for staying home when sick.
- We have posted signage in the school, including effective hygiene practices.
- We have posted signage at the main entrances indicating who is restricted from entering the premises, including visitors and workers with communicable disease symptoms.
- Administrators have been trained on monitoring workers and the workplace to ensure policies and procedures are being followed.
- Communication with staff is conducted through on-site and virtual meetings, emails, group chat messages, virtual staff meetings.
- Train staff on workplace policies and procedures:
 - Initial changes/expectations communicated to staff prior to first day of return to work.
 - Review of Communicable Disease Prevention Plan prior to Sept. 9, 2022 and January 6, 2023 to see if any changes need to occur
 - Administration will field questions and concerns about the Communicable Disease Prevention Plan and adjust if needed
 - Changes/adjustments to the Communicable Disease Prevention Plan will be updated accordingly and communicated to all stakeholders.
 - Communicable Disease Prevention Plan is posted to school website.
 -
- All workers received information about staying home when sick
- All staff are encouraged to complete a daily health check to assess for symptoms of communicable disease: [BC Covid-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#)
- Signs have been posted to restrict entrance of people to the building if showing symptoms
- Administration will monitor safety measures in the school.
- Daily communication with staff
- Administration will send staff regular emails regarding updates to policies, procedures, ministry documents or developments from Vancouver Coastal Health
- Records will be kept of inspections, cleaning schedules, health reports, etc.

STEP 4 – MONITOR YOUR WORKPLACE AND UPDATE PLANS AS NECESSARY

- Things may change as school gets up and running. New areas of concern will be monitored and 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 (MoE, Provincial Health Officer, Worksafe) will be consulted.
- Administration will review Communicable Disease Prevention Plan regularly and update as needed

