

Holy Cross Elementary School's COVID-19 Safety Plan for Return to School (February 4, 2021)

Introduction:

The purpose of this plan is to inform Holy Cross Elementary School staff, students and parents of the Operations and Health & Safety for our site with the return of in-person instruction starting September 10, 2020. This safety plan was developed by the Holy Cross Administration and represents a compilation of the most current information and guidelines available on COVID-19 from the *Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, BCCDC, WorkSafeBC and Coastal & Fraser Health*.

Background:

On the advice of the Provincial Health Officer, in-person instruction in public and independent K-12 schools was suspended effective March 17, 2020 as a precautionary measure in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning March 30, 2020, public and independent K-12 schools were asked to ensure ongoing school care and in-person learning opportunities for children of essential service workers requiring school care, those in remote locations, vulnerable students requiring in person support, and learners with diverse needs. As of September 10th, in accordance with the Ministry of Education's K – 12 Restart

Plan, Holy Cross Elementary School will be resuming K to 7 in-class instruction. The 2020/21 School Year will begin in Stage 2 of the K – 12 Restart Plan with the goal of maximizing in-class instruction for all students within the revised public health guidelines.

Whenever possible, feasible and practical control measures in accordance with the order of the Provincial Health Officer, have been selected to provide the best/widest protection to all staff and students within the school community.

This plan is posted at the school entrance, Office, and also on the Holy Cross School website, and it has been communicated to parents. This information is based on the best evidence currently available and will be updated as new information becomes available.

Based on the current epidemiology of COVID-19 in B.C., and the fact that children are at a much lower risk of developing COVID-19, K-12 schools in British Columbia should begin increasing the number of students receiving in-class instruction within the school environment, while supporting the health and safety of children and adults. Schools should adapt as much as possible to implement public health and infection prevention and control measures, including staying home when ill, physical distancing, minimized physical contact, hand hygiene, frequent cleaning and disinfection, as described in this plan.

Step 1: Assess the risks at your workplace

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, and from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. Adequate protocols are required to address the risk.

The risk of person-to-person transmission is increased the closer you come to other people, the amount of time you spend near them, and the number of people you come near. Physical distancing measures help mitigate this risk.

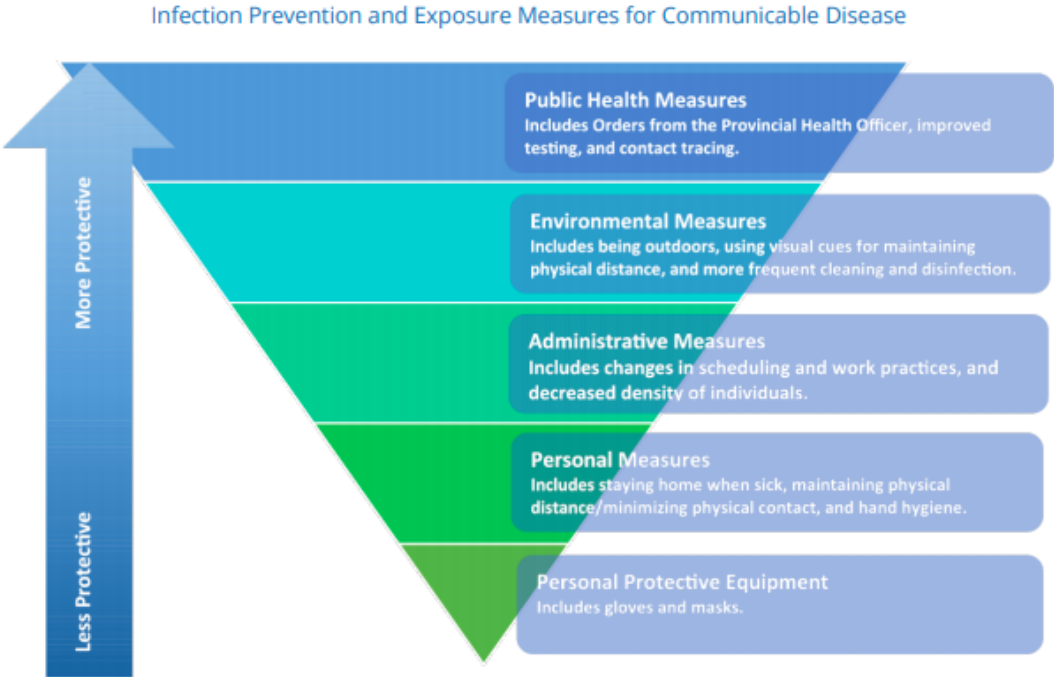
The risk of surface transmission is increased when many people contact the same surface, and when those contacts happen in short intervals of time. Effective cleaning and hygiene practices help mitigate this risk.

We have assessed our workplace by completing a facility inspection to check for **spaces** allowing for physical distancing and **surfaces** that can be contaminated. We have identified high traffic areas such as hallways, washrooms, staff room and photocopier room. Staggered breaks & schedules, directional procedures & instructional signs will assist with reducing the risk. We have also identified surfaces that people touch often such as doorknobs, light switches and desktops. Strict cleaning measures, creative ways to open doors and lights and assigned individual supplies and materials will assist with reducing the risk.

Step 2: Implement protocols to reduce the risks

To reduce the risk of virus transmission, we have implemented protocols to protect against our identified risks. Note that different protocols offer different levels of

protection. **Wherever possible, we are using the protocols that offer the highest level of protection and adding additional protocols as required. We have incorporated controls from various levels to address our risks.**



Step 3: Develop policies

Step 4: Develop communication plans and training

Step 5: Monitor your workplace and update your plans as necessary

Step 6: Assess and address risks from resuming operations

Steps 3-6 are addressed throughout the following sections.

Public Health Measures:

1. Mass Gatherings

The Provincial Health Officer's Order for mass gatherings continues to prohibit gatherings and events of people in excess of 50 people, *however, this Order does not apply to regular school activities. As such, there can be more than 50 students and staff in a school at any given time if they are not all in one area and if they are actively engaged in physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.* However, large assemblies of staff and students should not be held.

Under the most current guidelines (July 29, 2020), our students will be placed into cohorts with no more than 36 people, including students and staff. A Learning Group is a group of students and staff who remain together throughout a school term or year, and who primarily interact with each other. Students will remain in an established cohort for most of the school day. The composition of the Learning Group will remain consistent for all activities that occur in the school day, including but not limited to learning and breaks (lunch, recess, classroom change, etc.)

Occupancy limits will be posted in certain areas (eg. Staffroom, Office, Teacher Resource Room, etc.)

The number of adults (teachers/EAs) interacting with groups of students throughout the day will be minimized. Students will stay in assigned cohorts to receive beneficial supports or services (e.g. resource). Within these supports or services, it is expected that cohorts and physical distance are maintained as much as is practical to do so while still ensuring the support, program or service continues.

Learning Groups will go outside when possible for lessons and/or play-exercise times.

Encourage fixed seating arrangements over flexible seating arrangements where relevant

Students seats should be facing in the same direction whenever possible.

A 5 minute transition time between itinerant classes will allow for the teacher to clean all surfaces/equipment. Please allow for shorter classes due to cleaning.

Playground to be divided to accommodate Learning Groups. These areas will rotate weekly to allow for students to be able to play in a variety of areas.

2. Case Finding, Contact Tracing & Outbreak Management

At the School Level

- The office will call the parent to arrive as soon as possible when notified their child is ill. Parent will need to have a plan in place.
- The office will contact 811 or the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
- The office will record illness in our school records file in the event this information is later needed.
- Staff member is to put on mask and immediately separate the sick child from others and put him/her into a supervised area until the parent/guardian arrives. Apply physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and hand hygiene principles while waiting for pick up. Avoid touching student's body fluids (mucous/saliva). Wash hands thoroughly.
- Staff member to clean/disinfect area where child was re-located.

At the Public Health Level

- If a staff or student in a school is confirmed by public health as positive for COVID-19, public health will work with school administration to determine what actions should be taken, including if any staff or students who have been in contact with that person need to self-isolate, and if other staff and students' families should be notified.
- Schools should NOT provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school, including if they display symptoms of COVID-19, unless directed to by public health.

At the Home Level

- Children with common cold, influenza or COVID-19 like symptoms must stay home, be assessed by their health care provider and tested for COVID-19.
- Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered a close contact of a confirmed case and are waiting to see if they develop COVID-19 illness
- If concerned, parents can be advised to contact 8-1-1, or the local public health unit to seek further input. They can also be advised to contact a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.

Should children, youth and staff have common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms they must stay home, be assessed by their health care provider and tested for COVID-19. When someone is symptomatic, they should self-isolate and follow directions provided by their health care provider. Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered a close contact of a confirmed case and are waiting to see if they develop COVID-19 illness.

Restricting Access to Schools:

For the safety of all, the following conditions necessitate an individual remaining at home and self-isolating:

- all students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 (symptoms include: fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache)
- anyone who has travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days

- anyone identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak

*This includes children of essential service workers who are ill.

1. Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. *It has been recommended by a health care professional that parents take their child's temperature if their child shows signs of not "being themselves" rather than just relying on subjective measures.*

If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents and caregivers must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, and their symptoms have been resolved.

Parents and caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.

***A Daily Health Checklist will be provided for parents for routine screening.**

2. Staff must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID19 prior to entering the school. School Administrators must ensure school staff are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other

infectious respiratory disease prior to entering the school. Staff has to sign off on a weekly confirmation of their ability to work form & adhere to daily health checks/self-assessment prior to entering the building.

3. School Administrators must:

- Clearly communicate with parents and caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school.
- Assign staff if needed, to additionally conduct daily checks for respiratory illness at drop-off by asking parents and caregivers to confirm the child does not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease.
- Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school to be sent home as soon as possible.
- Prevent staff and students who are ill, including children of essential service workers, from attending school.
- Advise, as needed, those unsure if they or a student should self-isolate to use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool.
- Advise, as needed, parents to contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further input.
- Advise, as needed, parents to contact a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.

Note: There is no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health care professionals.

Administrative Areas:

- Limit the public, including parents, coming into the school. Encourage parents and others to avoid visiting the school for minor matters. Parents are encouraged not to come to the school to drop off lunches, supplies, etc.
- A 2-metre area in front of our front Office has already been established by the Office window and counter. Signage for limited entry has been posted.
- If parents/caregivers need to contact the school principal or their student's teachers, they will be directed to do so by phone or email. In-person visits should be for essential purposes and arranged in advance by appointment.
- Visitors must be aware of, and follow safety protocols; limited in their access to necessary spaces only; and will be asked to confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering the school building.

Environmental Measures:

1. Cleaning/Sanitizing and Disinfection

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of COVID-19 from contaminated objects and surfaces. Schools should be cleaned and disinfected in

accordance with the *BCCDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings* document.

This includes:

- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises should occur at least once a day.
- Frequently touched shared surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day. (e.g. door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, electronic devices, keyboards and toys)
- A new product SANITOL will be utilized on a weekly basis in the school facilities.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Use common, commercially available detergents and disinfectant products and closely follow the instructions on the label.
- Limit items that are not easily cleaned (e.g. fabric or soft items).
- Empty garbage containers daily.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g. runny nose, vomit, stool, urine).
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Drinking fountains have now been replaced with water-bottle filling stations on the upper and lower floor of the building (safe use of the water filling stations will be part of the Staff training program in early September)
- Regular disinfecting of equipment used by Students (ie. P.E. Equipment, Balls, Manipulatives, etc.)

There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. As

such, there is no need to limit the distribution of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

In addition to following the above guidelines, at HC, we have:

- Provided paper hand towels and soap dispensers at every sink.
- Disallowed the use of water fountains (taped marked indicates this)
- Removed shared items (e.g. school supplies)
- Provided cleaning products for common devices and materials used for the delivery of education (e.g. photocopiers, supply rooms, etc.).
- Washrooms will be cleaned at least twice a day keeping in line with the high touch surface area protocols.
- Increased air flow and ventilation ,where climate allows, will be encouraged through open doors and windows.

Administrative Measures:

1. Physical Distancing and Minimizing Physical Contact

Physical distancing (e.g. maintaining a distance of 2 metres between two or more people) is challenging in a K-12 school setting, particularly with younger students. As such, it is reasonable to establish different expectations for varying age levels and activities. For example, younger students should be supported to have minimized physical contact

with one another, while older students and adults should seek to maintain a safe physical distance whenever possible.

The following physical distancing strategies are implemented where possible in our school setting:

Student Management:

- Parents and caregivers to remain outside of the school (i.e. in their cars) to drop off their children.
- Parents and caregivers and other non-staff adults entering school will be restricted. They will be reminded to practice diligent hand hygiene and maintain physical distance when they are in the school. School signage to reinforce hand hygiene is very visible throughout the school. (This signage will also include social distancing and safe washroom usage reminders).
- Avoid close greetings (e.g. hugs, handshakes). Regularly remind students about keeping their “hands to yourself”.
- Spread people out into different areas. - Consider different classroom and learning environment configurations to allow distance between students and adults (e.g. different desk and table formations).
- Organize students into cohorts that stay together throughout the day. Focus on individualized activities whenever possible.
- Students within cohorts are encouraged to stagger visits to their cloakroom and/or lockers.

- Strive to minimize the number of different teacher(s) and educational assistant(s) that interact with groups of students throughout the day (Only EA, Specialists).
- Have clearly-defined drop-off procedures and staggered pick-up times, as communicated in Principal's Memos. (Upon arrival, students are to their designated area where an Staff Member will be waiting. Teachers will then proceed with their learning groups and enter the building through designated doors at appx. 8:50 am. Upon dismissal, the Primary students will begin the exit process at 2:45 pm and Intermediates at 2:55 pm. A Staff member will escort the cohort outside to the pick-up area. Parents will be expected to be prompt in their child's pick-up time. Children are not permitted to play on the school grounds after dismissal nor prior to the morning bell.)
- Stagger recess/snack, and class transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Take students outside more often. - Organize learning activities outside including snack time, place-based learning and unstructured time. - Take activities that involve movement, including those for physical health and education, outside.
- Reassure students, parents and caregivers that **playgrounds** are a safe environment, and encourage appropriate personal hygiene practices before, during, and after outdoor play. The HC Adventure Playground will open to individual class cohorts at prescribed times only.

- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways and bathrooms. There are separate washrooms for Kindergarten, Grades 1 to 4 and Grades 5 to 7.
- Assemblies and other school-wide activities will be organized to avoid large gatherings of people in one place.
- Clear protocols for bringing **materials** (example, things to and from home) into and out of schools.
- Clear protocols for safe and healthy handling of all **food items**, such as labeling of beverage and food containers, clear communication to students **not to contact or share items**, and other parameters deemed appropriate. Students are encouraged to label all of their items.
- Schools should not be used for community related events unless determined essential by the CISVA.
- Employees and students should not be sharing personal items (e.g. electronic devices, writing instruments, etc.).
- Buddy class activities will be postponed until otherwise notified.
- Food brought in for birthday celebrations, etc. is only permitted if it is purchased from a certified food supplier and is individually-packaged. Those individually-packaged items will only be distributed by adult Staff Members.
- Student assemblies, including Masses, will be live-streamed to the classroom as necessary.
- Extra-curricular programs will be based within learning cohorts.

- Parent meeting procedures (eg, Meet the Teacher Night, AGM) will be detailed in the Weekly Principal's Memo.
- Parent in-school participation will be limited when students and staff are in the school

Safety for Staff: (Physical Distancing)

- establish and post occupancy limits for shared spaces such as staffroom and copy room.
- provide additional areas for workers to have their breaks (i.e. in their classrooms, outside).
- maintain 2m physical distancing whenever possible between staff. Continue the use of virtual staff meetings.

Personal Measures:

1. Stay Home When Sick

All students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19, OR travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days, OR were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate, including children of essential service workers who are ill.

*For more information and details on this topic see **Public Health Measures** above.*

2. Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Both students and staff can pick up and spread germs easily, from objects, surfaces, food and people. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene. Parents, caregivers and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

How to practice diligent hand hygiene:

- Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19.
- 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.
- To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the *hand washing posters* in the school.

Strategies to ensure diligent hand hygiene:

- Encourage hand washing with water and soap upon arrival at school. Place hand washing stations in various locations, including school entrances, hallways and classrooms to encourage appropriate hand hygiene throughout the day.
- Consider alcohol-based hand rub dispensers where sinks are not available and posters to promote the importance of regular hand washing.
- Regularly remind staff and students about the importance of diligent hand hygiene.

- Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule. –Students should wash their hands at minimum:
 - when they arrive at school and before they go home
 - before eating and drinking
 - after using the toilet
 - after sneezing or coughing into hands or tissue
 - whenever hands are visibly dirty
 - when moving between different learning environments (e.g. outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom)
- Ensure hand washing supplies are well stocked at all times including soap, paper towels and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Staff should assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- Washroom areas will be monitored and supervised. Maximum capacity in the washroom is 2. Traffic flow to and from the washroom will be controlled. Educational assistants to assist with movement.
- Hand sanitizers will be available in each classroom and other areas including the front entry to the school, office, staff room, gym, library, etc.,

Safety for Staff: (Hygiene)

- encourage staff to remain onsite and not to leave during break times (outside on grounds is fine)
- ensure hand washing and sanitizing supplies are available at all times and establish hand washing policies and procedures (frequent hand washing is required to reduce risk of transmission)
- hand washing signs are posted near all sinks
- hand hygiene station is set up at the school entrance/office
- Use of Staffroom amenities will be permitted but use of sanitary wipes after usage will be expected.

3. Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

- Cough and 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, or unwashed utensils.

Wearing cloth or homemade masks, particularly for children, is not required. There is no evidence to support the use of medical grade, cloth or homemade masks in school settings at this time.

Wearing one is a personal choice and it will be up to the discretion of the parents. It is important to treat people

wearing masks with respect. Parents, caregivers and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

4. Personal Protective Equipment

Personal protective equipment (PPE), such as masks and gloves are going to be supplied by the school where mandated by the Ministry of Education. All PPE equipment will be made available to our teachers at the expense of the school. Guidelines from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education will determine who and what PPE is required by our Staff.

All Staff will be required to wear masks in all indoor areas including

- a) When they are with their learning groups, except when sitting or standing at their seat or workspace in a classroom (ie. desk).
- b) When there is a barrier in place.
- c) When they are eating or drinking.

All speciality teachers will be required to wear masks and adhere to the 2m physical distancing guideline to the best of their ability.

ALL classrooms will be provided with gloves, nonsurgical masks, a face shield, and hygienic supplies.

Grade 6 and 7 Students (including their teachers and EAs) will be required to store and label their masks in individual cloth bag or plastic pouch.

More information about COVID-related mask use is available on the BC Centre for Disease Control website.

Communications Strategies:

- Remind staff that all health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- Attempt to mitigate staff confusion and concerns by communicating essential health and safety information to them in writing before they return to the workplace. If possible, give staff an appropriate amount of time to review this material, and to respond with questions. (Staff COVID-19 Screening Form)
- Upon first return to the workplace, hold a health and safety meeting to review workplace practices relating to COVID-19 and other health and safety matters. Additional communication may be required as new information is made available that may affect work practices. **(Training Dates: September 2nd, 8th, and 9th)**
- Daily check-in meeting with staff to provide them with new information and review any concerns.
- Ensure that parents and caregivers understand your policy that students must stay home if they are sick.

- Restrict the number of non-essential people coming into the school such as parents and caregivers and contractors.
- Keep parents and caregivers informed about what you are doing in your educational setting regarding taking extra precautions.
- Ensure that staff know how to raise safety concerns. This may be through your joint health and safety committee.
- Establish a central location (Staffroom) where new information is posted relating to COVID-19 in your workplace.

Documentation and Training:

- Train your staff on:
 - The risk of exposure to COVID-19 and the signs and symptoms of the disease.
 - Safe work procedures or instruction to be followed, including hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette.
 - How to report an exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19.
 - Changes you've made to work policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic and keep records of that training.
 - Document COVID-19 related meetings and post minutes at a central location.

- Keep records of instruction and training provided to staff regarding COVID-19, as well as reports of exposure and first aid records.

Safety Responsibilities by Role:

Employer (CISVA)

- Select, implement, and document risk assessments and appropriate site-specific control measures.
- Ensure that all resources (information, authorization administrative changes, technology, training, human resources) and materials (personal protective equipment, equipment, cleaning and disinfecting products and systems) required to implement and maintain plan are reasonably made available as practical when required.
- Ensure that supervisors and workers are informed about the content of safety policies.
- Conduct a periodic review the effectiveness of the plan. This includes a review of the available control technologies to ensure that these are selected and used when practical.
- Maintain records of training and inspections.
- Re-examine all tasks in the workplace, especially those that require the direct care of students, and ensure that safe work procedures are updated with COVID-19 practices.
- Where possible, have workers perform only essential tasks to maintain the student's education and well-being. Tasks that are non-essential should be put on

hold until directed otherwise by the provincial health officer.

Supervisors (principals and vice principals)

- Ensure that staff are knowledgeable regarding the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Direct work in a manner that eliminates or minimizes the risk to staff.
- Post or relay educational and informational material in an accessible area for staff to review.
- Train staff and inform them how to keep themselves safe while at school. Formal Staff Training and information pages will be held on September 2nd, 8th and 9th. Staff will be informed of changes made to work policies, practices and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The administration will keep records of training meetings. Covid-19 related meetings are document and minutes are available in the Staffroom. Signage is posted around the school indicating limitations on occupancy in rooms, as well as restricting access to the school building.
- Staff Meeting will be held in the Gymnasium or Music Room in order to allow social distancing. Mask-usage for all Staff will be encouraged.

Workers (teachers, education assistants, support staff and outside contractors)

- Know the controls required to minimize their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Participate in COVID-19 related training and instruction.
- Follow established work procedures and instructions as directed by the administration.
- Report any unsafe conditions or acts to the administration.
- Know how and when to report exposure incidents.
- Visitors to the school must sign in at the Office and provide contact information.
- The Office will track students/families travelling outside of Canada during the school year.
- The Administration / Office Staff will track student and/or staff absence and compare against usual absenteeism patterns at the school.