



COVID-19 Return to School Protocols

The purpose of this document is to:

- 1) Set protocols and standards for the opening of St. Mary's School for the 2020-2021 school year amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- 2) Maintain a safe and healthy school environment by minimizing the risk of spreading COVID-19.

This document recognizes that:

- 1) The current intent is to open schools in September in Stage 2, and
- 2) Movement between the Stages 1 and 5 is possible within the 2020-2021 school year.

A) Public Entry / Access to School

- 1) Public entry of St. Mary's School is limited. Parents and others are asked to call instead of visiting the school if possible.
- 2) All staff and approved visitors use the main entrance to the school.
- 3) Sanitizer and masks are available at the front entrance/desk for visitors. Visitors are required to wear a mask when entering a public indoor setting and to sign in at the office.
[See: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions#masks](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/restrictions#masks)
- 4) Students enter and exit through their assigned learning cohort doors, following the necessary signs and instructions regarding traffic flow in boot rooms and hallways.
- 5) Staff are maintaining a 2 metre distance from the office counter when interacting with the public, including parents and students. A Plexiglas shield at the office counter provides further protection.
- 6) Limited access signs are posted on the main external front door (see WorkSafe BC resources).

B) Drop Off and Pick Up

- 1) St. Mary's School recognizes that the high majority of our families have children in more than one learning cohort, which causes difficulty with staggered arrival times. As such, students will immediately join their designated learning cohort area upon their arrival until their learning cohort enters the school with their teacher. Students will not be permitted to move outside their designated area in an effort to minimize contact outside of the learning cohorts. Students are encouraged to bring an individual activity with them that they can use while waiting in their cohort line / area.

- 2) If students arrive late, they must enter the school via the main entrance doors, while maintaining 2 metres physical distancing. Health checks are completed by parents/guardians before students enter the building.
- 3) Students will exit the school at pick up time through their assigned door and wait in their learning cohort line or area for parent/guardian pick-up.

C) Health Check for Students and Staff Entering School

- 1) Parents / caregivers are required to assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school (self-assessment tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>).
- 2) If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents / 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 resolved.
- 3) Staff will assess themselves daily for symptoms of the common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school (self-assessment tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>). Staff will initial the daily health check attendance form upon entering the building.
- 4) All students and staff who have travelled outside of Canada are required to self-isolate for 14 days.

D) Students who Develop Symptoms while at School

- 1) The symptomatic student is immediately separated from others and moved to a supervised area (sick room).
- 2) Staff will encourage symptomatic students to wear a mask when moved to a supervised sick room. Staff can help young students with putting on a mask.
- 3) The student's parent / caregiver is contacted to pick up the student as soon as possible. Parents / Caregivers are expected to pick up their child as soon as possible if notified they are ill.
- 4) Where possible, staff will maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask and/or shield if tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.
- 5) Staff will provide the student with tissues or a disposable mask to cover their coughs and sneezes. All used tissues will be thrown away as soon as possible and hand hygiene will be practiced.
- 6) Staff will avoid touching the student's body fluids. If they do, diligent hand hygiene will be practiced.
- 7) After the student is picked up, staff will practice diligent hand hygiene.
- 8) Staff will clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated (sick room) and any other areas used by the student.
- 9) The office will notify public health officials.
- 10) If a staff member or student are confirmed positive with COVID-19, public health will work with the school administration to determine the subsequent actions. Students and staff exposed to confirmed cases of COVID-19 will follow the directions of public health.

- 11) Schools are not permitted to provide notification to staff or student families if a staff member or student becomes ill at school, unless directed to do so by public health.

E) Student Management: Hygiene

- 1) Students wash their hands (at a minimum):
 - a) Upon arriving at school;
 - b) Before eating and drinking;
 - c) After using the toilet;
 - d) After sneezing or coughing into hands or tissue;
 - e) When hands are visibly dirty; and
 - f) When moving between different learning environments (classrooms, indoor/outdoor, etc).
- 2) Staff are encouraged to assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- 3) If a sink is not available, 60% alcohol based hand sanitizer can be used.
- 4) Food and drink will not be shared between students.
- 5) All fruits and vegetables should be washed with soap and cold water before consuming. This is expected to be done at home before the student arrives at school.
- 6) Food items and containers will be kept in the student's backpack, which only the student touches. Students must be able to open their own food containers and packages.
- 7) School water fountains are deactivated, though water bottle refill stations are available. Students must bring their own water bottles for use during the day. Refill stations will be sanitized mid-day and again after school hours. Water bottles will be sent home daily to be washed.
- 8) Microwaves, fridges, stoves, and any other food preparation items are not available to students.
- 9) St. Mary's School will provide one re-usable face mask per student, as offered by Focused Resources. Cleaning and maintenance of the mask is the responsibility of the family.

F) Student Management: Physical Distancing

- 1) Parents / Caregivers will remain outside of the school to drop off their children.
- 2) All staff and students refrain from close greetings, such as hugs or handshakes.
- 3) Students are reminded to keep their hands to themselves. Parents / Caregivers are asked to reiterate the same reminders with their child before arriving at school.
- 4) Staff may consider the use of educational videos / online programs as part of learning so young students can sit independently and distanced from each other.
- 5) Staff may consider providing work space outside when practical. Contact sports, including tag games, are not permitted.
- 6) Staff may incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff.
- 7) Hallway movement will be limited. Before a staff member leads a class through the hallway, they will check to be sure the hallway isn't being used by another class.
- 8) The use of hallways for individual or small group student work, as traditionally done, will only be permitted if it is safe to do so.

G) School Structure / Organization

- 1) Students are organized into learning cohorts of a maximum size of 60. Learning Cohorts are:
 - a) Kindergarten and Grade 5
 - b) Grades 1 and 2
 - c) Grades 3 and 4
 - d) Grades 6 and 7
- 2) Learning cohorts have the option of learning together or collaborating on academic activities, preparing virtual assemblies, sharing recess breaks, etc.
- 3) Individuals working with those not in their learning cohort, such as specialty teachers who work with many grades, will keep their 2 meters physical distance.
- 4) Reasonable efforts are made to minimize the number of different staff members that interact with different learning cohorts throughout the day. Staff that interact with multiple learning cohorts will maintain 2 metres physical distancing.
- 5) Consideration is given to different classroom configurations to maintain distance and minimize physical contact between students.
- 6) Recess and lunch breaks will occur within learning cohorts and cohorts may be separated into playground areas during outdoor recess breaks.

H) Staff Management: Physical Distancing

- 1) Occupancy limits for shared spaces (staff room, copy room) are established and posted. See WorkSafe BC posters / resources.
- 2) Staff are maintaining 2 metre physical distancing whenever possible between other staff and students.
- 3) Work processes and practices are modified to encourage physical distancing between staff and student, and between staff.
- 4) Staff are avoiding close greetings, such as hugs and handshakes.
- 5) Staff who meet in person are ensuring there is a 2 metre space between each staff member.
- 6) The flow in public places is being managed by moving through hallways on the right side (such as vehicles)
- 7) St. Mary's School is not holding assemblies, school Mass, and other school-wide events to avoid a large number of people gathered in one place.

I) Staff Management: Hygiene

- 1) Staff are remaining on site and not to leaving during lunch or at break times, unless necessary (ie. for their own child care purposes).
- 2) Hand-washing supplies are available at all times (soap, clean towels, paper towels, 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- 3) Handwashing signs are posted near all sinks. All staff will wash their hands frequently to reduce the risk of transmission.
- 4) Other hygiene practice signage is posted (see resources from WorkSafe BC).

- 5) The BCCDC specifies that PPE (masks, gloves) are not needed, beyond those used by staff as part of regular precautions for the hazards normally encountered in their regular course of work.
- 6) St. Mary's School will provide two masks for each staff member, as offered by Focused Resources.
- 7) Staff are to wear masks when interacting with staff and students.
- 8) Staff are to wear at all times except when sitting or standing at their work station, there is a barrier in place, or when they are eating and drinking.

J) Cleaning / Disinfecting During School Operation (On-Site Staff) (refer to separate document entitled COVID Cleaning Plan)

- 1) Common, commercially-available detergents and disinfectant products are being used.
- 2) Frequently touched surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day, including (but not limited to) door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, stair railings, shared office spaces, keyboards, communication devices, and toys.
- 3) Garbage containers are emptied daily.
- 4) Shared items where cross-contamination is possible (shared school supplies, coffee stations, water stations, etc) are limited, removed, or restricted from access.
- 5) Staff are wiping down shared spaces (shared desks) at the end of their shift.
- 6) Pillow cases and blankets (from the sick room) are laundered after each use.

K) Cleaning / Disinfecting After School Hours (Custodian) (refer to separate document entitled COVID Cleaning Plan)

- 1) St. Mary's School is cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC CDC's Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings (http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/CleaningDisinfecting_PublicSettings.pdf)
- 2) Cleaning practices are in line with the PHO's COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings (https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19_child_care_guidance_-_2020_may_15_final.pdf).

L) Communication (refer to separate document entitled Communication Plan COVID)

- 1) Essential health and safety information is communicated to staff in writing before returning to the workplace.
- 2) Upon first return to the workplace, a health and safety meeting is held to review workplaces practices.
- 3) Daily check-ins with staff to provide new information and review concerns.
- 4) Parents and caregivers are provided a clear understanding that students must stay home if they are sick.
- 5) St. Mary's School is minimizing the number of non-essential people (parents, caregivers, contractors) entering the school.
- 6) St. Mary's School is keeping parents / caregivers informed about extra precautions occurring in the school setting.
- 7) All information relating to COVID-19 is posted in the staffroom.

M) Concerns about Unsafe Work

- 1) St. Mary's School Staff are to raise safety concerns in writing via email to the Principal.
- 2) Staff have the right to refuse work if they believe it presents an undue hazard. An undue hazard is an "unwarranted, inappropriate, excessive, or disproportionate" hazard. For COVID-19, an "undue hazard" would be one where a worker's job role places them at increased risk of exposure and adequate controls are not in place to protect them from that exposure.
- 3) If the matter is not resolved, the worker and the supervisor / employer must contact WorkSafe BC (<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/contact-us/departments-and-services/health-safety-prevention>). A prevention officer will consult with workplace parties to determine whether there is an undue hazard and issue orders if necessary.
- 4) Workers / employers with questions or concerns about workplace exposure to the COVID-19 virus can call WorkSafe BC's Prevention Information Line at 1-888-621-SAFE to speak to a prevention officer to have questions answered. If required, a prevention officer will be assigned to assess the health and safety risk at your workplace.

N) Staff Mental Health Resources

- 1) COVID-19 Psychological First Aid Service: Information and Signup (British Columbia Psychological Association) – Free virtual counselling provided by registered psychologists. <https://www.psychologists.bc.ca/covid-19-resources>
- 2) COVID-19: Staying Well In Uncertain Times (Canadian Mental Health Association – B.C.) – Tips and information on how to reduce and manage anxiety in the workplace due to the COVID-19 outbreak. <https://cmha.bc.ca/covid-19/>
- 3) Managing COVID-19 Stress, Anxiety and Depression (Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions) - Tips and resources on things we can do as individuals and collectively to deal with stress and support one another during these challenging times. https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health-safety/covid19_stressmanagement_5_accessible.pdf
- 4) Mental Health and Psychosocial Considerations During COVID-19 Outbreak (World Health Organization) – These mental health considerations were developed by the WHO's Department of Mental Health and Substance Use as messages targeting different groups to support for mental and psychosocial well-being during COVID-19 outbreak. <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf>
- 5) Mental Health and COVID-10 (Conference Board of Canada) – Videos on different aspects of mental health, including coping with anxiety, job loss, and dealing with isolation. [https://www.conferenceboard.ca/\(X\(1\)S\(1tloqepagnh0xli4w2hckucy\)\)/insights/covid-19?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1](https://www.conferenceboard.ca/(X(1)S(1tloqepagnh0xli4w2hckucy))/insights/covid-19?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1)
- 6) Taking Care of Your Mental Health (COVID-19) (Public Health Agency of Canada) – Tips and resources for taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak. <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/mental-health.html>

O) References

- 1) K-12 Education Restart Plan. Ministry of Education. July 29 2020.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caring-orderly/k-12-education-restart-plan.pdf>
- 2) COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings. Coronavirus COVID-19 BCCDC & BC Ministry of Health, July 29 2020. http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance-k-12-schools.pdf
- 3) BC What to Expect in Stage 2. July 29 2020.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school/expect-stage-2>
- 4) BC Information for School Districts and Independent Schools. July 29 2020.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school/school-districts>
- 5) Learning Groups for Students & Staff. July 29 2020.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school/learning-groups>
- 6) Expectations for the K-12 Sector at Each Stage. August 10, 2020.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/administration/program-management/safe-caring-and-orderly-schools/planning-framework/expectations>
- 7) WorkSafe BC. Education (K-12): Protocols for returning to operation. August 11, 2020.
<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/education>
- 8) BC Centre for Disease Control. Child Care and Schools. July 30, 2020.
<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/childcare-schools>
- 9) BC Government Self-Assessment Tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>.
- 10) British Columbia COVID-19 Dashboard.
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a6f23959a8b14bfa989e3cda29297ded>
- 11) <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/hc-sc/documents/services/publications/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering/covid-19-safely-use-non-medical-mask-face-covering-en.pdf>