



## COVID-19 Return to School Protocols

*The purpose of this document is to:*

- 1) Set protocols and standards for the partial return to school of students and staff for the month of June 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- 2) Maintain a safe and healthy school environment.

*This document recognizes that:*

- 1) The return to school for students from June 1 to June 25, 2020 is optional for families.
- 2) There will be an increase of students and staff within our school building.

### **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 students, staff and all others will use the main entrance to the school.
- 3) Staff are maintaining a 2 metre distance when interacting with public, including parents and students as much as possible.
- 4) WorkSafe health signs are posted (see WorkSafe BC resources).
- 5) Parents are remaining outside the school to drop off their children. Health checks are completed before the student enters the building. (Parents must be present to answer health check questions).
- 6) Upon arrival, students are taken to the washroom to wash their hands or they will use hand sanitizer at the entrance.
- 7) Students are to remain on site for the duration of their attendance each day. Students may not leave the school property (i.e. for lunch) and return the same day (but they can be picked up at lunch to go home for the day).
- 8) For pick up, parents must wait outside the school's main entrance, maintaining physical distancing, and their child will be released to them.

### **B) Health Check for Students and Staff Entering School**

- 1) All students and staff who have symptoms or have travelled outside of 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.
- 2) 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>).
- 3) 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.

- 4) At drop-off, a staff member conducts a daily health check by asking parents / caregivers to confirm their child does not have symptoms or common cold, influenza, COVID-10, or other respiratory diseases. This is recorded.
- 5) 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>).

**C) 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) The student's parent / caregiver is contacted to pick up the student as soon as possible. Parents / Caregivers will be expected to pick up their child as soon as possible if notified they are ill.
- 3) Staff will contact 811 to notify them of a potential case and seek further input.
- 4) Where possible, staff will maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.
- 5) Staff will provide the student with tissues 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.

**D) 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. Students must bring their own water bottles for use during the day.
- 8) All group food preparation activities are eliminated from St. Mary's School.

**E) Student Management: Physical Distancing**

- 1) Parents / caregivers will remain outside of the school to drop off/pick up their children.
- 2) A health check is completed before students are admitted to the building.
- 3) All staff and students refrain from close greetings, such as hugs or handshakes.
- 4) Students are reminded to keep their hands to themselves. Parents / caregivers are asked to reiterate the same reminders with their children before arriving at school.
- 5) 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.
- 6) Staff may consider providing work space outside when practical. Contact sports are not permitted.
- 7) Staff may incorporate more individual activities or activities that encourage more space between students and staff.

**F) School Structure / Organization (Not Yet Complete)**

- 1) Students are organized into smaller groups and stay together throughout the day.
- 2) Reasonable efforts are made to minimize the number of different staff members that interact with groups of students throughout the day, while still keeping work load in mind.
- 3) Consideration is given to different classroom configurations to maintain distance between students or different locations in the school.
- 4) St. Mary's School playground equipment remains closed. Students who play outside can use the grassy area and can engage in contact-free sports that do not involve hands (i.e. frisbee or volleyball is not be permitted, passing a soccer ball with the feet is permitted).
- 5) Parents understand that students may not have their regular teacher or classmates.
- 6) To Be Determined (based on parent survey data):
  - a) Classrooms to use;
  - b) Number of students per classroom; and
  - c) Shift of Staff.

**G) Academic Learning**

- 1) St. Mary's teachers are posting their learning plan no later than Sunday night for the coming week.
- 2) Students opting to attend school are bringing to school all supplies needed to complete the learning plan. All supplies must be carried between home and school; supplies / work cannot be left at school.
- 3) Students opting to attend will complete the activities assigned in the learning plan (numeracy and literacy, as well as optional work) at school under the supervision of St. Mary's Staff (Teachers and / or Special Education Assistants).
- 4) Students are encouraged to bring to school other activities for use after assigned activities are completed, such as reading books, colouring, individual games, etc.

**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.

**J) Cleaning / Disinfecting During School Operation (On-Site Staff)**

- 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)**

- 1) Veritas 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](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](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**

- 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](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) COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings. BCCDC/Ministry of Health. May 15, 2020. [https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19\\_k-12\\_school\\_guidance\\_-\\_2020\\_may\\_15\\_-\\_final.pdf](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19_k-12_school_guidance_-_2020_may_15_-_final.pdf)
- 2) WorkSafe BC: COVID-19 and returning to safe operation – Phase 2. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation?origin=s&returnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worksafebc.com%2Fen%2Fsearch%23q%3DCOVID-19%2520and%2520returning%2520to%2520safe%2520operation%2520-%2520Phase%25202%26sort%3Drelevancy%26f%3Alanguage-facet%3D%5BEnglish%5D>
- 3) WorkSafe BC: Education (K-12): Protocols for returning to operation. <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/covid-19-returning-safe-operation/education>
- 4) BC CDC's Cleaning and Disinfecting for Public Settings: [http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/CleaningDisinfecting\\_PublicSettings.pdf](http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/CleaningDisinfecting_PublicSettings.pdf)
- 5) 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](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)
- 6) BC Government Self-Assessment Tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>.