



# **St. Michael's School**

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## **Return to School Safety Plan re: COVID-19**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this COVID-19 Safety Plan is to inform St. Michael's School staff, students and parents of the Operations and Health & Safety during COVID-19. This safety plan represents a compilation of the most current information available on COVID-19 from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, BCCDC, and WorkSafeBC. This safety plan will be reviewed and updated to meet future phase requirements. This safety plan outlines the policies, guidelines and procedures the school has put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

The BC Center for Disease Control has published the following key information in its updated July 29, 2020, COVID-19: Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings,

- COVID-19 virus has a very low infection rate in children (ages 0 to 19).
- In B.C., less than 1% of children tested have been COVID-19 positive, and even fewer are suspected to have been infected based on serological testing. Most children are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection. Children under 10 comprise a smaller proportion of the total confirmed child cases compared to children between the ages of 10 and 19.
- Based on published literature to date, the majority of cases in children are the result of household transmission by droplet spread from a symptomatic adult family member with COVID-19. Even in family clusters, adults appear to be the primary drivers of transmission.
- Children under one year of age, and those who are immunocompromised or have pre-existing pulmonary conditions are at a higher risk of more severe illness from COVID-19 (visit the BCCDC Children with Immune Suppression page for further details).
  - Children who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 can still receive in-person instruction. Parents and caregivers are encouraged to consult with their health-care provider to determine their child's level of risk.
- Children typically have much milder symptoms of COVID-19, if any. They often present with low-grade fever and a dry cough. Gastrointestinal symptoms are more common than in adults over the course of disease, while skin changes and lesions are less common.

In accordance with the Ministry of Education's K-12 Restart Plan, beginning on September 10, St. Michael's School will be resuming K-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.

### **STEP 1: RISK ASSESSMENT AT ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL**

The virus that causes COVID-19 spreads in several ways, including through droplets when a person coughs or sneezes, or from touching a contaminated surface before touching the face. We formed a re-start committee made up of the administration team, teachers and parents to review all pertinent documentation in order to develop this plan.

#### **Things to Consider**

During normal operation prior to COVID-19:

- St. Michael's School has 235 students plus 30 staff and support workers. Parent volunteers also assist with various activities inside the school including library helpers and hot lunch parents.
- Students and staff congregate and are in close quarters in classrooms, in other learning areas (gym, library, music room, learning support rooms), in hallways, in the staffroom and other smaller areas such as the secretary's office.
- Surfaces that are touched often include doorknobs/handles, desks, washroom doors, toilets, taps, hand dryers, paper towel dispensers, staff room appliances, soap dispensers, water fountains, light switches, office equipment (photocopier, phones), teacher/student computers, classroom materials including books and supplies, fridge, microwave, coffee pots, library books, gym equipment, etc.
- Staff, students and other adults sometimes attend school when they are sick or have symptoms of colds, influenza, etc.
- The school is used on Wednesday evenings for Confraternity of Christian Doctrine (CCD) classes.

### **STEP 2: PROTOCOLS TO REDUCE THE RISK**

#### **Reduce the risk of person-to-person transmission**

To reduce the risk of the virus spreading through droplets in the air, we have implemented protocols to protect against identified risks. Different protocols offer different levels of protection. Wherever possible, we will use the protocols that offer the highest level of protection.

#### **A. First Level of Protection (elimination): Restricting Access and Ensuring Physical Distancing**

##### **i.) Restricting Access**

In accordance with the Ministry of Education's K-12 Restart Plan, beginning on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020 St. Michael's School will begin the 2020-2021 school year with in-class instruction in a controlled manner while ensuring health and safety measures are in effect.

- Access to the building will be restricted. Only staff and students are permitted, unless it is an urgent matter and only by appointment. Parents/guardians will remain outside when they drop off their children. Parents are also not permitted to come into the school during the school day to drop off lunches/supplies, etc.
- Currently, participation jobs carried out by parents in the school will be **minimized** and will continue to depend on approval by the Parish Education Committee. Participation parents will be expected to be trained and to follow all health and safety guidelines, including wearing a mask and maintaining physical distance (2m).
- Visitor access during school hours is prioritized to those supporting activities that benefit student learning and well-being (e.g. speech language pathologist, behaviour interventionist, public health nurses, etc.).
- Visitors will be made aware of health and safety protocols and requirements prior to entering the school.
- Visitors must confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering.
- School will keep a list of the date, names and contact information for any visitors who entered the school.
- Parents and others are to avoid visiting the school for minor matters. Parents should not come to the school to drop off lunches, supplies, etc.

#### **ii.) Regulating Physical Distancing During the School Day**

- Students and staff will avoid gathering/congregating in groups in hallways or other common areas.
- Classrooms will be reconfigured to maximize space between desks/tables. Carpet areas will be removed from classrooms.
- Staff will minimize physical contact within learning groups or when outdoors.
- Physical distancing (2m) when interacting outside of their learning groups while indoors.
- Students will be trained and reminded daily on how to practice social distancing at school.
- Public Health guidelines for the K-12 school setting recognize that physical distancing can be challenging –especially for younger students. There will be a focus on physical distancing and reduced physical contact in those situations where physical distancing (2 m) is not practical. Students are to keep their hands to themselves. No hug/handshakes/high fives, etc.
- The number of different adults (teachers/EAs) interacting with groups of students throughout the day will be minimized.
- Teachers will incorporate more activities that encourage more space between students and staff. For younger students, teachers will adapt group and individual activities to minimize physical contact and reduce shared items. For older students, teachers will minimize group activities and avoid activities that require physical contact.
- At this time learning that would have taken place in the library and music room will instead take place in the classroom. Physical Education classes will take place as usual with students going outside as often as possible. Students are asked to bring sweatpants

to school for cooler days. When students need to be in the gym, they will be doing individual training or activities where distancing is possible.

- Classes will go outside when possible for lessons and/or play-exercise times.
- Staff will implement staggered recess/snack, lunch and transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Traffic flow will be marked in hallways and stairways.
- 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 when movement involves mixed learning groups.
- Occupancy limits will be posted in certain areas (e.g. staffroom, LRC, Teacher Resource Room, Sensory Room, etc.).
- Assemblies will not be held to avoid a large number of people gathered in one space. These will be conducted virtually.
- Small gatherings can only occur within a learning group.
- A gathering can include the full learning group (60) and the minimum number of people needed to meet the gathering's purpose
- Tournaments, competitions & festivals
  - All inter-school events including competitions, tournaments and festivals will not occur at this time.
- Sports, Clubs & Extracurricular Activities
  - Extracurricular activities including sports, arts and special interest clubs can only occur if:
    - Physical distance can be maintained between members of different learning groups
    - Reduced physical contact is practiced by those within the same learning group

### **B. Second Level of Protection (engineering): Barriers and Partitions**

- Where physically distancing measures cannot be maintained, such as in the office area, library checkout area, plexiglass or other barriers will be installed. These barriers must also be cleaned as part of the cleaning protocols.

### **C. Third Level of Protection (administration): Rules & Guidelines**

- We have clearly communicated the rules and guidelines to staff in training sessions and through printed materials and signage throughout the school.

#### **Measures in Place - How to avoid spread**

For Staff who are ill with respiratory illness symptoms (shortness of breath, breathing difficulties, fever and cough) to stay home from school/work. If you have symptoms contact 811 for guidance.

- The consistent practice of good respiratory etiquette, physical distancing and hand hygiene.
- If a student or staff member develops symptoms while at school, they must wear a mask while they are preparing to go home.

- Follow the guidelines from the Health Minister and Self-Isolate, Contact 811 for guidance.
- Do not share office equipment like pens, scissors, staplers, etc.
- Do not share food (fruit trays, deli trays, etc.)
- Avoid skin-to-skin contact with others (handshaking, hugging, etc.)
- Avoid touching your face with your hands.
- No congregating in common rooms or areas (lunchroom, lobby, office washroom, etc.)
- Endeavour to make use of phone calls instead of in-person conversations.
- Whenever possible, relocate to another workspace or location to maximize social distancing.
- Always follow the guidelines and recommendations of the public health officer
- Students are required to remain on-site during breaks and lunch and staff must inform the administrator if they are required to leave the school property.

#### **D. Fourth Level of Protection: Using masks (optional measures in addition to other control measures)**

- According to the Ministry’s “Health & Safety Standards and Guidelines for K-12” non-medical masks are not recommended for elementary school students due to the increased likelihood they will touch their face and eyes, as well as require assistance to properly put on and take off their mask (requiring increased close personal contact from school staff). No student needs to wear a non-medical mask if they do not tolerate it, but students may wear them as a personal choice and masks will be provided by the school.
- Non-medical masks are required for all staff anytime they are outside of their classroom or learning group and physical distance cannot be maintained (e.g. specialist teachers or EAs working in close proximity to students across learning groups).
- We have trained workers in the proper use of masks.
- Everyone must treat each other and those wearing or not wearing masks with respect.

### **Effective Cleaning and Hygiene Practices**

#### **i.) Personal Hygiene—Hand Washing**

- Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. The school will ensure that adequate hand-washing facilities are on site.
- We will consider the maximum number of students and staff required to wash their hands at peak times and ensure that sufficient hand washing or sanitizing stations are available at these times. The use of lower floor kitchen sinks and changeroom sink will be used in addition to the washroom facilities and classroom sinks.
- Staff members are to wash or sanitize their hands when they arrive as well as frequently throughout the day. Wearing of gloves does not preclude hand washing.
- Teachers will provide instruction and assist younger students (as needed) to properly wash their hands. Hand washing signs will be posted near all sinks.
- Teachers will incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into their daily schedule. Students will wash hands/use hand sanitizer when necessary but at least:
  - When they arrive at school and before going home
  - Before and after eating and drinking

- After using the toilet
- After sneezing/coughing into hands or tissue
- Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple cohorts
- Whenever hands are visibly dirty
- When transitioning to different area (e.g. outdoor to indoor; gym to classroom)

### **How to wash hands**

- Follow video from World Health Organization <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PmVJQUCm4E> and, remove jewelry
- Wet hands with running water
- Distribute liquid cleanser thoroughly over hands
- Clean hands for 20 seconds following steps 1-9
  1. Rub palm to palm
  2. Rub right palm over the back of left hand with interlaced fingers and vice-versa
  3. Rub palm to palm with fingers interlaced
  4. Back of fingers on opposing palms
  5. Rub thumb rotationally, clasped in opposing hand
  6. Rub tips of fingers rotationally on opposing palm
  7. Rinse hands thoroughly
  8. Dry hands with paper towel
  9. Use paper towel to shut off water
- If a sink is not available, students/staff will use alcohol-based sanitizer. Hand sanitizers will be available in each classroom and other areas including the front entry to the school, office, staff room, gym, library, etc.
- There is no current evidence of COVID-19 transmission in playground environments. Playgrounds are a safe environment. The following measures will be taken when using the playground:
  - Appropriate hand hygiene practices before and after outdoor play
  - Individual grades will use the playground structure at one time

### **ii.) Food and Drink**

- Food and drinks are not to be shared by students.
- Group food preparation activities (including Hot Lunch) will be eliminated. This service will be re-evaluated in January.
- Appliances (staff can share the use of appliances and other objects, but treat items like microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pot, photocopiers or laminators as frequently touched surfaces.) Staff are encouraged to use these items as infrequently as possible and only with a routine cleaning. Hands must be washed before and after using shared staff room items.
- The Public Health Guidance says that "there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources." However, laminated paper-based products should be cleaned and disinfected daily if touched multiple people.
- Avoid sharing communal equipment/supplies as much as possible.

### **iii.) Storing Belongings**

- Due to limited space in the classrooms, the students will be using the hallway hooks to store belongings. Each student is to bring a backpack with what they need for the day. Students will be dismissed in small groups in order to access their belongings and avoid

crowding in the cloakroom area. If possible, all belongings, including lunches will be kept in the child's backpack. Students are to take their backpack home each day.

- The classroom teacher will give more specifics but, in general, students are to bring:
  - Filled water bottle (water fountains are disabled); water bottles may be filled at the filling stations.
  - Snack/lunch in a container.
  - Outdoor play equipment (e.g. ball, skipping rope, hula hoop, etc.,).
  - School supplies will be divided and each child will be given a labeled bag with their own supplies. There is no communal sharing of supplies.
  - Personal size hand sanitizer-labeled with child's name (optional).
- Parents will be asked to label ALL personal items, including water bottles and masks. Cloth and disposable masks are to be labeled with the students initials and grade and kept in a paper envelope or cloth bag.

#### iv.) School Cleaning/Sanitizing Protocols

- The school will be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) *Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings* guidelines. Cleaning practices will be in line with the Provincial Health Officer's COVID-19 *Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings*.
- Staff members are to keep their classrooms and desks free from clutter so as to allow custodial staff the ability to clean areas thoroughly.
- High touch surfaces (door and cabinet handles, stair railings, washroom areas, shared office spaces, desks, communication devices, keyboards, light switches, plexiglass barriers, etc. ) are to be frequently cleaned and disinfected, at least **twice (2) a day**. Staff/students may assist with this.
- Washrooms should be cleaned **twice (2) a day** keeping in line with the high touch surface areas protocols. Staff may be assisting with this.
- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises will be completed by the janitorial service at least **once (1) a day**.
- Shared items where cross-contamination is possible (e.g. shared school supplies, devices, water fountain, plates, etc.) should not be used. Staff should bring their own items.
- Drinking fountain will be disabled; however water fill stations to fill water bottles will be available for use.
- Items that are not easily cleaned (e.g. fabric or soft items) are to be limited. Classroom carpets have been removed.
- There is no evidence that 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.
- Garbage containers are to be emptied daily.
- The mattress in the medical room will be encased in plastic and all linens removed in order to effectively disinfect this room after use
- The custodian will ensure that hand washing supplies are available at all times (i.e. soap, paper towels and minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.) Also, cleaning products (e.g. Lysol wipes) will be provided for cleaning desks, photocopiers and other common devices.
- The custodian will train the evening janitors as to supplies and cleaning protocols to be used in the school under these new requirements. This includes barrier cleaning.

## STEP 3: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### A. Health and Sickness

- **No one who is sick or showing symptoms is to come to school.**
- Students and staff should stay home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases AND their symptoms have resolved.
- Staff or students who are unsure if they should self-isolate should be directed to use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#).
- If concerned, they 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.

#### i.) Daily Health Assessments

- Staff members must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school. Staff members are to provide proof each day that they are healthy and have not been exposed to COVID-19.
- Parents have the responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school. Parents are to ensure their child is free from symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before they are to come to school. Parents will be required to provide a signed copy of a completed daily health check form at the start of the school year confirming that they understand how to complete a daily health check.
- If a student develops symptoms while at home, parents/guardians **MUST** keep their child at home until have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, **AND** their symptoms have resolved.

\* 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.

#### ii.) If student/staff becomes ill during the day

- Individuals who show **any** signs of illness will go home until they are well and symptom-free.

**Staff Illness:** Staff members who start feeling ill while at work are to return home and monitor their symptoms. The staff member must wear a mask while they are preparing to go home. They are to let the school secretary know how they will get home. The staff member will contact 811, Public Health or their family physician to seek further direction.

#### **Student Illness:**

- The office will call the parent to arrive as soon as possible when notified their child is ill.
- 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 First Aid records 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.
- The student will wear a mask (unless it cannot be tolerated) while awaiting return home.
- Staff member to clean/disinfect area where child was re-located.
- Children with common cold, influenza or COVID-19 like symptoms must stay home, be assessed by their health care provided and tested for COVID-19.
- The student must remain at home until any COVID-19 like symptoms have resolved.
- 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.

### iii.) Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and the BCCDC Guidelines

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

- Any student or staff who has symptoms of COVID-19 (symptoms include but are not limited to: fever, chills, new and worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, and new muscle aches or headache) OR has travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days OR was identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate, including children of essential service workers.
- seek assessment by a health-care provider and self-isolate while they await the results if they have cold, influenza, or COVID-19-like symptoms.
- Consult the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment tool at: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/> or call 811 for further guidance related to testing and self-isolation.
- Daily assessment of children for symptoms by parents/caregivers, and staff self-assessment - students and staff stay home if symptomatic.

### B. Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue. Ensure that used tissues are thrown away immediately and hands are thoroughly washed.
- Refrain from touching their eyes and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils.

### C. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, or a face shield (in which case a non-medical mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) in high traffic areas such as in common areas such as hallways, or anytime outside of their learning group whenever physical distancing cannot be maintained (e.g., itinerant teachers/specialists interacting with multiple learning groups). Staff can also wear a mask or a face shield within their classroom or learning group if that is their personal preference.
- The school will have non-medical masks available for staff and students, including anyone who becomes ill while at school.



## **G. Student Supplies**

Students coming to school are to:

- Wear their school uniform.
- Bring appropriate outdoor gear for the weather (rain jackets, rain boots, umbrellas, etc).
- Bring all their materials for the day including lunch and snacks, outdoor play equipment (ball, skipping rope, etc.), and school supplies as instructed by their teacher. Please ensure that all items are clearly labeled.
- Personal, labeled hand sanitizer (optional).
- All items must fit into their backpack which is to be taken home every day.

### **STEP 4: COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND TRAINING**

- Everyone in the school community (staff, students and parents) will know the policies around staying home when they are sick. This information will be communicated in writing. Information will also be posted on the school's website.
- All staff will be trained and informed as to how to keep themselves safe while at school. Formal staff training and information sessions will be held on September 3<sup>rd</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> and will include:
  - i. the risks of exposure to COVID-19
  - ii. how to report an exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19
  - iii. safe procedures and instructions regarding proper hand washing, cough/sneezing etiquette, etc.
- Staff will be informed of changes made to work policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the daily check-in, updates will be provided when available.
- The health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- The administration will keep records of training meetings. COVID-19 related meetings are documented and minutes available in the staff room and the Principal's office.
- A bulletin board will be dedicated to sharing information with staff about policies and practices for COVID-19
- Signage will be posted around the school including occupancy limits and effective hand washing practices. Signage will also be posted at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the school including anyone with symptoms.

### **STEP 5: MONITOR THE WORKPLACE AND UPDATE PLANS**

- As new information is provided, some of these protocols and guidelines may change.
- Steps will be taken to update policies and procedures and involve the staff in this process.
- All staff are asked to raise any safety concerns with the Principal.

### **STEP 6: ASSESS AND ADDRESS RISKS FROM RESUMING OPERATIONS**

- New employees will be trained via online training module.

### **STEP: 7 CONFIRMED CASE OF COVID-19 IN A LEARNING GROUP OR AT SCHOOL**

If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school, protocols are in place.

- If a student or staff member develops symptoms at school, a non-medical mask will be made available and the individual will be separated (placed in supervised isolation) from their classmates or colleagues and sent home.
- The individual's parent or guardian will be contacted to discuss next steps.
- Schools will immediately inform public health of a potential case.
- Custodial staff will clean and disinfect the areas the person used.
- Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness should not return to school until they have been assessed by a health-care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases AND their symptoms have resolved.
- If a student or staff is confirmed to have COVID-19, public health will do an investigation to confirm if any staff or students have been in close contact with that person and need to self-isolate. Public health will inform the school and superintendent if there are close contacts of a confirmed case within a learning group or school.
- 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.
- Schools will provide learning support to students required to self-isolate.
- Together, schools and public health officials will determine if suspending in-class learning is necessary.

#### *References:*

- B.C.'s Back to School Plan website (Last updated: August 18, 2020)
- <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/covid-19-return-to-school>
- BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) website (Last updated July 29/Aug. 11, 2020)
- BC Restart Plan <https://www2.gov.bc.ca>
- CISVA Restart Plan
- CISVA Staffing Considerations
- COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for K-12 School Settings
- COVID-19 Workplace Health & Screening Form
- Daily Health Checks COVID-19 forms for Students and Staff
- K-12 Education Restart Plan.pdf
- Provincial COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings Ministry of Education
- Vancouver Coastal Health: Safety of the School Environment in the Vancouver Coastal Health Region During the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Who Comes Back First Checklist
- WorkSafeBC COVID-19 Safety Plan
- WorkSafeBC - Protocols for K-12 Education