



Nelson Christian School Society

Communicable Disease Prevention and Management Plan

Updated October 2024

Johnstone 570 Road, Nelson BC, V1L 6J2
Phone: 250-352 0526 Email: office@chekabc.ca
www.chekabc.ca | www.nelsonchristian.ca | www.kootenaypreschool.ca

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Key Principles of the Guidelines.....	3
3. Regional Differences.....	4
4. Infection Prevention & Exposure Control Measures.....	5
5. Supportive School Environments.....	6
6. Vaccines.....	7
7. Emergency and Evacuation Drills.....	7
8. Environmental Practices.....	8
a. Cleaning and Disinfecting.....	8
b. Ventilation and Air Exchange.....	9
c. Hand Hygiene.....	9
d. Respiratory Etiquette.....	10
9. Administrative Practices.....	11
a. Health Awareness and What to do When Sick.....	11
b. What to do When Sick at School/Work.....	12
c. Staff Responsibilities.....	12
d. Supporting Students With Disabilities/Diverse Abilities and/or Receiving Health Services.....	13
e. Space Arrangements.....	13
f. Student Transportation.....	14
g. Visitors and Community Use of School.....	15
h. School Gatherings and Events.....	16
i. Curriculum, Programs and Activities.....	16
j. Field Trips.....	16
k. Densities and Capacities.....	17
l. Outdoor Spaces and Playgrounds.....	17
m. School Closures.....	18
n. Communication and Training/Orientation.....	18
o. Contingency Plans and Online Learning.....	18
10. Personal Practices.....	19

a. Health Awareness, Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette.....	19
b. Masks and Face Coverings.....	19
c. Personal Space.....	20
d. Personal Items and Food Safety.....	20
<i>Appendix A: Safe Work Procedures.....</i>	21

1. Introduction

Communicable diseases circulate in our communities. As long as cases occur within our communities, students and staff members may be affected. Nelson Christian School Society (NCSS) is committed to ensuring communicable disease prevention measures are in place and will contact public health if concerns arise about communicable disease transmission within its schools and require additional support. NCSS strives to follow all public health measures in an effort to keep our students, staff and families safe from the transmission of any communicable disease.

NCSS's Communicable Disease Prevention and Management Plan focuses on reducing the risk of transmission of all communicable diseases in all NCSS schools and programs. This plan was developed according to the [BC Ministry of Education Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings \(September 2023\)](#), [Communicable Disease Prevention in K-12 Schools](#), and the [BC Centre for Disease Control and Ministry of Health \(public health\)](#).

2. Key Principles of the Guidelines

The following principles shall be applied to NCSS's Communicable Disease Prevention and Management Plan:

- Aligning communicable disease prevention measures with public health guidance to support student and staff wellness.
- Using an inclusive and trauma-informed lens, with a focus on mental health and wellness.
- Focusing supports to address unique student and staff needs, recognizing the different impacts that communicable diseases may have on individuals and communities.
- Working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to address the unique educational and learning needs of their communities.
- Engaging and collaborating with parents/caregivers, staff, unions and community partners to develop local solutions when needed.
- As required by WorkSafeBC, ensure the health of all employees by ensuring steps are taken to reduce the risk from communicable diseases. (See Appendix A)

Indigenous Students (First Nations, Métis and Inuit)

NCSS recognizes that communicable disease outbreaks and pandemics have disproportionate impact on First Nations and Indigenous communities. NCSS will ensure the identification of any First Nations and Indigenous learners whose educational outcomes may be negatively impacted during periods of increased communicable risk and make accommodations to ensure these students are supported. The needs of First Nations and Indigenous learners who require additional supports will be planned for and prioritized in partnership with parents/caregivers

and communities.

Additional considerations include:

- Engage with First Nations to identify the transportation needs of First Nations learners living on reserve to ensure there are equitable and safe transportation opportunities for students.
- Collaborate between educators and Indigenous support staff on the development of Indigenous students' learning plans, including ensuring the integration of language and culture into these plans.
- Awareness and sensitivity regarding the complex and devastating history that pandemics have had on many First Nations and Indigenous communities.
- Understand that some First Nations families and communities may continue to take increased safety measures, which may mean that some students will not attend in-person instruction during periods of increased risk in communities.

Trauma-Informed Practices

Trauma-informed practice is a compassionate lens of understanding what is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events.

Trauma-informed practice includes:

- Providing inclusive and compassionate learning environments.
- Understanding coping strategies.
- Supporting independence.
- Helping to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual needs of students and staff.

NCSS educators and support staff will monitor changes in student behaviour, including trauma-related behaviours which may include fear, hyperactivity, aggression, body aches and pain, depression, self-harming behaviours, excessive shyness, or withdrawal. To support educators and staff in identifying and responding to the needs of students who have experienced trauma, NCSS will utilize the Ministry of Education trauma-informed practice resources that are available on the erase (Expect Respect and a Safe Education) website.

3. Regional Differences

NCSS will comply with all orders (provincial, regional, and local) issued by a Medical Health Officer. These orders or guidelines may augment the Provincial Communicable Disease Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings based on epidemiological data. Regional or local orders would consider:

- Increased community transmissions
- Communities with low vaccination uptake
- Local epidemiology

These orders may be issued as part of a local or regional strategy, but may also be issued to an individual school, a grouping of schools, a school authority, all schools within the health authority region, or some combination thereof, during times of elevated risk.

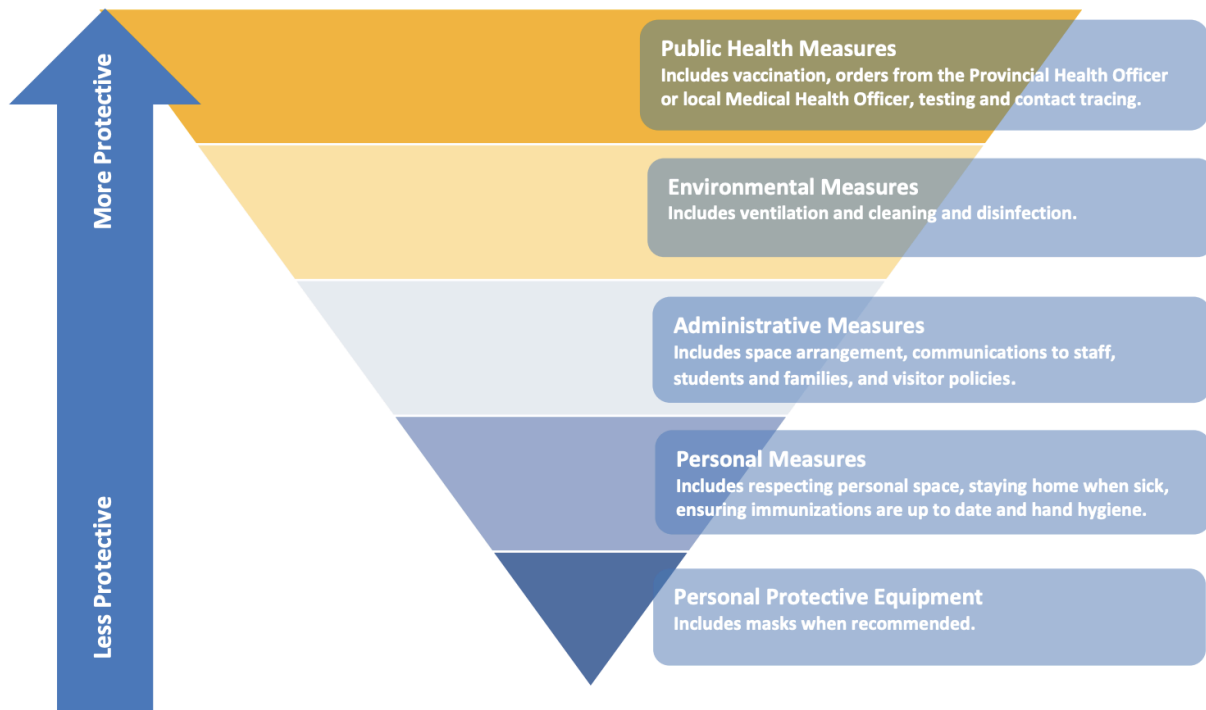
These measures may include:

- Limits on gatherings and events
- Reconfiguring room arrangements or incorporating more activities that maximize space between people and reduce face-to-face contact
- Limiting visitors
- Recommending increased mask use

4. Infection Prevention & Exposure Control Measures

Infection prevention and exposure control measures (also called communicable disease measures or health and safety measures) help create safe environments by reducing the spread of communicable diseases (e.g., influenza, COVID-19, etc.). Schools and learning centres provide a controlled environment in which access to the public is restricted. As such, these environments allow for greater use of administrative measures as all individuals present are part of the school environment. The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that should be taken to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in schools. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level, the risk of communicable diseases are substantially reduced.

The Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease



5. Supportive School Environments

NCSS can support students to practice personal preventive measures by:

- Having staff model personal practices (e.g., hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette), and assist younger students as needed.
- Promoting safety measures in the school using visual aids like signage and posters.
- Ensuring individual choices for personal practices (e.g., choosing to wear a mask or face covering) are supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

NCSS will share any applicable links to reliable communicable disease information on the website of each school/program and/or via our parent communication system (ParentSquare) to provide information to parents, families, and caregivers. Additional information that NCSS receives from our Regional Medical Health Officers or Interior Health may be distributed to parents, families and caregivers by the individual School or School/program Administrators. School staff will utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventive practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature. Staff should also utilize a trauma-informed lens when planning school activities (e.g., gatherings and events) and interacting with other staff and students, including considerations around respecting others personal space. Students and staff may choose to wear additional personal

protective equipment beyond the required, and those choices will be respected. School and program administrators are encouraged to review the information in this section with their school community, to increase awareness and support from staff, students, and families.

6. Vaccines

NCSS recognizes that vaccines are important tools to protect against serious outcomes of many communicable diseases like COVID-19 and influenza. NCSS students and staff are encouraged to ensure they are up to date on all recommended vaccines for communicable diseases. NCSS will provide information to students and staff to be vaccinated in partnership with public health and the local medical health officer.

NCSS will work with Interior Health to:

- Share evidence-based information (e.g., from BCCDC and ImmunizeBC), and details on how and where people can get vaccinated, with staff, students, and families prior to the start of the school year; and
- Establish a designated space in each school for public health nurses or other qualified health personnel to carry out their duties (including immunizations).

NCSS does not require students and staff to be vaccinated to attend/work at NCSS.

7. Emergency and Evacuation Drills

It is critical that emergency and evacuation planning and drills continue as required by the Ministry of Education. However, Emergency and evacuation planning, and drills will consider communicable disease prevention plans. School/program administrators will conduct regular fire drills, lockdown drills and other emergency drills. Administrators will ensure that muster points for emergency drills are also spaced to ensure that classes make use of the space available to them to muster.

In the event of an actual emergency, communicable disease prevention measures may be suspended to ensure a timely, efficient, and safe response.

8. Environmental Practices

a. Cleaning and Disinfecting

Daily cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases from contaminated objects and surfaces. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty.

As part of sustainable communicable disease management, NCSS will maintain and incorporate enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, whenever feasible.

General Cleaning

- Daily practices will include general cleaning of the premises.

Products and Procedures

- For cleaning, water and detergent or common, commercially available products will be used with good cleaning practices. For hard-to-reach areas, use a brush and
- rinse thoroughly prior to disinfecting.
- Common, commercially available sanitizing and disinfectant products will be used, recognized by Health Canada's Hard Surface Disinfectants and Hand Sanitizer's list.
- The following procedures will be used when cleaning and disinfecting:
 - Wash hands before and after handling shared objects.
 - Items and surfaces that a person has placed in their mouths or that have been in contact with bodily fluids should be cleaned as soon as possible and between uses by different people.
 - A dishwasher may be used to clean and sanitize dishwasher-safe items if the sanitize setting is used with adequately hot water.

Frequently Touched Surfaces and Shared Use Items

Cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched surfaces should occur at least once in a 24-hour period and when visibly dirty. Frequently touched surfaces are items touched by larger numbers of students and staff.

NCSS will perform frequent cleaning of all learning and office sites. These include:

- Items used by larger numbers of students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles.
- Shared equipment (e.g. computer keyboards and tablets, glassware and testing equipment for science labs, kitchen equipment for culinary programs, sewing machines and sewing equipment for home economic programs, PE/sports equipment, music equipment, etc.)

- Appliances (staff and students can share the use of appliances and other objects, but treat items like microwaves, refrigerators, coffee pots, photocopiers, or laminators as frequently touched surfaces)
- Service counters (e.g., office service window, library circulation desk) Areas that are not used in a day will not require cleaning.
- When using teaching materials, toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g. fabrics) or at all (e.g. sand, foam, playdough, etc.), they may only be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use. Carpets and rugs (e.g. in Preschool and Kindergarten classes) can also be used.
- When doing laundry, ensure hand washing is practiced after loading a laundry machine.

No cleaning or additional hand washing is required when handling:

- Textbooks, papers or other paper-based products;
- Laminated or Glossy Paper-based products (e.g., Children’s books or magazines) and;
- Items with plastic covers (DVDs)

Cleaning and Disinfecting Bodily Fluids

When cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine), the following procedures must be followed:

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Follow regular health and safety procedures and regularly used PPE (e.g., gloves, protective or woven sleeves) for blood and bodily fluids (e.g., toileting, spitting, biting).

b. Ventilation and Air Exchange

NCSS aims to mitigate any potential risks by implementing the following ventilation practices:

- Providing air purifiers for all instructional and office spaces. Purifier filters are changed every 6 months or sooner depending upon manufacturer recommendations
- If using portable fans or air conditioning units, ensure they are set up to move air downward and not blowing air directly from one person’s breathing zone to other occupants of a room. Avoid horizontal cross breezes
- Having HVAC systems inspected and serviced on a regular basis
- Keeping exterior windows open as much as possible for natural air flow
- Providing portable air conditioner units with ventilation capacities to learning and office spaces

c. Hand Hygiene

Rigorous handwashing with soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene and schools should facilitate regular opportunities for students and staff to wash their hands. NCSS will ensure hand hygiene supplies are always well stocked including soap, paper towels (or air drier).

Effective Hand Hygiene

To be effective, hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds with soap and water. If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand sanitizer may not be effective at eliminating microbes. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty. If it is not available, use an alcohol-based hand wipe followed by alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.

When to Perform Hand Hygiene

Staff and students should make frequent use of handwashing facilities. For example, staff and students should perform hand hygiene when they arrive at school and before they go home, before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch), between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom), before and after eating and drinking, after using the bathroom, after handling common resources/equipment/supplies or pets, after sneezing or coughing into hands, after contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood), after cleaning tasks, after removing gloves, after handling garbage, and whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Hand Sanitizer

NCSS will use commercial hand sanitizer products that have met Health Canada's requirements and are authorized for sale in Canada. Hand sanitizer should only be used in areas where hand washing is not available. Hand Sanitizer should not be used when hands are visibly dirty.

d. Respiratory Etiquette

Respiratory Etiquette Control of coughs and sneezes is also an important tool in preventing the spread of communicable diseases. Parents and staff can teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices among students, including:

- Cough or sneeze into their elbow, sleeve or tissue. Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand
- hygiene.
- Refrain from touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, or vaping devices

9. Administrative Practices

Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school or a learning centre program. If a staff member or student is demonstrating illness symptoms, they need to stay home rest and get well before returning. It is critical that ill staff and students do not enter NCSS facilities.

For students demonstrating ill symptoms at school, parents will be contacted to pick-up the student as soon as possible. For staff and students who become ill at school, it is important that they remove themselves from regular daily activities, until they can return home.

a. Health Awareness and What to do When Sick

NCSS program administrators will ensure that staff, other adults entering the school, parents, caregivers, and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. This can be supported through communications (e.g., emails/letters to parents and staff), orientation activities (e.g., meetings, videos) and other reminders (e.g., signage on doors).

NCSS program administrators will encourage all staff, student, and parents to perform regular health checks to ensure they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school to prevent spread of communicable diseases within the school settings.

Schools are not required to monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness. Staff, students, or other persons in the school setting who are exhibiting symptoms of illness, such as respiratory illness, should stay home until they are well enough to participate in regular activities or otherwise advised by a healthcare provider. Those experiencing certain illnesses, such as gastrointestinal illness caused by norovirus, may be advised to stay home for longer. Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved, and they feel well enough to return to regular activities. If you are unsure or concerned about your symptoms, connect with your healthcare provider or call 8-1-1.

NCSS does not require a health care provider note (i.e., a doctor's note) to confirm the health status of any individual, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practice.

b. What to do When Sick at School/Work

If a staff member, student, or other person develops symptoms of illness at school and is unable to participate in regular activities, they should be supported to go home until their symptoms have improved or otherwise advised by a healthcare provider. Appropriate infection control precautions should be taken while the person is preparing to leave the school premises, including:

- Make arrangements for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible (e.g., contact student's parent/caregiver for pick-up).
- Provide a space for the student or staff to wait comfortably for pick-up and are separated from others.
- Younger children must be supervised when separated. Supervising staff can wear a mask, should avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible and practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Use appropriate hand hygiene

Use a mask if experiencing respiratory symptoms (NCSS will have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one - for both the person who is sick and for those who may be assisting them.)

- Staff responsible for facility cleaning should clean and disinfect the surfaces/equipment which the person's bodily fluids may have been in contact with while they were ill (e.g., their desk in a classroom, the bathroom stall they used, etc.) prior to the surfaces/equipment being used by others. Cleaning/disinfecting the entire room the person was in (a "terminal" clean) is not required in these circumstances.

Request that the individual stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school-related activities.

c. Staff Responsibilities

NCSS Program administrators must ensure staff and other adults stay home if they are sick.

- Clearly communicate with parents/caregivers their responsibility to keep their child(ren) home from school if they are sick.
- Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/work to be sent home as soon as possible.
- Some students or staff may not be able to be picked up immediately. As such, schools should have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably and is separated from others (at least 2M) and provide the student or staff with a nonmedical mask if (unless they are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms and are at risk of vomiting).
- Schools must provide adequate supervision for all students. Supervising staff should wear a non-medical mask and/or face shield if they are unable to maintain physical distance, avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible, and practice diligent hand hygiene.

- Staff responsible for facility cleaning should clean and disinfect the surfaces/equipment which they have been in contact with while they were ill (e.g., their desk in a classroom, the bathroom stall they used, etc.) prior to the surfaces/equipment being used by others.

NCSS does not require a health-care provider note (e.g., a status of any individual) for staff or students, beyond those required to support medical accommodation as per usual practices.

d. Supporting Students With Disabilities/Diverse Abilities and/or Receiving Health Services

NCSS is committed to accommodating our students with disabilities or diverse abilities and will work with families to ensure that students have access to learning support. Parents/Caregivers of students with disabilities/diverse abilities are encouraged to contact their school administrator to discuss available options for their child (including ensuring appropriate preventative measures are in place).

Guidelines for Staff Working with Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities

Where Physical Contact may be required, supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student.

When staff are working with a student indoors, additional personal protective equipment is not required beyond that used as part of the personal care routine normally encountered in their regular course of work (e.g., gloves for toileting). Staff may choose to wear additional protective equipment, depending upon their own personal choice. When working with students where seeing facial expressions and/or lip movement is important, options include having the staff member wear a mask with a transparent section to enable visualization of the mouth.

e. Space Arrangements

In learning environments, schools can use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

Space Arrangements During an Outbreak (Students)

During a communicable disease community outbreak where NCSS staff and students are required to practice social distance and space requirements according to Public Health regulations, the following measures will be taken:

- Remind students and staff about respecting others' personal space. Use visual supports, signage, prompts, video modelling, etc. as necessary.
- Use available space to spread people out, both in learning environments and for gatherings and events, where possible.
- Limit and, whenever possible, avoid face-to-face seating arrangements.
- Utilize different common space, classroom, and learning environment configurations (e.g., different desk and table formations).
- Spread out learning activities which normally bring multiple classes together (e.g., examinations, physical education) across multiple locations/spaces whenever possible. (A size reduction is not necessary.)
- Implement strategies that prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off times.
- Focus on entry and exit areas, and other places where people may gather or crowd.
- Stagger recess/snack, lunch, and transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone.
- Take students outside more often, where and when possible.
- Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways, to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.
- Use floor markings and posters to address traffic flow throughout the school. This may include one-way hallways and designated entrance and exit doors. It is important not to reduce the number of exits and ensure the fire code is adhered to.

Space Arrangements During an Outbreak (Staff)

Transmission between adults within the school environment is also important to control. In non-school workplaces (such as the Central Office) NCSS will use WorkSafeBC Guidelines to determine what measures will be implemented. Within non-student areas within schools, additional precautions may be put in place including:

- Rules and procedures to prevent crowding at gathering areas (such as the break room or photocopier)
- Occupancy limits
- Hold staff-only gatherings (e.g., staff meetings, in-service and professional development activities) virtually.

f. Student Transportation

Buses

For school buses, NCSS will implement the following prevention measures:

- All students riding the bus will be assigned a seat.
- Students will spread out within the bus when empty spaces are available.
- Whenever weather permits, windows will be open to allow for increased ventilation of the bus.

- Students should clean their hands before they take the bus.
- Where possible, bus line up areas should be set up to prevent crowding and students should put on their masks prior to boarding the bus.
- Due to the fact that NCSS contracts bus services from various carriers, students may be required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering on school buses.

Carpooling

When staff, students or others carpool as part of NCSS activities, the following protocols should be followed:

- Weather permitting, windows can be opened to increase ventilation
- If the weather is poor, the vehicle's ventilation should be turned on and set to bring in fresh outside air. Do not use air recirculation
- Students should travel with the same people whenever possible
- Spread out within the vehicle as much as possible
- All vehicle occupants should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after trips
- Clean frequently touched surfaces within the vehicle regularly

NCSS encourages families and staff who carpool outside of school hours to follow the same protocols where possible.

Other Methods of Transportation

Staff, students or visitors who take mass transit (such as BC Transit buses or any of the inland ferries) should wash their hands following trips and ensure they are following any other safety guidance issued by the transit operator.

g. Visitors and Community Use of School

Visitors

NCSS welcomes visitors and volunteers into all its schools and programs. Visitors, including community groups using the school, should follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures such as:

- Check-in with the office or reception
- Must be at the school for a school-based purposes
- Follow all required communicable disease and other mandated protocols

Where NCSS facilities are required to operate as a 'locked' facility due to an outbreak, NCSS will follow local and provincial health guidelines when it comes to the operation of facilities. Safety measures may include:

- Ensuring awareness of those within the building(s) at any given time.
- Wearing of mask
- Limiting of guests and visitors
- Moving meetings to a virtual platform

Community Use

After hours community use of facilities may be permitted in alignment with other health and safety measures. NCSS will ensure that community groups have a communicable disease plan in place that ensures:

- Diligent hand hygiene
- Respiratory etiquette
- Ensuring participants stay home if they are feeling ill
- Where possible, limiting building access to only those areas required for the purpose of the activity community users are responsible for collecting names and contact information of participants to support contact tracing activities by the local health authority.

h. School Gatherings and Events

School gatherings and events can occur in line with those permitted by all applicable public health orders and recommendations. If planning an event with more than a single class, the school/program administration must be consulted.

In the event of a public outbreak, NCSS will apply a trauma-informed lens to their planning, including consideration of:

- Respecting student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space;
- Using space available to spread people out as much as possible, respecting room occupancy limits, and ensuring enough space is available to prevent involuntarily physical contact between attendees (e.g., overcrowding); and

i. Curriculum, Programs and Activities

While engaging in any curriculum, programs and activities (including school-led activities held off campus like sports academies, community-based programs/courses), NCSS will implement ongoing communicable disease prevention practices specific to the activity including:

- Cleaning/disinfecting equipment
- Hand hygiene practices specific to the activity
- Respiratory etiquette
- Reducing the number of close face-to-face interactions (where required)

j. Field Trips

Field Trips and off-site group activities need to adhere to the following protocols:

- Administration must approve each field trip as per previous protocols, however in this approval Administration must weigh the Communicable Disease risks of each trip
- All staff and volunteers must be trained on safety protocols and procedures prior to the field trip occurring

Students enrolled in individual training/work experience programs should follow the communicable disease prevention plan required by the workplace/facility or the field trip venue. Classes (or other similar groupings of students) participating in training/work experience programs or field trips should follow the more stringent measures (if applicable) between the school and the workplace/facility/field trip destinations communicable disease prevention plans.

k. Densities and Capacities

As much as possible NCSS strives to keep densities and capacities as low as possible – in spaces where staff and students spend longer sustained periods of time.

As needed, NCSS will implement strategies to manage the flow of students around hallways to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through. These can include:

- Uni-directional hallways
- Staggered release times where feasible
- Encouraging students to not loiter in hallways
- Configure indoor spaces to maximize space between people without involuntary physical contact during learning activities.

l. Outdoor Spaces and Playgrounds

In the event of an outbreak, due to the low transmission rates in outdoor spaces, NCSS encourages the use of outdoor spaces for:

- Student classes and activities
- Staff activities
- Staff and student lunches
- Student free time and recesses

m. School Closures

It is the intent of NCSS to keep programs and schools operating as per the planned school/program year. However, a school may be temporarily closed in the following situations:

- **Health closure** of a school, which is determined by the local health authority due to the Communicable Disease case count in, or related to, a school.
- **Functional closure** of a school, which is determined by the school or school district due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial to ensure the health and safety of students. This would likely be due to a high absenteeism of all staff or certain employees required for a school to function and the inability to replace those absences.
- **Transportation Closure**, which is due to a lack of staff to be able to provide the required level of transportation services for students. This would likely be due the absenteeism of bus drivers and/or mechanics and the inability to replace those absences.
- **Weather Closure**, inclement weather does not permit safe travels to/from the school and/or safe operations of the school facility.

n. Communication and Training/Orientation

NCSS is committed to assisting Interior Health Regional Medical Health Officers and the Provincial Health Officer (PHO) in communicating out guidance, recommendations, and orders. NCSS will also continue to communicate to staff and parents about changes to Communicable Disease protocols using various means including:

- Emails,
- Letters,
- School and district websites,
- Staff meetings,
- ParentSquare Portal, and
- Orientations

All staff participate in a Communicable Disease orientation training prior to the return of students in September. Regular Communicable Disease updates are part of every staff meeting within schools/programs in our society.

School/program administrators should ensure all staff know how to report health and safety concerns and understand the protocols in place to keep them safe.

o. Contingency Plans and Online Learning

All NCSS programs develop a contingency plan that addresses absenteeism and operations. If absenteeism deems it necessary to operate remotely or online learning, a brick-and-mortar program may implement such a program to provide continuance of learning. Remote or online learning within a brick-and-mortar school/program is intended to be short-term and does not take the place of our Online Learning school, CHEK ABC. The transition of a program to remote or online learning may also be at the directive of the Ministry of Education or Ministry of Health.

10. Personal Practices

a. Health Awareness, Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

Everyone at school should practice health awareness (including staying home when sick), hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

b. Masks and Face Coverings

The decision to wear a mask is a personal one, based on individual preference. At NCSS we respect this personal choice. Some students and staff may choose to continue to wear a non-medical mask or face covering throughout the day or for certain activities. The choice of staff and students to choose whether they practice additional personal prevention measures should be respected.

Masks are one layer of protection used to prevent the spread of communicable disease. To be most effective, wearing a mask should be combined with other important protective measures such as getting vaccinated, staying home when sick, and regularly practicing hand hygiene. Masks are most effective when fitted, worn and handled correctly.

Schools can support those who choose to wear a mask, including:

- Promoting a supportive school environment for mask wearing through mask-specific messaging, including at assemblies, in announcements, signs, and written communications. Include that some people wear masks to reduce risk of communicable disease and it is important to be respectful of other's choices. Include evidence-based, trusted information on masks from BCCDC.
- Continue school-wide efforts to create safe and inclusive learning environments free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. Set, communicate and consistently reinforce clear expectations that bullying and disrespectful behaviour and conduct related to personal mask use is unacceptable. Address behaviour in line with protocols and practices (e.g. student code of conduct)

Exemptions for Staff, Students and Visitors in the Event Masks are Mandated

When/if mandated by a public health order, mask requirements do not apply in the following circumstances:

- To a person who cannot tolerate wearing a mask for documented health or behavioral reasons.
- To a person who is unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person.
- If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it.
- If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g., playing a wind instrument, engaging in high intensity physical activity, etc.);
- If a person is eating or drinking.
- If a person is behind a barrier; or
- While providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment) where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important. If a staff, student, or visitor is unable to wear a mask, other controls should remain in place.

c. Personal Space

Staff and students should be encouraged to respect others' personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person).

d. Personal Items and Food Safety

Staff and students can continue to bring personal items, but they should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g. food, drinks, unwashed utensils, wind instruments).

Appendix A: Safe Work Procedures

Isolation of Ill Students

Purpose:

This safe work procedure establishes how to safely move a student to the designated sick area if they become ill.

Steps:

1. If a student becomes ill, escort the student to the isolation room. Ensure the student is supervised until picked up. The staff member may choose to put on a mask and/or other PPE.
2. Inform the Administrator on site.
3. Collect the student's personal items.
4. The Administrator on site will phone the parent/guardian or emergency contact and have them pick up their child. Note the time the child was picked up.
5. After the child has left, close the door to the isolation room (area), and do not allow anyone entrance to the room.
6. A complete cleaning of the space must be conducted before it can be used again.

Procedure for Ill Staff

Purpose:

This safe work procedure establishes how staff should leave the school/site if they begin to develop symptoms while at work.

Steps:

1. Inform/text the Administrator/your supervisor immediately. It is recommended that you put on a mask.
2. If unable to immediately leave the site, symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others to wait until they are able to leave the site. Otherwise, staff should leave the site and head home.
3. Once symptomatic staff leaves the site, the area they waited in should be cleaned and disinfected.
4. Once the staff member leaves the site, clean and disinfect any areas they were in.