



# **ST. BERNADETTE SCHOOL COMMUNICABLE DISEASES HEALTH AND SAFETY PLANS**

**UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2022**

**All information in this document is subject to change. Please refer to the BCDC, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education for the most up-to-date information.**

## Communicable Disease Health and Safety Plans

St. Bernadette School will support students to practice personal preventative measures by having staff model healthy behaviours, having reliable communication with parents and the school community, and promoting preventative measures using dialog and visual aids.

St. Bernadette School will use positive and inclusive approaches to promote preventive measures and the school will foster a culture of practice and awareness of preventative measures to help reduce the spread of communicable diseases. The school will avoid punitive measures or enforcement activities that exclude students from fully participating in school or that could result in stigma.

### Health and Safety Plan Checklist

#### **DEFINE the guidelines and procedures for a particular audience**

- Staff and student procedures and guidelines are determined by the BCCDC, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education and CISVA
- Parents and wider community who are directly involved with the staff and students of the school will have their procedures and guidelines determined by the BCCDC, Ministry of Health, the PEC and the Principal.

#### **CREATE an outlined**

- Safety plans must address and align with:
  - BCCDC
  - Fraser Health Authority
  - Ministry of Education

#### **IMPLEMENT flexible policies**

- Adjust local procedures and guidelines to fit the needs of the school that are within the PHO Orders, CISVA Policy, and labour laws
- Update policies when necessary. Stay current.

#### **PREPARE contingency plans**

- Be prepared to work through communicable disease outbreaks using a combination of remote and in-class learning.
- Be prepared to be at work during communicable disease outbreaks.
- Anticipate changing regulations, unexpected challenges, and new requirements.

## Communicable Diseases Guidelines and Protocols

As part of the infection prevention and exposure control measures to create a safe environment for staff and students, the following measures are in place to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases.

*“School administrators should 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**. School administrators can support this practice by communicating the importance of everyone doing a health check.*

*A health check means a person regularly checking to ensure they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness (including but not limited to [COVID-19 symptoms](#)) that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school to prevent spread of communicable diseases, such as COVID-19, within school settings.*

*Schools do not need to monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness.” – BCCDC Guidance*

- For the safety of all, when a person is symptomatic of a communicable disease, such as a cold and/or flu virus, the individual must not enter the school. They must stay home and follow the directions of the BCCDC and the Ministry of Health.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or other communicable diseases before sending them to school. Staff must conduct daily self-checks for symptoms.
  - St. Bernadette’s is not required to verify that the staff/student health check has occurred every day or require that parents/caregivers submit a daily health check form.
- Parents and caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is not feeling well and/or symptomatic. Staff must leave the school as soon as possible if they are not feeling well and/or symptomatic.
  - Some students/staff may not be able to be picked up immediately. Students or staff can wait comfortably in the sick room until they can be picked up.
  - The supervising staff will avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible, practice diligent hand hygiene and socially distance themselves when possible. Ventilation will be increased in the medical room via windows and fans.
- Staff must actively assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or other communicable diseases prior to entering the school.
- 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 enough to where they feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen). Information specific to COVID-19 and other communicable diseases are available from BCCDC.

### **School Administrators must:**

- Clearly communicate the responsibility of the staff, parents and caregivers to assess themselves and/or their children daily before sending them to school.
- Established procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school. This entails staff and students being sent home as soon as possible.
- Ensure staff/students or other adults who are sick/unwell will not be permitted to enter the school.

## **Space Arrangements and Visitors**

St. Bernadette's will use classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

We will follow normal practices for welcoming visitors and the community use of schools.

- Visitors, including community groups using the school, should follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this document.

## **Curriculum, Programs and Activities**

Teachers and staff should implement communicable disease prevention practices (e.g., cleaning and disinfecting, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette) specific to the activity.

When planning field trips, staff should follow existing policies and procedures as well as the guidance in this document. Schools should consider guidance provided for overnight camps from the BCCDC and the BC Camps Association when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation.

Frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g., fabrics) or at all (e.g., sand, foam, playdough, etc.) and carpets and rugs (e.g., for circle time activities) can be used.

Students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after shared equipment use. Equipment that touches the mouth (e.g., instrument mouth pieces, water bottles, utensils) or has been in contact with bodily fluids should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses.

## Health and Functional Closures

There are three types of school closures that are related to communicable disease management: health closure, functional closure and transportation closure.

- A health closure of a school is determined by the Fraser Health Authority due to the COVID-19 or other communicable disease case count in, or related to, a school.
- A Functional Closure of a school is determined by the CISVA Superintendent's office. A functional closure is 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.
- A Transportation Closure is due to a lack of staff to be able to provide the required level of transportation services for students. Transportation closures do not apply to the school as we do not have bus services.

### HEALTH CLOSURES

Health closures will occur in the school when Fraser Health determines that a class or the school needs to pivot away from in-class instruction due to high COVID-19 or other communicable disease case counts. Learning will continue most likely in an online format until such time that Fraser Health determines it is safe to return to in-person learning.

### FUNCTIONAL CLOSURES

Functional closures will occur in the school when there is not enough staff to preserve the integrity of in-person learning. A functional closure is when there is a significant absence of staff. When there is a significant absence of students, that is a health closure.

- Functional closures can be the whole school or a single class or multiple classes
- Depending on the nature of the illness of the staff (severity, impact, etc.) learning could be online or done in take-home self-directed packages or in another form that will support the continuity of learning.
- Every effort will be made to preserve the integrity of in-person learning prior to moving to a functional closure.
- When there is a significant absence of Educational Assistants, discussions will be had with the families of a student receiving educational support to determine the best course of action.

## OTHER CLOSURES

Closures due to snow, power outages, extreme weather or other events are outside of these types of closures and are separate from these health and safety plans. For more information on these types of closures, please refer to the parent handbook.

## Personal Practices

### RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

Parents and staff can teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices among students, including:

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

### MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

*“The decision to wear a mask beyond when it is recommended by public health is a personal one, based on individual preference. 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. Information on non-medical masks is available from the BCCDC.” – BCCDC Guidelines*

The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students, and visitors. Some people may choose to continue to wear a mask because they are more comfortable wearing a mask or because they, or someone in their family, may be at higher risk and want to take extra precautions. Some may choose to continue to wear them throughout the school day, or only during specific activities. A person’s choice should be supported and respected. This should include:

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

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 all the recommended doses of vaccine, staying home when sick, and regularly practicing hand hygiene. Masks are most effective when fitted, worn and handled correctly.

## **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).

## **SHARING FOOD, BEVERAGES & OTHER ITEMS THAT TOUCH THE MOUTH**

Staff and students should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g., food, drinks, unwashed utensils, etc).

Shared-use items that touch the mouth should be cleaned and disinfected between use by different individuals (e.g., water bottles, instrument mouth pieces).

## **Disinfection & Sanitation Guidelines and Protocols**

The goal is to establish a sanitary baseline. Disinfection should occur once in a 24hr period. Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases from contaminated objects and surfaces.

St. Bernadette's will use commercial disinfectant products listed on Canada's hard surface disinfectants for use against communicable diseases. We will follow the procedures outlined in the BCCDC Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings Document when cleaning and disinfecting. The cleaning steps outlined below should be done routinely to disinfect surfaces, chairs, tables, etc. as aid in the preventative measures to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases.

### **Disinfection and Sanitization Daily Guidelines and Routines:**

- Disinfecting spray and disposable cloths are in every classroom. Extras can be found in the janitorial room.
- Classrooms and common areas are to be disinfect at least once per day.
- Hand sanitizer, soap and water, or effective disinfectant is available throughout the school.

### **Frequently Touched Surfaces:**

Frequently touched surfaces are items used by multiple students and staff, including doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water fountains, faucet handles, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, manipulatives, toys, shared equipment,

appliances, and counter areas.

- Access to water and washrooms will not be restricted.
- Some frequently touched items like toys or manipulatives may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g. fabrics) or at all (e.g. sand, playdough, etc.). These items can continue to be used if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING BODILY FLUIDS**

The school will follow these procedures, in conjunction with school policies, when cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g. runny nose, vomit, blood, stool, urine)

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Follow regular health and safety procedure and regularly used PPE for blood and bodily fluids.
- Ensure that the medical room has appropriate ventilation

## **General Ventilation and Air Circulation Guidelines and Protocols**

The school continues to undergo yearly assessment, preventative maintenance and general overview of operations of the school's ventilation system. This assessment is conducted by a professional HVAC company. Currently, the school is on a quarterly exchange of MERV-13 filters in all furnaces and air exchanges. The school will support air circulation through opening windows, using fans, and opening doors when appropriate.

At this time there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute to the spread of the virus. Good indoor air ventilation alone cannot protect people from exposure to communicable diseases; however, it may reduce risk when used in addition to other preventive measures.

At the time of this update, St. Bernadette School has excellent ventilation.

### **Ventilation Safety Plan:**

If the school's ventilation system is temporarily compromised due to a power outage, or a ventilation break down, the following will occur:

- The principal or designate will assess the situation and make note of all safety concerns.
- The principal or designate, in the event of a power outage, will contact BC Hydro to obtain an estimated return to power.

- If the power outage will continue for longer than one hour or until the end of the school day (whichever comes first), the principal or designate will initiate calls to families to retrieve their child(ren) from school.
- The principal or designate in the event of a breakdown of the school's ventilation system will contact the school's HVAC company and obtain a work order.
  - If the work cannot be done within a 24-48hr window, the principal will consult with the superintendent's office and contact the pastor and PEC chair to discuss the health and safety of school operations without a functioning HVAC system.

## **Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) and Socio-Emotional Learning**

Trauma-informed practice is an informed way of approaching working with children through a compassionate lens of understanding that is helpful to all children, youth and adults, especially those who have experienced traumatic events.

St. Bernadette School will use regular needs-based 'check-in' to assist in gathering important information to inform the level of trauma response and recovery necessary to support the school community. The school will provide inclusive and compassionate learning environment and help minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual student needs.

St. Bernadette staff members receive on-going in TIP and socio-emotional learning opportunities. Training is done through on-site, small group, professional lead, workshops and/or through virtual meetings.

### **TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE (TIP)**

The goal of TIP is to recognize the cues of trauma and move them from survival instincts to a capacity to learn. TIP recognizes that students cannot learn when they are stressed and that a trauma informed brain needs to learn through repetition and focusing on the environment where students can learn.

#### **Key components of TIP are:**

- Staff are to provide inclusive and compassionate learning environments
- Staff are to provide modelling and lead students in practicing coping strategies
- The school will use non-adversarial discipline (avoiding punitive and stigmatizing measures)
- Staff will help to minimize additional stress or trauma by addressing individual student needs

- Staff will engage in self-awareness practices to understand their own levels of trauma and that trauma is everywhere in our community

The school will build an understanding that executive functioning skills are compromised; work within the framework that these skills will not be performing at peak levels and these behaviours are a deficit of the following skills:

- Inhibitions
- Working memory
- Verbal working memory
- Emotional self-regulation
- Forethought
- Paying attention
- Organizing, planning, and prioritizing
- Starting tasks and staying focused
- Understanding different points of view
- Self-monitoring

### **Socio-Emotional Learning:**

Socio-emotional learning is an integral part of education and human development. It is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships and make responsible and caring decisions.

### **Key benefits of socio-emotional learning:**

- Improvement in students' social and emotional skills, attitudes, relationships, academic performance, and perceptions of classroom and school climate
- Long-term improvements in students' skills, attitudes, prosocial behaviour and academic performance
- Decline in students' anxiety, behaviour problems, and substance use  
(From: <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>)

St. Bernadette School fuses the knowledge and understanding of TIP with the knowledge and understanding of socio-emotional learning. This is done through grade level curriculum, online educational programs, forging healthy relationships, on-going TIP workshops, community building, and providing a safe and caring environment for learning.

## Supportive School Environments

St. Bernadette's provides supportive environments for communicable disease prevention by:

- Having staff model personal practices (e.g., hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette), and assist younger students as needed.
- Sharing reliable information, including from the BC Centre for Disease Control, Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and local health authorities to parents, families and caregivers.
- Promoting personal practices in the school (e.g., 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.

## Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities and/or Receiving Health Services

### EXPECTATIONS

- Schools are expected to implement health and safety measures that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities.
- In-class instruction may not be suitable for some children (or families) with severe immune compromise or medical complexity, which should be determined on a case-by-case basis with a medical care provider. Schools should follow regular practices for those needing alternative learning arrangements due to immune compromise or medical complexity to ensure access to learning and supports.
- Guidelines for Staff and/or Those Working with Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities, Complex Behaviors, Medical Complexities, or Receiving Delegated Care Where Physical Contact May Be Required

*“Staff and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct or delegated care, or with disabilities and diverse abilities who are in close proximity to a student should follow routine infection control practices and care plans for the child, if applicable. “ – BCCDC*

Those providing health services in schools may receive guidance related to PPE from their regulatory college or employer. Health service providers are encouraged to work with their employer to confirm what PPE is recommended for the services they provide in school settings.

Parents and caregivers of children who are considered at higher risk of severe illness due to communicable disease (including COVID-19) are encouraged to consult with their health care provider to determine their child's level of risk. Students are not required to wear a mask or face covering when receiving services, though may continue to base on their or their parent/caregiver's personal choice.

Schools should continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.

## **Indigenous Students**

### **FIRST NATIONS LIVING ON RESERVE**

First Nations may take increased safety measures during the pandemic recovery phase. This may mean that some First Nations learners will not be able to attend in-person classes.

First Nations have the authority to declare states of emergency and have responsibility for the education of their citizens. In the spirit of Reconciliation and consistent with the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, St. Bernadette's is expected to engage with First Nations communities who have First Nation students living in community (on- reserve) enrolled in the school as soon as possible to discuss school plans for the 2022/23 school year. This will help to identify potential accommodations needed to support students who may not be able to attend in-person classes.

### **INDIGENOUS STUDENT SUCCESS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

The CISVA, in collaboration with St. Bernadette School, is expected to continue to support equitable outcomes and opportunities for all Indigenous learners by maintaining Indigenous student supports and collaboration with Indigenous communities and education partners. St. Bernadette School is expected to collaborate with local First Nations, Métis Chartered communities and Indigenous communities on any changes/updates to the delivery of any programs including Indigenous language and culture services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a disproportionate impact on Indigenous communities. The school should identify Indigenous students whose educational outcomes may have been negatively impacted during the pandemic and make accommodations to ensure these students are supported. The needs of Indigenous students who require additional supports should be planned for and prioritized in partnership with parents/caregivers and communities.

St. Bernadette's is also expected to engage with First Nations to identify the transportation needs of First Nation students living on reserve. Collaboration between the school and First Nations is necessary to ensure there are equitable and safe transportation opportunities for students.

Additional considerations for St. Bernadette's include:

- Collaboration between teachers 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 Indigenous communities.
- Understanding that some Indigenous families and communities may continue to take increased safety measures, which may mean that some students will not attend in-person instruction in September.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The CISVA, in collaboration with St. Bernadette School, has an obligation to inform and communicate with the First Nations they serve regarding learning plans for Nominal Roll students, Enhancement Agreement goals and Equity Action Plans, Local Education Agreements and Joint Transportation Plans.

St. Bernadette School is expected to inform and communicate with the local Métis Chartered communities regarding the learning plans, Enhancement Agreement goals and Equity Action Plans for Métis students.