

# OLA's Communicable Disease Prevention Plan (09/21)

## Introduction:

A communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent or its toxic product that can be transmitted in a workplace from one person to another. Examples of communicable disease that may circulate in the workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

The level of risk of certain communicable diseases may increase from time to time or on a seasonal basis. OLA administration and OLA's Joint Health and Safety Committee will monitor and review school and community communicable disease-related information (including orders, guidance, notices and recommendations) issued by our regional or provincial medical health officer.

## OLA Routine Communicable Disease Prevention Practices:

- Implement policies to support staff who have symptoms of a communicable disease (eg. fever or chills, coughing) so they can avoid being at the workplace when sick.
- Provide hand-hygiene facilities with appropriate supplies. Use policies and signage to remind workers to wash their hands regularly and to cover coughs and sneezes.
- Maintain a clean environment through routine cleaning processes.
- Make sure building ventilation is adequate and ventilation systems are properly maintained and functioning as designed.
- Support employees in receiving vaccinations for COVID-19 and other vaccine-preventable conditions.
- During a period of elevated risk, all direction from regional and provincial medical health officers will be followed.
- Employees and visitors will receive information about OLA's measures, practices and policies for managing communicable disease, including policies for staying home when sick.
- Signage will be posted to support health and safety measures.
- OLA's Joint Health and Safety Committee will identify (or receive concerns from other staff) and resolve school health and safety issues. All staff will be reminded how to raise health and safety concerns.
- School property inspections and ongoing supervision will ensure measures are functioning properly, followed and maintained.

## Understanding the Risk

The principal is responsible for regularly monitoring and reviewing the communicable disease-related information that is provided by our Fraser Health or the Provincial Health Officer. This includes all issued orders, guidelines, notices, and recommendations. In addition, staff follows the guidelines that are provided by the Superintendent. This information is regularly communicated to staff to understand and minimize risk for communicable disease transmission in our school.

## Implementing measures, practices and policies to reduce the risk

Ongoing Measures – Policies to support staff who have symptoms of a communicable disease are in place so they can avoid being at the workplace when sick. These include CISVA Policy 310, Employee Leaves of Absence, as well as OLA Policy 506.9 Communicable Disease Prevention \*\*

Measures, practices and policies are regularly reviewed in staff meetings and documented in minutes.

### **Health Screening**

- Parents and caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school. Parents/caregivers and students can utilize the provincial K-12 Health Check app for daily assessment of symptoms.
- Staff and other adults should complete a daily health check prior to entering the school.
- If a student, staff or other adult is sick, they must not enter the school.
- Students and staff who become sick while at school/work are to be sent home as soon as possible. Students or staff who are not able to be picked up immediately will have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably (first aid room or front hall bench) and is separated from others (at least 2M), and the student or staff will be provided with a non-medical mask (unless they are experiencing gastrointestinal symptoms and are at risk of vomiting). Supervising staff will wear a non-medical mask and 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 will clean and disinfect the surfaces/equipment which the 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.
- Students and staff will return to school/work in line with the guidance in the “Staying Home, Self-Isolation and Symptoms” section of the K-12 Guidelines to ensure students and staff who are not sick are not kept out of school/away from work longer than necessary.
- Students, staff or other adults must stay home if they are required to self-isolate.

- Students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g. seasonal allergies) can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal. They do not require re-assessment by a health-care provider and are not required to provide a health-care provider note. If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a healthcare provider.
- Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness, provided the student/staff has no symptoms themselves. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19, public health will advise the asymptomatic student/staff on self-isolation and when they may return to school.

## **Hand Hygiene & Respiratory Etiquette**

- Rigorous hand-washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness (antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19) and these guidelines will be followed: Diligent hand hygiene will be practiced by washing hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds (temperature does not change the effectiveness of washing hands with plain soap and water); regular opportunities for staff and students to practice hand hygiene will be provided; portable hand-washing sites and/or alcohol-based hand sanitizer dispensers containing at least 60% alcohol will be used where sinks are not available; commercial hand sanitizer products authorized for sale in Canada will be used; Hand-washing will be encouraged upon school entry and before/after breaks and eating, using washroom and using frequently touched shared equipment; the importance of diligent hand hygiene will be promoted to staff and students regularly (including hand hygiene posters at handwashing sites); hand-washing supplies will always be well stocked including soap, paper towels and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Staff will assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.
- Students may bring their own sanitizer or plain soap if they are on the list authorized by Health Canada or have a medical condition that requires specialized soaps.
- 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.
- Staff will teach and reinforce respiratory etiquette amongst students: cough or sneeze into the elbow sleeve or a tissue; throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene; refrain from touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands; refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, or vaping devices.

When Student Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When they arrive at school.</li> <li>▪ Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch).</li> <li>▪ Before and after eating and drinking (excluding drinks kept at a student's desk or locker).</li> <li>▪ Before and after using an indoor learning space used by multiple classes with shared equipment.</li> <li>▪ After using the toilet.</li> <li>▪ After sneezing or coughing into hands.</li> <li>▪ Whenever hands are visibly dirty.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ When they arrive at school.</li> <li>▪ Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch).</li> <li>▪ Before and after eating and drinking.</li> <li>▪ Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating.</li> <li>▪ Before and after giving medication to a student or self.</li> <li>▪ After using the toilet.</li> <li>▪ After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood).</li> <li>▪ After cleaning tasks.</li> <li>▪ After removing gloves.</li> <li>▪ After handling garbage.</li> <li>▪ Whenever hands are visibly dirty.</li> </ul>

## Shared Spaces

- Occupancy limits will be established and posted for spaces such as lunch rooms and break rooms.
- Additional areas for staff to have their breaks will be provided, including outside areas if available.
- Virtual meetings will be used whenever possible to reduce the number of staff onsite.
- Flow of people in public spaces such as hallways will be managed to ensure maximum space.

## Maintaining a clean environment

- A cleaning and disinfecting schedule has been established so that high touch surfaces are frequently cleaned during the day. General cleaning of the premises, and cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces (such as doors and cabinet handles, stair railings, washrooms, shared office spaces, desks, keyboards, light switches, and communications devices), will occur at least once in a 24-hour period; Surfaces that are visibly dirty will be cleaned and disinfected; Garbage containers will be emptied daily; paper hand towels will be provided rather than hand dryers.

- Limiting access to water fountains is no longer recommended. Hand hygiene will be practiced before and after use.
- 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.) can be used, if hand hygiene is practiced before and after use.
- There is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper-based products. Laminated or glossy papers (e.g. DVDs) can be contaminated if handled by a person with COVID-19; however, the risk is low. There is no need for these items to be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for any period of time, or for hand hygiene to be practiced before or after use.
- When cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, 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 (e.g. toileting, spitting, biting).
- Cleaning staff include a full-time custodian, part-time custodian, PEC Maintenance Coordinator, Participation Program Parents (Saturdays for 2 hours per room). Custodian sets out supplies and video tutorials are provided to train cleaners.
- Cleaning protocols reviewed monthly by Joint Health & Safety Committee
- Building ventilation is inspected annually (Pacific Mechanical) and ventilation systems are properly maintained and functioning as designed. Room Filters replaced quarterly.
- Joint Health & Safety Committee uses “Prevent the spread of communicable disease: Ventilation and air circulation” to guide inspection. Maintenance coordinator reviews HVAC inspection report and updates PEC.

During periods of elevated risk, the Joint Health and Safety team will assemble to discuss and establish plans in relation to guidance and new information provided by the local or provincial health officers.

Depending on severity of risk, formal meetings with stakeholder groups will be conducted. Consultation with the Superintendent’s Office will occur as needed and plans will be documented.

## Communicating Measures, practices and policies

To ensure that everyone entering our school receives information about our measures, practices and policies, we have instituted the following:

All employees are provided with information on OLA Policy 506.9 Communicable Disease Prevention and CISVA Policy 310 Employee Leaves of Absences. Employees will also sign a “Statement of Understanding” that they have read and understood the necessity of completing a daily health check and staying at home if sick.

Training regarding school procedures and expectations has been provided to staff. Staff are encouraged to respond with any questions. Staff will be reminded how to raise safety concerns (through health and safety committee) and any new information relating to communicable disease in the workplace will be posted in the staffroom and emailed to staff.

Parents and caregivers will be made aware that students must stay home if they are sick. Parents and caregivers will be informed about the extra precautions being taken at the school. The number of non-essential people coming into the school such as parents, caregivers and contractors will be minimized.

Signage is posted in entrance ways, washrooms, and throughout the school to support the hygiene measures. Signs will be posted at the main entrance indicating who is restricted from entering the premises (including anyone with symptoms).

## Monitoring school environment and updating plan as necessary

Upon first return to the school in the fall, a health and safety meeting was held to review workplace practices relating to communicable disease and other health and safety matters. Additional communication may be required as new information is made available that may affect work practices.

Administration and joint health and safety committees meet at least monthly to evaluate measures, practices, and policies at the school. Discoveries from staff concerns, walk-throughs, or site inspections will be addressed and discussed with the staff if necessary.

Staff will be encouraged to speak (or write) to a Joint Health & Safety Committee member if they witness or have concerns. If not satisfactorily addressed, staff will be encouraged to bring concerns to the principal and PEC. Staff will be reminded of the process at staff meetings.