

COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PLAN

REQUIREMENT: An employer must have a communicable disease plan as a part of their occupational health and safety program. The NVSD program contains program guidelines and requirements as identified by the Ministry of Health, BC Centre of Disease Control, WorkSafeBC, and other applicable regulatory bodies. WSBC OHS Part 5

WHAT

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 a workplace include COVID-19, norovirus, and seasonal influenza.

Communicable diseases are transmitted through direct or indirect contact with bacteria or viruses. Routes of transmission into the human body vary according to the characteristics of the infectious agent and availability of that route into the body.

Occupational exposure to communicable diseases or other hazardous substance can be caused by exposure to bloodborne diseases such as, HIV, AIDS, and Hepatitis B and C, which are transmitted through direct contact with blood and body fluids.

Another method of contracting an infectious disease is through respiratory droplet transmission or airborne transmission. Individuals become infected by breathing in air that is contaminated with the virus or bacteria.

Infectious agents can also be transmitted between animals and humans through skin contact, contact with saliva, and through bites.

This program covers many situations and conditions however it is common to deal with situations that are newly emerging, situations for which guidelines do not exist, or specific circumstances in which it may be appropriate to take actions that vary from these or other guidelines. The NVSD will follow any guidance and consultation provided by the medical health officer (MHO) in these situations.

DEFINITIONS

Blood Borne Pathogens – pathogenic microorganisms present in human blood and other potentially infectious materials (OPIMs), that can cause disease in humans. These pathogens include but are not limited to hepatitis B virus (HBV), hepatitis C virus (HCV) and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

COVID-19 – Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses found mostly in animals. In humans, they can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The disease caused by the new coronavirus has been named COVID-19. COVID-19 was first identified in late 2019. It was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organization in March 2020.

Daily Health Check – a daily assessment to determine if any symptoms are present for communicable disease. [daily-health-check \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/diseases/communicable-diseases/daily-health-check)

Hand Hygiene - washing hands before and after preparing/eating food, before and after going to the washroom, before and after administering first aid, and after sneezing or coughing. Using regular soap, rubbing vigorously for a minimum of 20 seconds, rinsing for a minimum of 10 seconds. Avoiding touching eyes or mouth. If sinks are not available (e.g., students and staff are outdoors), use alcohol based NVSD approved hand sanitizer, containing at least 60% alcohol. For the hand sanitizer to be the most effective hands need to be rubbed until they are dry.

Harmful Contact – an exposure incident to blood or OPIMs through:

- Percutaneous injury (injury through the skin from a contaminated sharp item such as a needle)
- Contact with the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, or mouth
- Contact with non-intact skin (healing wound less than 3 days old or lesion causing disruption of the outer skin layer)
- Bites.

Hazardous Substance - is defined as “a liquid or solid material this is contaminated with a prion, virus, bacterium, fungus or other biological agent that has a classification given by the World Health Organization or Health Canada”, as amended from time to time, as a Risk Group 2, 3, or 4 human pathogen that causes an adverse health affect.

Occupational Exposure – anticipate harmful contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIMs) that may result from the performance of the employee’s duties.

Physical Activity effort definitions – High intensity physical activities involve sustained heavy breathing and elevated heart rates. Most people engaged in these activities cannot say more than a few words without having to catch their breath. In contrast most people engaged in low intensity physical activities can carry on a conversation without having to catch their breath.

Precautions - treating all blood and OPIMs (except sweat) of every person as potentially infectious. Includes handwashing, wearing disposable waterproof gloves, correct disposal of contaminated sharps.

OPIMS - Other potentially infectious materials.

WHY

The purpose of this program is to both inform and help protect employees from exposure to anticipated harmful disease-causing organisms present in blood and body fluids, respiratory droplets, and other potentially infectious materials (OPIMs).

HOW

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROLS

Specific Task Hazard Control

HAZARDS	CONTROLS
Provision of personal care: including diapering and catheterization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hepatitis Vaccination.• Standard Precautions Safe Work Procedures. <p>Exposure to Blood or Body Fluid Safe Work Procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wear personal protective equipment including disposable gloves and if risk of splashing exists, protective eyewear.• Dispose of diapers, catheters, and any other contaminated material, including gloves in lined garbage receptacle with a self-closing no-touch lid.• Wipe down the personal care area with an approved disinfecting agent.

<p>Harmful Contact with blood or OPIMs: through cleanup of feces, blood, vomit, or other potentially infectious material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Precautions Safe Work Procedures. • Schools should call their Custodial Staff for cleanup • If the school chooses to clean up without a custodian, they must be trained in safe work procedures. • All spills must be cleaned up using the established procedure, tools, equipment, and products. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools are reminded that only cleaning products supplied by the district are to be used. • Personal Protective Equipment including gloves, safety glasses that prevent exposure from splashes and district provided disinfectant must be used. • Contaminated materials should be placed in a disposable garbage bag, label as containing hazardous waste and directly deposited into the main garbage receptacle. • Blankets and pillows must be laundered, and beds wiped down with an approved disinfectant agent.
<p>Diabetes monitoring – needle stick prick</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharps Containers • Education and training on procedure. • Barrier gloves. • Immediately seeking medical attention in accordance with the Exposure to Blood or Body Fluid Safe Work Procedures.
<p>Exposure to Diseases transmitted by animals such as rats and mice, poultry, bird droppings and by mosquitos, ticks, and cockroaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the possibility of exposure within the school setting. • Report first signs of rodents to Facilities/ Custodial • Have Facilities/ Custodial clean up rodent droppings. • Removing and dispose nesting materials such as soft furnishings, under-sink rags and cloths, and any other areas that rodents would use to nest. • Keep food tightly sealed.

ACTION REQUIRED

1. Identify all workers who potentially are exposed to communicable disease.
2. Review current administrative and engineering controls that are in place to determine if there are additional measures that can be implemented to reduce risk of exposure.
3. Ensure employees that are identified for vaccinations have appropriate information to receive and be compensated.
4. Ensure employees are trained and aware of safe work instructions and procedures
5. Conduct health and safety inspections to monitor effectiveness of the program.

APPENDIX A COVID-19 Protocols March 2022

Administrative Controls:

Vaccines

- Vaccination protects from serious illness due to COVID-19 and is the most effective way to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our communities
- **BCCDC strongly recommends adults interacting with children to be fully vaccinated**
- All COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in Canada protect against serious complications, including the Omicron variant
- Schools and school districts are expected to work with their local health authority to share evidence-based information about vaccination and to explore opportunities to establish school-based vaccination clinics when requested.

Daily Health Check

- A daily health check is a tool to reduce the likelihood of a person with COVID-19 coming to school when they are infectious
- 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
- Schools are required to
 - Ensure staff and other adults are aware of their responsibility to complete a daily health check prior to entering the school/ worksite
 - Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school/ work and is unable to be sent home as soon as possible
 - Schools need to have a space available for students (including supervision for younger children) and staff to stay that is separated from others, and should have non-medical masks available
- Staff responsible for facility cleaning should clean and disinfect all surfaces which the person's bodily fluids may have contacted prior to being used by others.
 - Cleaning and disinfecting the entire room (terminal clean) is not required under these circumstances

Staying Home, Self-Isolation and Symptoms

- Students, staff, or other adults must stay home if they are required to self-isolate
- Guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness:
 - Staff and other adults can refer to BCCDC's [When to get a COVID-19 test \(bccdc.ca\)](https://www.bccdc.ca)

- Staff, students, and parents/ caregivers can also use the BCCDC online Self Assessment Tool <https://www.k12dailycheck.gov.bc.ca>, call 8-1-1 or their health care provider
- 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
- If they experience any new or unexplained symptoms, they should seek assessment by a health care provider
- Students or staff may still attend school if a member of their household develops new symptoms of illness provided, they have no symptoms
- Public health staff will advise on isolation requirements for students and staff
- When a staff, student or other adult can return to school depends on if they have tested positive for COVID-19 and/ or improvement of symptoms (see Appendix A – COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing and Return to School)

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette including coughing and sneezing safely, should always be practiced and are a part of universal communicable disease prevention practices
- Wash hands with plain soap and water and where sinks are not available use alcohol based NVSD approved hand sanitizer

Visitors

- Schools are responsible for ensuring that visitors are aware of communicable disease protocols and requirements, and have completed a daily health check, prior to entering the school
 - Information on communicable disease protocols and requirements for visitors should be posted by the entrance to the school, on the school's website and included in communications to students and families
- Schools can return to routine sign in/ sign out practices.
- Schools do not need to keep a list of the date, names and contact information of visitors for communicable disease prevention purposes
- Schools can return to routine pick up/ drop off practices, through should still consider strategies to prevent crowding at pick-up and drop-off time

Gathering and Events

- After hours community use of facilities is allowed in alignment with other health and safety measures

School-led Gatherings and Events with Visitors	
While PHO Gatherings & Events Order is in place	After PHO Gatherings & Events Order is lifted (expected end of day April 7, 2022)
Schools should not implement proof of vaccination requirements and indoor capacity should not exceed 50 people or 50% operating capacity (whichever is greater)	All school gatherings and events can return to 100% capacity

Sports

- Intra- and inter- school programs, activities, sports academies and events can continue in accordance to guidance in school gatherings and events
- Sport activities should be held outside whenever possible

Physical Distancing and Space Arrangement

- Schools can return to classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches, through should still consider strategies to create space between people

Staff-Only Spaces

- Refer to [WorkSafeBC guidance for Workplaces](#) to determine measures for non-school spaces
- In addition K-12 schools and worksites should implement
 - Floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding
 - For gatherings, respect room occupancy limits and use available space to spread people out, and consider virtual options

Transportation

Buses

- Surfaces should be cleaned once per day
- Bus drivers should clean their hands often, including before and after completing trips
- Hand hygiene should continue, passengers should spread out if space is available, and windows should be open when the weather allows

- Bus drivers, teachers, and students in K-12 may choose to wear non-medical masks or face coverings when they are on the bus
- Parents must assess their child daily for symptoms or common cold, influenza, COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory disease and **if a child is sick, they must not take the bus or go to school**
- Spread passengers out and open windows if possible

Other Methods of Transportation

- Where mass transit is used hand hygiene should be practiced before and after trips
- Riders should follow any safety guidance issued by the transit authority
- Active transportation (e.g., walking, biking) is encouraged whenever possible due to its overall benefits

Field trips

- When planning field trips, staff should follow existing policies and procedures as well as the guidance from the Ministry of Health
- Schools must ensure that volunteers providing supervision are trained in and strictly adhere to required health and safety guidelines
- Consideration of relevant locations public health recommendations where required including for international travel
- Schools need to consider guidance for overnight camps from BCCDC Camps (bccdc.ca) and BC Camps Association British Columbia Camps Association - Covid-19 (bccamping.org) when planning overnight trips that include group accommodation
- Schools should make every effort to avoid venues or locations that place additional requirements that could prevent a student from being able to participate.

Engineering Controls

Ventilation and Air Exchange:

- All NVSD facility and school buildings will ensure all mechanical heating, ventilation and HVAC system are designed operated, and maintained as per OHS regulations, and are working properly
- Employees are encouraged to open windows when weather permits and does not impact the functioning of ventilation systems
- Portable air conditioners and fans should direct air from high places to lower places instead of blowing air from one person to the next
- Note: During periods of extreme heat, the risk from heat may be greater than the risk from COVID-19

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Surfaces (including those frequently touched) should be cleaned and disinfected once per day and when visibly dirty
- Frequently touched items that are not easily cleaned do not need to be limited
- Microfiber clothes and spray bottles will be made available in all classrooms
- Water fountain use does not need to be restricted, cleaning can occur as for any other surface

Laundry

- Laundry should be placed in a laundry basket with a plastic liner
- Do not shake dirty items
- Wearing gloves is optional, ensure hand hygiene is performed before and after use

Personal Protective Equipment

Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings

- The decision to wear a non-medical mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors
- A person's choice should be supported and treated with respect
- Schools should continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one, or who become ill at school

Curriculum, Programs and Activities

*See Provincial COVID-19 Health Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings Aug 24 2021 for additional information)

Food Services

- Food services can return to normal with the usual food safety practices
- Students involved in food preparation and distribution should be taught food safety practices

Music

- Shared equipment should be cleaned and disinfected as per cleaning and disinfecting guidelines and student should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after music equipment use
 - Equipment that touches the mouth should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected in between uses

- Refer to [Guidance for Music Classes in BC during COVID-19](#). In the case of any discrepancy in guidance, schools are expected to follow the Ministry of Education guidelines

Physical Education and School Sports

- Spread out within available space, encourage outdoor activities and program
- Shared equipment can be used, provided it is cleaned and disinfected as per guidelines
 - Students should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene before and after using frequently touched times
 - Equipment that touches the mouth should not be shared unless cleaned and disinfected between uses
- Intra- and inter-school programs, activities, sports, academies, and events can continue in alignment with requirements of local, regional, and provincial public health recommendations and Orders for community gatherings and events

Theatre Film Dance

- Intra- and inter-school programs, activities and events can continue in alignment with the guidance within this document and capacity according to School Gatherings and Events section
- Spread students and staff within available space, and encourage outdoor activities as much as possible
- Shared equipment such as set pieces, props, cameras, should be cleaned and disinfected as per cleaning and disinfecting guidelines and student should be encouraged to practice proper hand hygiene
- The Association of BC Drama Educators (ABCDE) is currently developing additional guidelines for teaching drama during COVID-19 [ABCDE Guide to Teaching Drama and Theatre](#) In the case of any discrepancy with this guidance, schools and school districts are expected to follow the Ministry of Education guideline

Extracurricular Activities

- Intra- and inter-school extracurricular activities and special interest clubs can occur in alignment with the guidelines in this document and requirements of applicable local, regional, and provincial health recommendations and Orders for community gatherings and events

Education Service Centre (ESC)

- Follow COVID-19 ESC Building Protocols on website and in staff room for specific updates

APPENDIX A

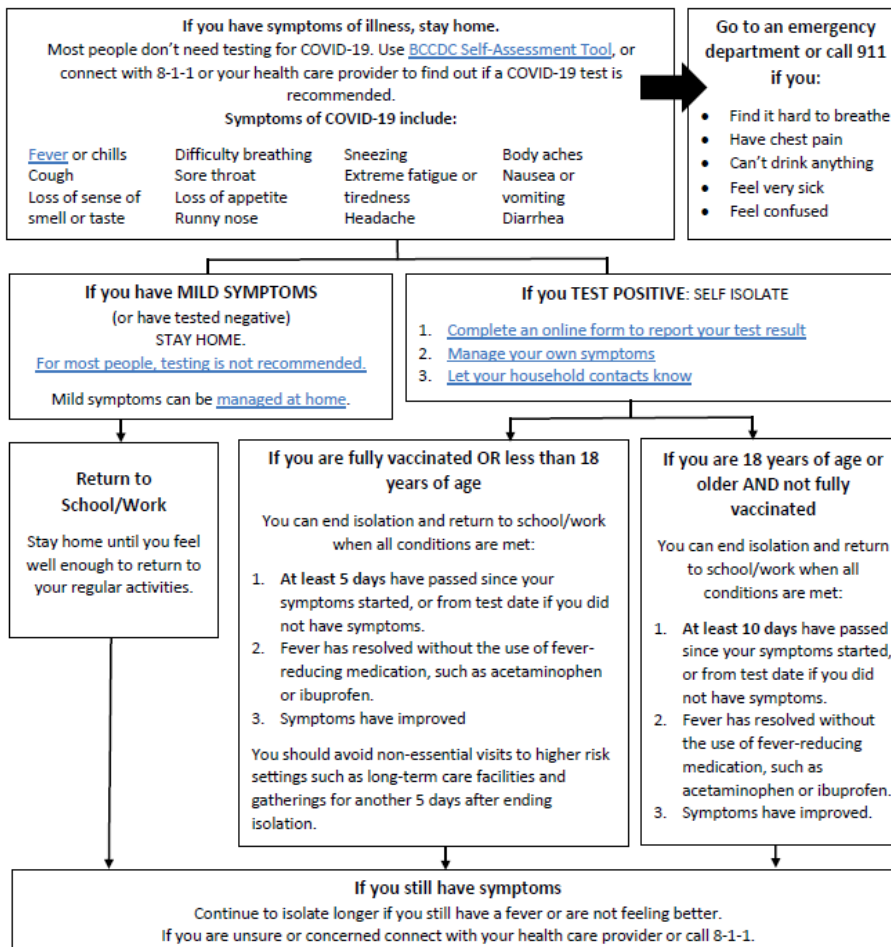
COVID-19 Symptoms, Testing & Return to School

March 28, 2022

When a student, staff, or other adult can return to school depends on if they have tested positive for COVID-19. The table is summarized from the BCCDC online Self-Assessment tool, or call 8-1-1 or their health care provider when they are experiencing symptoms of illness.

BCCDC provides information about COVID-19, including what to do if a person suspects they have the virus, and what actions to take based on a COVID-19 test result.

Summary: What To Do When Sick



What to do if someone is sick in your household:

You can continue to attend school if someone in your household is sick and/or self-isolating as long as you do not have any symptoms of illness and feel well. This includes if they have tested positive for COVID-19. Ensure you closely monitor yourself (or your child) for symptoms of illness and stay home if you feel unwell. The best way to protect yourself and your family from COVID-19 is to get vaccinated. Vaccines are available for anyone ages 5 and up. Register now at: [Getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca](https://getvaccinated.gov.bc.ca)

APPENDIX B (links coming soon)

Associated Programs	Topics	Resources
<p>Exposure Control Plan Communicable Disease Prevention</p>	<p>Blood and Body Fluid Precautions Blood and Body Fluid Precautions HealthLink BC</p> <p>Rodent Clean Up Precautions Getting Rid of Rodents (Rats and Mice) HealthLink BC</p> <p>Safe Work Procedure - Bird / Bat Droppings</p> <p>Safe Work Procedure - Picking up Sharps and Other Items</p> <p>How to Treat Nose Bleeds - First Aid Training - St John Ambulance - YouTube</p> <p>How to remove gloves St John Ambulance</p> <p>Disease Prevention: It's in Your Hands WorkSafeBC</p>	<p>BC Health Link Information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coronavirus Coronavirus Health LinkBC • Chickenpox Chickenpox Health LinkBC • Fifth Disease Fifth Disease HealthlinkBC • Hand foot mouth disease Hand foot mouth HealthlinkBC • Hepatitis B Hepatitis B Virus Infection HealthLink BC Hepatitis B Vaccine HealthLink BC • Impetigo Impetigo HealthlinkBC • Influenza Influenza HealthlinkBC • Head Lice Headlice HealthlinkBC • Measles Measles HealthlinkBC • Norovirus Norovirus HealthLink BC • Rabies Rabies HealthLink BC • Rubella Rubella HealthLink BC • Scabies Scabies HealthLink BC • Mumps Mumps HealthLink BC • Pink Eye Pink Eye HealthLink BC • Scarlet Fever Scarlet Fever HealthLink BC • Immunize BC FAQ FAQ Immunize BC • VCH North Shore School Health Manual North Shore school health manual - Vancouver Coastal Health (vch.ca) • Hand Washing: Help Stop the Spread of Germs HealthLink BC • Avian Influenza HealthLink BC • WSBC Protecting Workers from Infectious Disease • WSBC Hantavirus Exposure Control Program • WSBC Protecting Yourself from Ticks

Appendix C: Communicable Disease Plan Orientation Checklist

This checklist is intended to support school districts and independent school authorities in planning ongoing communicable disease orientation for staff (including newly hired staff and staff who changed worksites), other adults (including volunteers and teacher candidates in practicums) and students. Orientation sessions should provide a comprehensive overview of the key principles and guidelines outlined in the resources listed below, as well as information on how these principles and guidelines will be implemented at the school level:

- [Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings](#)
- [Public Health Communicable Disease Guidance for K-12 Schools](#)
- [WorkSafeBC Communicable Disease Prevention: A Guide for Employers](#)
- School/district communicable disease plan

Schools and school districts should ensure their Joint Health and Safety Committee is established prior to the orientation session. At the beginning of the school year **and whenever district/school communicable disease plans change**, schools/school districts are encouraged to hold Joint Health and Safety Committee meetings more frequently to help identify and address any safety concerns in a timely manner.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

Adopt a trauma-informed approach:

- where possible, have an employee trained in trauma-informed practice deliver some of the orientation
- conduct needs-based assessments and regular 'check-ins' after the orientation session, and provide contact information to students/staff for requesting additional supports
- provide information on how to access counselling services during school start up
- for staff: consider sharing the [Building Compassionate Communities in a New Normal](#) webinar link. This free webinar developed by the Ministry of Education is intended to provide teachers, education assistants, and administrators with information, ideas and strategies that they can use to create compassionate spaces for students.

Highlight the process used to develop the school/district plan (e.g., alignment with provincial direction, engagement at the local level) and the provincial guidelines:

- The Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings have been developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the BC Centre for Disease Control,

Indigenous rights-holders and education partners, including district/school leaders, teachers, support staff, and parents.

- These guidelines are based on the public health guidance developed by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control.
- Discuss the importance of implementing communicable disease prevention measures that promote equity and inclusion, and outline how these principles are reflected in the school/district plan
- Review the provincial K-12 guidelines and school/district plan, and describe what a school day will look like with the new guidelines (e.g. interactions between peers and staff, traffic flow throughout the school, transition time, recess/lunch, etc.)
- Outline how prevention and exposure control measures are being implemented in schools to ensure student and staff safety (see the [Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures](#) section for more information)
- Discuss measures for gatherings and events; provide opportunities for staff and students to put forward alternatives to continue to support events in a different format if needed (e.g., virtual events)
- Discuss preparation for potential transitions (e.g. regional public health order)
- Review school emergency and evacuation procedures (e.g., fire drill) considering relevant guidelines (see the [Emergency and Evacuation Drills](#) section for more information)
- Outline individual responsibilities (e.g., daily health check, stay home if sick, etc.) and remind everyone to do their part (e.g., practice diligent hand hygiene on a regular basis)
- Outline measures in place to support students and staff who are immune compromised
- Implement strategies to ensure staff and students who cannot attend orientation are made aware of communicable disease protocols (e.g., provide a booklet/a video on communicable disease plans)
- Provide enough time and space for staff, students and families to review the school/district communicable disease plan, ask questions, and provide input; provide contact information for any future questions that may arise
- Describe the process to address concerns and suggestions regarding the communicable disease plan (e.g., suggestions to support continuous improvement)
- Outline the process in place to assess and revise the school/district safety plan on an ongoing basis as well as how staff, students and families will be made aware of any changes in the plan
- Communicate proactively and on an ongoing basis about the changes made to policies, practices, and procedures to ensure staff, students and families are informed in a timely manner
- Provide a list of resources and links for more information (e.g., [BCCDC resources](#), [resources from the Government of Canada](#), guidelines developed by provincial associations, [Ministry-developed traumainformed practice resources](#) or other resources such as [videos from the BC Health Emergency Services](#))

CONSIDERATIONS SPECIFIC TO STAFF

- Walk staff (administrators, teachers, teachers teaching on call, support staff, itinerant staff, etc.) through changes to communicable disease plans when they occur
 - If appropriate, consider involving school staff representatives in the delivery of information pertaining to specific area of expertise
- Ensure orientation includes specific communicable disease protocols for itinerant staff and specialists (e.g., teachers teaching on call, counsellors, education assistants, teacher candidates)
- Include itinerant staff as well as on call and auxiliary staff in orientation sessions
- Implement strategies to ensure staff who work at multiple sites are made aware of communicable disease protocols in each of the sites (e.g., provide a booklet/a video on communicable disease plans for different schools)
- Share procedures and contact information in case of emergencies
- Introduce members of the Joint Health and Safety Committee or any other safety representative (along with their contact information) and outline the committee/representative's role in helping maintain a healthy and safe workplace
- Outline existing processes to address requests, concerns or accommodations related to communicable disease prevention measures.