

COVID-19 Protocols – Management of Illness and Confirmed Cases

The health and safety of all students, staff and parents is the district's top priority and as such, the district and all schools will adhere to the requirements of the COVID-19 Public Health Office's Guidance for K-12 School Settings. This document outlines the protocols for managing symptoms of illness, exposure to COVID-19, and confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 within the school community.

The guiding practices in this FAQ are informed by the [BC Centre for Disease Control website](#), [COVID-19 Public Office's Guidance for K-12 School Settings](#), and the [COVID-19 Operational Guidelines for School Districts and Independent School Authorities](#).

How will the district respond to a confirmed case of COVID-19?

If a student or staff member in a school is confirmed by public health to have COVID-19, public health will work with the person who is sick or their family, school administration, and any relevant health care providers to determine and support the next steps.

1. The first step is telling the person who is sick to self-isolate at home.
2. Public health will start contact tracing. This means calling people who have been close to the person who is sick.
3. Public health will determine which family members, teachers, support staff or students have been in close enough contact with the person that they may have been exposed.
4. If contacts are more likely to get sick with COVID-19, they are considered "close contacts".
5. Close contacts will be asked by public health officials to self-isolate and monitor for COVID-19 symptoms.

Will parents be notified if there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a school?

Public health will notify everyone who they determine may have been exposed. The district will work with public health and school administrators to determine if additional notifications are warranted. Public health will:

1. notify anyone who may have been exposed.
2. provide any follow-up steps like self-isolating or monitoring for symptoms.
3. work with school administration to decide if communications to the school community are needed.

What will happen if my child was a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19?

If a health authority determines that a student or staff member is a close contact of a confirmed case of COVID-19, they (or their parent) will be contacted directly by public health officials and will be required to self-isolate. Public health officials will be responsible for determining who is a close contact.

Is self-isolation always required for someone who was in contact with a confirmed case?

Yes. Close contacts are always required to isolate. Casual contacts may be advised to self-monitor. Depending on the circumstances public health officials may determine that someone who was in contact with a confirmed case is at low risk of developing COVID-19. In this situation, the person may be asked to self-monitor for symptoms but will not be required to self-isolate. Individuals asked to self-monitor for symptoms may continue to attend school.

Will parents or staff members be told who has tested positive for COVID-19 in a school?

Public health officials will not disclose that a student or staff member is a confirmed case of COVID-19 unless there is reason to believe they may have been infectious when they attended school. In this case, public health will provide only the information required to support effective contact tracing. The medical health officer will advise regarding the level of risk to the wider school community and guide all communication processes.

How do I find out if there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 at my child's school?

If there has been a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the school, the local health authority will notify everyone who they determine may have been exposed. The medical health officer will also work with the school and school district to decide if any additional notifications are warranted. Medical health officers have the lead role in determining if, when, and how communication will be provided regarding a confirmed case in a school community.

Will our privacy be protected if someone in our family tests positive for COVID-19?

To ensure privacy, schools will not provide any public statements or communications to staff or students' families unless they are directed to do so by the medical health officer. Communications will not identify whether the case is in a student or staff and will not violate the confidentiality of the individual(s) affected.

What will happen if my child or family member experiences stigma or discrimination if they test positive for COVID-19?

As COVID-19 infections become more common, we hope that the stigma around this infection decreases. The district and public health will endeavor to protect the privacy of the individuals and families. We hope that individuals who test positive or are required to self-isolate do not experience stigma and discrimination. The district will seek out opportunities to foster compassion and empathy in the school community and offer support to affected individuals and their families.

What will happen if there is an outbreak of COVID-19 in schools?

It is important to note that occurrences of COVID-19 are expected in school settings given that COVID-19 virus is circulating in the community. These occurrences are not considered outbreaks. The declaration of an outbreak of COVID-19, or any other communicable disease in a school setting, is at the discretion of the medical health officer.

When multiple confirmed linked cases of COVID-19 occur among students and/or staff within a 14-day period (a cluster), public health officials will investigate to determine if additional measures are required to prevent further transmission.

For students who are required to self-isolate, will there be support provided for them to continue their learning?

School administrators will ensure the necessary plans are in place to support continuity of learning for students who are required to self-isolate. Your child's teacher will remain in contact with you, and your child, should they need to self-isolate.

Will it be safe to return to school after a confirmed case of COVID-19?

Schools that have been exposed to a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be deep cleaned and disinfected immediately. Additionally, schools will continue to adhere to the requirements of the COVID-19 Public Health Office's Guidance for K-12 School Settings.

When can someone return to school if they have been required to self-isolate?

If a student or staff member tests positive for COVID-19, the health authority will provide further instructions to the student or staff member on when they can return to school.

Can students and staff without symptoms go to school if someone else in their household has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

Public health will assess the situation, identify close contacts, and ask them to stay home and self-isolate as necessary.

Can students and staff without symptoms go to school if someone else in their household is sick but has not been diagnosed with COVID-19?

Most people who are sick or have symptoms of illness in B.C. are not sick with COVID-19. So, it is unlikely the person in their household has COVID-19.

Students and staff without symptoms can still go to school even if someone else in their household is sick. They cannot go to school if public health has told them not to. This is the same as for other settings like workplaces and public spaces.