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Southridge

Communicable Disease Prevention Guidelines

PRINCIPLES

Southridge School is committed to maintaining a safe learning and working environment and to the overarching principles as communicated by the BC Centre for Disease Control, WorkSafeBC, and the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care with respect to managing communicable disease:

- Southridge School will adhere to the standards, orders, guidelines and direction from the Provincial Health Officer (PHO).
- Southridge School will adhere to the standards, guidelines and direction from WorkSafeBC.
- Southridge School will comply with any additional Ministry of Education and Child Care, PHO and Fraser Health Authority Communicable Disease guidelines and requirements as they are developed within the province's K-12 system. The school understands that these additional requirements will enhance, not duplicate, current PHO and WorkSafeBC requirements. The PHO may utilize regional orders to target specific geographical concerns and Southridge will adhere to any such orders that are issued for our location.
- Psychological safety measures and trauma-informed practice will be valued and implemented alongside physical health and safety measures.
- Effective communication with all community members, parents, students and employees is an essential aspect of successfully implementing these guidelines. Communication and Training/Orientation will take place on as necessary, and the School maintains an up-to-date portal on the website with updated information and links to data from various regulative bodies such as the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the PHO.
- Southridge acknowledges that the provincial or local health authorities may issue orders that override these school Communicable Disease Guidelines at any time. Southridge will comply with these orders.

OBJECTIVES

These Communicable Disease Guidelines are intended to guide students, parents, employees and school community members to reduce the risk of transmission of communicable diseases to support continuity of learning and educational outcomes:

- Prioritize in-person learning.
- Work and learn in a healthy and safe environment.

- Be informed about public health measures and how they support a safe school environment.
- Understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining and promoting safe and healthy schools including modeling of appropriate behaviour, sharing of reliable information and promotion of relevant and necessary protective measures.

REQUIREMENTS FOR HEALTHY AND SAFE SCHOOLS

As communicated by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, requirements for School Health and Safety are organized into two main sections:

- Foundational health and safety requirements.
- Infection Prevention & Exposure Control Measures

FOUNDATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

There are several sources for regulations for school health and safety, which are specified in the following:

Legislation

Southridge School follows the *BC Independent School Act* as a legal framework. As a matter of principle and where appropriate, Southridge reviews sections of the *School Act* for guidance and to enhance policy for Health and Safety.

Southridge School takes direction from Fraser Health, our Municipal Health Office and from the Public Health Act for additional orders or recommendations relating to independent schools.

Fraser Health can require an independent school authority to close a school if they consider the health or safety of students to be at risk. If Fraser Health believes that the health condition of a student or an employee of the school would endanger the health of other students or employees at the school, the school will be required to remove that person from campus.

An independent school has the authority to close a school on a required day of instruction if it believes the health or safety of students is endangered.

If a teacher or principal at a school suspect that a student is suffering from a communicable disease that endangers others at the school, this must be reported to Fraser Health and the School may exclude the student from participation at the school. Independent school authorities can also require employees who are suffering from a communicable disease to be suspended from work. Fraser Health will direct the actions of the school in the event of any suspected or confirmed case of a communicable disease at the school.

If a student is excluded from attending school due to health reasons, Southridge will continue to provide an educational program to the student. Specific programming will be dependent on the grade-level of the student, available resources and supports, and the expected duration of the student's exclusion from attending school.

Southridge School follows Section 79 of the *School Act* which requires schools and boards of education to ensure confidentiality of student information and ensure privacy for students and their families. It also requires that persons providing health or social services to students have access to student information.

Professional Standards

The Professional Standards for Educators sets out the principles that guide educators' professional practice. Standard 1 states that "*Educators value and care for all students and act in their best interest*".

Other Legal Guidance

Schools and teachers are expected to take responsibility for their students' physical and mental safety and wellbeing. This general duty of "in loco parentis" or acting in the place of a careful and judicious parent, is found in the common law of court decisions and precedents.

Trauma-Informed Practice and Social-Emotional Lens

Trauma-informed practice is a compassionate lens of understanding that 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 student needs.

An impact assessment of the students and teachers/educators is crucial as part of a trauma-informed transitions. Use of surveys and 'check-ins' can assist in gathering important data to inform what level of trauma response and recovery will be necessary to support the school community.

The North American Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response has released a resource to assist the education sector in supporting the transitioning students back to school called [Guidelines for Re-Entry into the School Setting During the Pandemic: Managing the Social-Emotional and Traumatic Impact](#). To support educators in responding to situations of trauma, the Ministry has created [trauma-informed practice](#) resources.

INFECTION PREVENTION & EXPOSURE CONTROL MEASURES

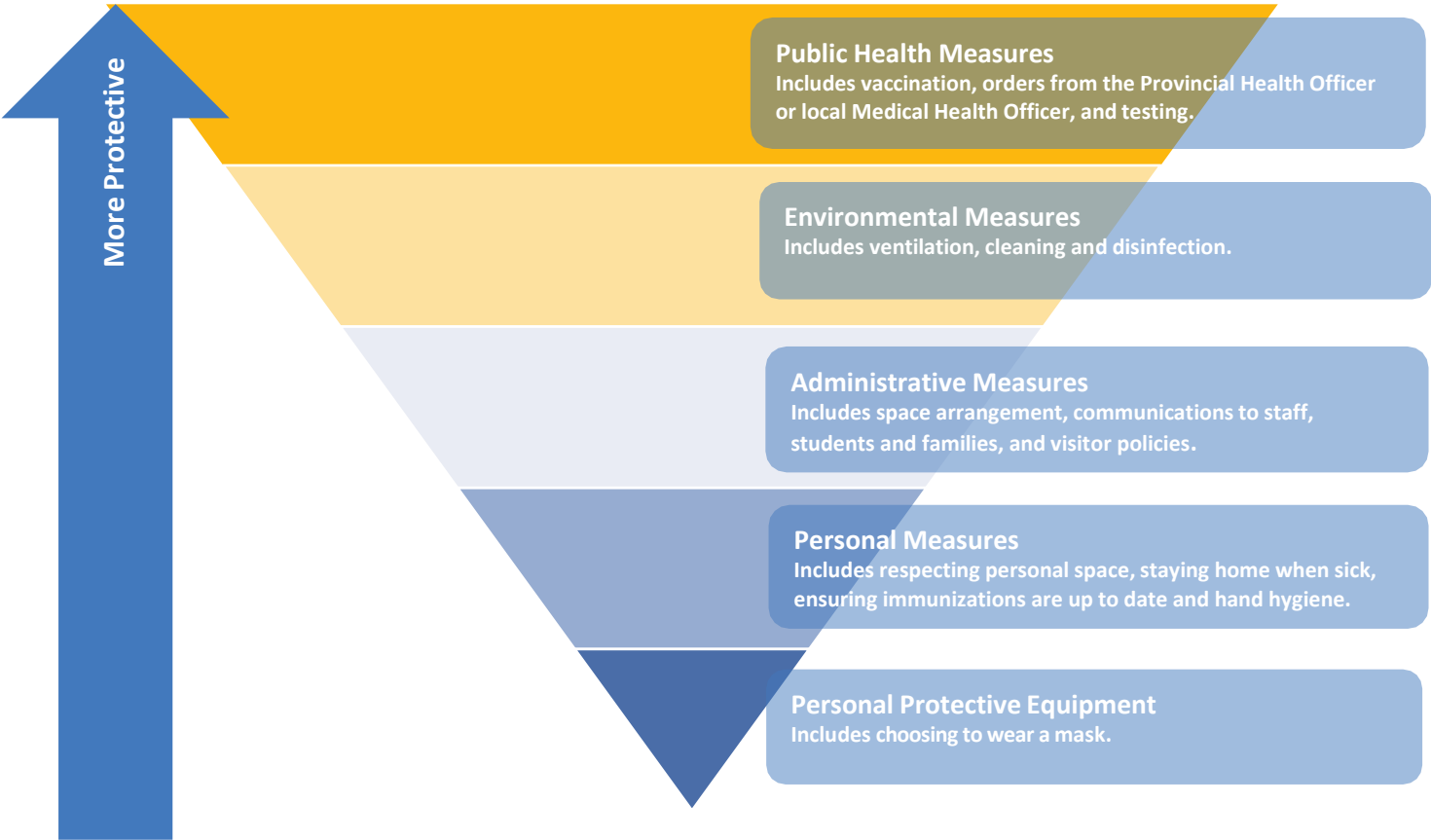
Southridge adheres to all of the requirements of the Provincial Health Office (PHO), BC Centre for Disease Control, WorkSafeBC, the Ministry of Health and Fraser Health, our municipal health authority.

Guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Child Care and the Provincial Health Officer

The Ministry of Education and Child Care along with the Provincial Health Office (PHO) have communicated updated Communicable Disease Guidelines for schools in BC for restart in September 2022. The most recent guidelines are available at: [Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#).

Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease

The *Hierarchy for Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease* is as follows:



Southridge considers this hierarchy of measures when developing policies and procedures to protect employees and students from the spread of communicable disease. These measures have been used as a

basis for determining procedures as communicated throughout these *Communicable Disease Prevention Guidelines*.

Supportive School Environment

Southridge will support students to practice personal preventative measures (as listed in the diagram above) by having staff model such behaviours, by sharing reliable information from regulatory bodies and by promoting safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids such as signage.

Students and staff may choose to wear masks, face shields or other personal protective equipment and these choices will be respected.

Vaccines

As per the Provincial Health Office, vaccines are the most effective way to reduce the risk of communicable diseases in our schools and communities. BCCDC strongly recommends adults interacting with children be fully vaccinated.

It is important to receive all recommended vaccine doses to ensure the most effective protection against serious cases of communicable diseases (and COVID-19 in particular).

Southridge will work with Fraser Health, where possible, to share evidence-based information on how and where our community members can access vaccinations. Following current provincial and ministry guidelines, Southridge does not require eligible students (aged 12+) or teachers and staff to be vaccinated. Southridge will update its protocols should these guidelines change.

Classroom Space Arrangements

Southridge will implement classroom and learning environment configurations and activities that best meet learner needs and preferred educational approaches.

Personal Space

Students and employees are encouraged to respect others personal space (the distance from which a person feels comfortable being next to another person).

Students with Diverse Abilities and Medical Complexity

Southridge will continue to support students with Individual Education Plans (IEP) with the necessary learning supports and counselling in both the Junior and Senior Schools. Students will be part of their regular grade but will have access to certain accommodations and the support of the learning strategies teachers as outlined in their IEP.

Most students with diverse abilities or medical complexity are not considered at greater risk of experiencing severe illness from a communicable disease. There may be a small number of students who are immune-compromised or have a significant medical complexity and have been identified as high risk to attend school by a medical health care provider. These students will be accommodated to the best of the school's ability on a case-by-case basis.

Staff and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression 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.

School Gatherings and Events

School gatherings and events that bring together students, staff, volunteers and parents do not have a specific capacity limit and follow regular practices.

Emergency and Evacuation Drills

Southridge continues to practice emergency and evacuation drills, including the six fire drills required per year by the BC Fire Code. Employees are notified of drills in advance and drills are carried out in a controlled manner. Faculty are reminded that in the event of an actual emergency, procedure modifications in place to manage communicable disease transmission will be suspended to ensure for a timely, efficient and safe response.

Personal and Shared Items

Staff and students are encouraged not to share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g., food, drinks and unwashed utensils). Shared items that touch the mouth should be cleaned and disinfected between use by different individuals (e.g. water bottles and instrument mouth pieces).

Food and beverages brought to school must not be shared.

Healthy Buildings

Regular cleaning and disinfection are essential to preventing the transmission of communicable disease. Southridge has developed procedures and checklists to ensure the complete and extensive cleaning of the school.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Measures Taken

- General cleaning and disinfecting of both schools and the Annex are undertaken by janitorial staff every evening.

- Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces in all buildings takes place on a continual basis throughout the day. A day porter is assigned to each school and the Annex to ensure that all areas are cleaned and disinfected at least once during the day
- Frequently touched surfaces are items touched by large numbers of students and staff and include doorknobs, light switches, hand railings, water bottle fill stations and toilet handles, as well as shared equipment (e.g., computer keyboards, PE/sports equipment and music equipment), appliances (e.g., microwaves) and service counters (e.g., library circulation desks) and may change from day to day based on utilization
- Frequently touched items like toys and manipulatives that may not be able to be cleaned often (e.g., fabrics) or at all (e.g., sand, foam and playdough) are used at Southridge, as are carpets and rugs in the Junior School.
- Southridge uses common, commercially available detergents and disinfectant products as per the BC CDC's Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings Guidelines. Products used at Southridge are recommended for use by Health Canada and are carefully administered.
- Washrooms are cleaned at least once during the day and at night. Student washrooms utilize touchless faucets and paper towel dispensers.
- All garbage and recycling containers are emptied daily.
- Disposable gloves and masks are provided to first aid and isolation rooms in each school.
- Cleaning products such as wipes and disinfectant spray are available to staff and students for use on commonly used devices and materials.
- Specific and directed protocols exist for dealing with students or employees in instances of first aid, including the wearing of disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool and urine).

General Ventilation and Air Circulation Measures Taken

- At this time there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, would contribute to the spread of viruses. Good indoor air ventilation may reduce risk when used in addition to other preventative measures.
- Southridge HVAC systems are designed, operated and maintained as per standards and design specifications.
- The school utilizes recycled/recirculated air systems in its buildings and monitors air quality periodically to determine effectiveness of filters and HVAC settings.
- Fresh air intake in both schools have been adjusted to maximize the intake of fresh air from outside. Room air exchanges take place 6 to 10 times an hour.
- Staff are encouraged to open windows for additional air flow in classrooms and offices when weather allows, and if it doesn't negatively impact the functioning of ventilation systems.
- Southridge does not utilize portable air conditioners but does have portable fans and heaters in staff-only spaces to provide personalized levels of comfort. These devices are used only in

ventilated spaces and are positioned such that air does not flow from one individual's space to another's breathing space.

- In the event of a power outage or other event that would compromise the schools' HVAC system, students and staff will be instructed to encourage natural air flow by opening windows.
- In the event of poor exterior air quality conditions students and staff will be instructed to not open windows so as to maintain the integrity of the air quality within the school. Exterior air quality will be monitored, and direction will be taken from the City of Surrey, the province or our local health authority who have developed plans for response to events of heat and wildfire smoke.

Food Services

Southridge food services are provided by Sage Dining and follow regular food preparation and distribution protocols as outlined by Fraser Health and WorkSafe BC.

Visitor Access

Southridge follows regular practices for welcoming visitors and guests to the school. Visitors and guests follow applicable communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this document.

Health Awareness

Everyone at Southridge practices health awareness, including staying home when sick.

Students or employees who become sick while at school will be sent home as soon as possible. Spaces have been set up to allow sick student to wait comfortably and separately from others until they are able to go home. See Appendix A: "What to Do if a Student or Employee is Sick at School"

Students and staff who become sick while away from the school should stay home and follow guidance available from [BCCDC](#) and/or the recommendations of their health care provider.

Students and staff may use the BCCDC online [Self-Assessment](#) Tool for further assistance with assessment of symptoms or call 8-1-1 or a health care provider.

To protect personal privacy and support accuracy, Southridge will not provide notification to staff or students' families if a staff member or student becomes ill at home or at school. The Fraser Health Authority manages and directs all communication with the school community regarding increased communicable disease activity, including the declaration of a temporary public health school closure when deemed necessary by the local Medical Health Officer to help prevent the excessive transmission of a communicable disease.

Students and employees 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.

Southridge Bus Use

Southridge buses are used exclusively for field trips and class outings. Regular seating and onboarding/offloading practices are followed.

Southridge buses are cleaned and disinfected in line with the cleaning and disinfection practices outlined in this document. Bus drivers, staff and students may choose to wear masks or face coverings when they are on the bus and are encouraged to practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

Hand Hygiene

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water or an effective hand sanitizer reduces the spread of illness. Employees and students are encouraged to practice diligent hand hygiene as outlined in the BCCDC's [hand hygiene poster](#). Southridge facilitates opportunities for students and staff to wash their hands.

- The use of hand sanitizer is encouraged when a sink is not available.
- Many of the Junior School classrooms have sinks available and students are encouraged to wash hands when arriving at school, before/after eating and after using the washroom
- All classrooms have hand sanitization stations installed with alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol that meets Health Canada's requirements and is authorized for sale in Canada.
- Southridge utilizes hand hygiene posters where sinks are located to remind students and employees about the proper way to wash hands.
- Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty.
- Facilities staff ensure hand washing supplies are well stocked at all times including soap, paper towels and, where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Faculty should assist younger students with hand hygiene as needed.

Respiratory Etiquette

Students and employees should:

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

Masks and Face Coverings

The decision to wear a mask or face covering is a personal choice for staff, students and visitors. An individual's choice will be supported and respected.

The school will have non-medical masks available for those staff, students and visitors who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one, or who become ill at school.

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

Curriculum, Programs and Activities

Specific information on curriculum, programs and activities is provided by the Junior School and Senior School in various communications to students and families. All curriculum, programs and activities- including school-led activities that are held off campus - operate in alignment with these *Communicable Disease Prevention Guidelines* and other relevant provincial K-12 guidelines produced by the Ministry of Education and Child Care, the Provincial Health Officer, the BCCDC and our regional health authority.

Additional Resources and Links

For key contacts, additional resources and relevant links, refer to the [Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 School Settings](#) (page 19)

Appendix A: What to Do if a Student or Employee is Sick at School

<i>If a Student Develops Symptoms of Illness at School</i>	<i>If an Employee Develops Symptoms of Illness at School</i>
<p>Faculty must take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area.2. Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible.3. Wear a mask if desired, available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth.4. Provide the student with a mask or tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene.5. Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene.6. Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene.7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated, and any areas recently used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas). <p>Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p>Employee should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p>If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others.2. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up.3. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated, and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas).
<p>Students and employees should stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all school/work-related activities.</p> <p>A health-care provider note is not required for students or employees to return to school.</p>	