

SCHOOL DISTRICT 5 (Southeast Kootenay)
Communicable Disease Prevention
January 24, 2022



Purpose:

School District 5 (SD5) is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all staff and students. A combination of measures will be used to minimize exposure to communicable diseases. Procedures will protect staff and students within the district. It is important that all staff follow the procedures outlined to reduce exposure to communicable diseases.

What type of prevention and continuity planning is SD5 doing?

There may be large numbers of students and staff absent due to illness during a pandemic. The district is working on the following plan emphasizing its most important element - prevention. The district's prevention plan follows Provincial Health guidelines and includes:

- Everyone eligible getting fully vaccinated;
- Advising staff and students to complete a daily health check and, for those who are ill, particularly if they have any communicable disease symptoms, to stay home until they are able to fully participate as they usually would in work/school activities;
- Wearing masks while indoors;
- Educating staff and students in hand washing frequency and technique and cough/sneeze etiquette;
- Ensuring adequate soap in dispensers in classrooms that have a sink, and all washrooms;
- Conducting daily cleaning of schools and district sites;
- Reminding staff of the 10% over what is typical absence due to illness reporting protocol and monitoring absence rates as they approach that rate; and
- Regular maintenance of HVAC systems and increase to external air flow to up to 20% fresh air intake.

Additional Measures:

During periods of elevated risk, Interior Health, Provincial Health authority and the Ministry of Education will provide guidance about the risk and how it can be reduced. In order to minimize the impact of such events. As a district we must follow the direction by the aforementioned Medical Health Authorities and the Ministry of Education.

Plan Overview

Organization and Structure of the Plan:

The main body of this plan is organized in three sections, which outline the key roles and responsibilities of personnel in the district in each of the three planning phases.

Roles and Responsibilities

Superintendent of Schools/Secretary Treasurer:

1. District Team lead
2. Maintain and distribute electronic communication
3. Direct school closures as required

Principals and Supervisors:

1. Educate all staff and students about proper hand washing practices
2. Educate all staff and students about cough/sneeze etiquette
3. Advise staff and students to complete a daily health check and not attend work or school when exhibiting flulike symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing)
4. Discuss communicable disease plans at safety committee meeting
5. If greater than 10%, over what is typical of the school population, is absent due to illness, or if more than 10% over what is typical of students in a classroom are reporting ill with similar symptoms, report to the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, and Manager of Operations
6. Ensure routine cleaning and infection control practices are happening in the schools and district sites. If concerns arise, contact the Manager of Operations

7. Ensure that parents/guardians have provided up to date emergency contact information to the school
8. Continuation of core building functions
9. Ensure custodial staff are trained in the use of cleaning chemicals provided and any special contact disinfection techniques for communicable diseases
10. Ensure custodial staff has appropriate personal protective equipment, training on use and care of equipment and cleaning supplies
11. Ensure adequate supply of soap and paper towels for increased hand washing vigilance during all three pandemic/epidemic phase
12. Monitor infection control program in conjunction with the Manager of Operations and Secretary Treasurer
13. Promoting safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids like floor markings and signage

Transportation Coordinators:

1. Transportation plan for rural students and students with special needs.

Secretary Treasurer:

1. Provide districtwide support, advice and expertise to schools and district sites on communicable disease initiatives, guidelines, and events
2. Maintain liaisons with other school districts, Health Authorities, Ministry and City officials
3. Advise and report to the COVID-19 Working Committee and District Joint Health and Safety committee on plans and preparedness

Staff:

1. Staff will need to follow communicable disease reduction strategies including completing a daily health check and staying home if they are not well enough to fully participate in regular school activities due to illness, practice good hand hygiene by washing their hands with soap and water regularly and coughing or sneezing into their elbow or a tissue.
2. School staff must report classroom illnesses in excess of 10% over what is typical to their Principal who must report that to the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, and Manager of Operations.

School Closure Decision Making Process:

1. **Public Health Closures:** The Provincial Health Officer will direct the province when it is time to take additional measures. The Medical Health Officer for Interior Health Authority will direct the district if closure of specific district site(s) is/are required. If, to minimize the spread of infection, activation of these plans is to include school closures, the Medical Health Officer will advise the Superintendent.
2. **Functional Closures:** A functional closure of a school is a temporary closure determined by a school district due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial services to ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Functional closures will be situational and will require discussion if required. This would likely be due to a high level of staff away or certain employees required for a school to function and the inability to replace those absences.

The school principal will contact the Superintendent by 7:00 am if they have exhausted the SD5 Shortage Protocol and have attempted to deploy students to other classes, if possible, to discuss next steps. A call including District Management and the principal and vice principal will then be held to discuss the principal's concerns, go over the protocol list, and determine if the school can no longer function.

If a school is functionally closed, the following communication will take place:

- Principal will provide communication to parents
 - Superintendent will notify the Board of Education, Medical Health Officer, and the Ministry of Education
 - Director of Student Learning & Indigenous Education will work with Executive Assistant to Principal of Transformative Learning to provide communication to the media and the rest of the school system
3. **Transportation Closures:** A transportation closure is a lack of staff able to provide the required level of transportation services for students. This would likely be due to bus drivers and/or mechanics being away and the inability to replace those absences. In the case of a transportation closure (i.e. cancellation of one or more bus routes) the following communication will take place:
 - Assistant Manager of Operations will contact the Manager of Operations who will then reach out to Executive Assistant to Principal of Transformative Learning with information on bus route cancellation.
 - Executive Assistant to Principal of Transformative Learning will send a

message to parents and to the school notifying them about the cancellation of the bus route. She will also provide this message to the local media (radio stations).

- Assistant Manager of Operations will contact the principal letting them know that one or more bus routes have been cancelled.

Education and Training:

If advised by Public Health, the Superintendent through the Principal will inform Site Based Staff. Staff will receive information about:

- the risk of the communicable disease in schools and the community
- the procedures to be followed to minimize risk of contracting the specific communicable disease
- how to report illness rates in excess of 10% over what is typical in either a classroom at the elementary level or as a whole school for all district sites
- how to find more information from public health on the pathogen in the community

Hand Washing Education:

Washing hands with soap and water is always preferred to any other method of hand sanitization. Washing your hands properly consists of the following steps;

1. Remove jewelry and watches from fingers and wrists
2. Wet hands under running water
3. Apply soap and vigorously rub hands together for 10 seconds to produce lather
4. Wash all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, backs of hands, between fingers and thumbs, and under finger nails, for 20-30 seconds
5. Rinse hands one at a time with fingers pointing downward
6. Dry hands with a disposable towel
7. Turn off the water with the same towel used to dry your hands. Do not turn off taps with solely your hands as this will only re-contaminate them
8. Dispose of the towel in the nearest waste basket

In the event that no running water and soap are available, and hands are not contaminated with visible dirt, hands may be sanitized with an alcohol based sanitizer ($\geq 60\%$ ethanol). Sanitizing your hands with waterless hand sanitizer consists of the following steps:

1. Remove jewelry and watches from your fingers and wrists
2. Apply an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to your hands
3. Rub all surfaces thoroughly, including wrists, palms, backs of hands, between fingers
4. Do not touch eyes, nose or mouth until after product has evaporated

A poster illustrating demonstration of proper hand washing is available in the schools throughout the district

Health Monitoring:

Schools and district sites must report absences due to illness rates of 10% over what is typical and include symptoms when known to the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, and Manager of Operations. The information will be passed on to the Interior Health Authority, if warranted.

In an effort to minimize spread of infection, grades with absences in excess of 25% over what is typical due to illness should report the grade to the Superintendent, Secretary Treasurer, and Manager of Operations. The Manager of Operations will coordinate targeted cleaning of affected rooms.

Record Keeping:

The Superintendent will maintain records with information received from all district sites regarding rates of illness at schools during communicable disease outbreak.

In addition, first aid records will be maintained.

Annual Review:

The communicable disease prevention plan will be reviewed annually and updated as required or as new information becomes available.