

## COVID-19 Update

December 16, 2021

Please share the following with your school communities:

COVID-19 continues to circulate in our communities. Amid emerging evidence about the Omicron variant of COVID-19, it is imperative that everyone continues to follow BC's [public health guidance](#) and use layers of protection to keep everyone safe throughout the holiday season.

It is also important that everyone receive all doses of COVID-19 vaccine for which they are eligible, including booster doses when available. If you haven't already, register [now](#) to book a vaccine appointment and receive an invitation when you are eligible to get another dose.

The Provincial Health Officer strongly encourages everyone to limit holiday gatherings to family and trusted friends who have been vaccinated, and to avoid non-essential travel outside of Canada. Connecting with the people we love and care for is important, and we encourage everyone to have a small, safe and happy holiday.

### International Travel and School Responsibilities

- The federal government has advised Canadians to [avoid non-essential travel](#) outside the country.
- Staff and students who travel (or their parent/caregiver) are responsible for ensuring they adhere to all federal travel requirements. This includes adhering to all quarantine and any other specific requirements.
- Staff and students who travel should be reminded to regularly review information from the [Government of Canada](#), recognizing requirements are subject to change, particularly in light of the rapidly evolving situation due to the Omicron variant.
- The information below summarizes information provided by the Government of Canada about requirements upon [returning to Canada](#) following international travel.

For up-to-date, full information, visit the [COVID-19 Travel, testing and borders site](#).

### Government of Canada International Travel Quarantine and Other Specific Requirements

#### 5–11-year-olds

- Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children under 12 years of age can travel with fully vaccinated parent/guardians. However, they must follow specific requirements when they return to Canada, which includes that they must not attend school for 14 days upon return to Canada.
  - o This includes if the trip is under 72 hours.

## **12–17-year-olds**

- Fully vaccinated 12–17-year-olds follow the same requirements as adults.
- While there are some exemptions for 12–17-year-olds who are not fully vaccinated to travel, most international travel (including domestic and international flights departing from most airports in Canada) requires travellers 12 years of age and older to be fully vaccinated.
- Unvaccinated and partially vaccinated youth 12 to 17 years of age who have travelled internationally are subject to 14-day quarantine and specific testing requirements. They must not attend school for 14 days upon return to Canada.
  - o This includes if the trip is under 72 hours.

## **Adults**

- While there are some exemptions for adults who are not fully vaccinated to travel, most international travel (including domestic and international flights departing from most airports in Canada) requires travellers 12 years of age and older to be fully vaccinated.
- Fully vaccinated travellers are not automatically required to quarantine upon return to Canada, though those arriving by air or at a land border may be selected for a mandatory randomized arrival test. They do not need to quarantine while awaiting their results (i.e., can attend school).

## **Cross-border custody arrangements**

Dependents entering Canada under a custody arrangement are exempt from quarantine and most testing requirements and can continue to attend school.

## **School Responsibilities**

If a school becomes aware of a person in attendance who is thought to be required to quarantine or not attend school, they should:

- Provide the student/staff with a space where they can wait comfortably that is separated from others while the school confirms if they are required to not attend school. Younger children should be supervised.
  - o If they are a staff member, the school should request they confirm they are adhering to all quarantine and any other specific requirements outlined by the Government of Canada for international travel.
  - o If they are a student, the school should contact their parent/guardian to confirm they are aware of and adhering to requirements outlined by the Government of Canada for international travel, including not attending school for 14 days upon return to Canada if they are not fully vaccinated.
- If the school confirms the staff/student is required to not be at school, arrangements should be made for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible.