



St. Francis de Sales School

6656 Balmoral Street, Burnaby BC V5E 1J1

Return to School Safety Plan re: COVID-19

In accordance with the Ministry of Education's K-12 directive, beginning on September 7, 2021, St. Francis de Sales School resumed K-7 in-class instruction: **Stage 3**. In-class instruction is provided for all students within the revised public health guidelines **and will continue on January 10, 2022**.

Whenever possible, feasible and practical control measures in accordance with the order of the Provincial Health Officer have been selected to provide the best/widest protection to all staff and students within the school community. The information is based on the best evidence currently available and is updated as new information becomes available.

In line with the K-12 in-class instruction for all students within current health and safety guidelines for schools, staff utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventive practices and do not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature.

MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK

Restricting Access

- In accordance with the Ministry of Education's K-12 Restart Plan, continuing on Jan. 10th, St. Francis de Sales School resumes in-class instruction in a controlled manner while ensuring health and safety measures are in effect. Students are grouped into: Kindergarten, Gr. 1, Gr. 2; Gr. 3-5; Gr. 6-7. These arrangements are for playground supervision primarily **and are used to keep students separated throughout the day**.
- Classrooms run at full capacity: 30 students and three staff (teachers/education assistant).
- **Access to the building is restricted again.** Parents/guardians must remain outside when they drop off their children. Parents are also not permitted to come in during the school day to drop off lunches/supplies, etc. and **they may schedule meetings with the teacher on Zoom**. Parent volunteers may continue to help with supporting some aspects of school life such as athletic coaching and musical accompaniment. Sign in/out procedures are in place. Mask wearing and hand sanitization procedures are expected to be followed. Daily health checks are expected.

- Parent volunteers who prepare hot lunch are trained in safety protocols, and prepare meals in the kitchen, entering/exiting from outside. Staff deliver meals to classrooms and return bins to the kitchen. **This procedure will continue.**
- If parents/caregivers need to contact the school principal or their student's teachers, they are directed to do so by phone or email. Zoom appointments will be scheduled.
- Visitors must be aware of, and follow safety protocols, limit their access to necessary spaces only, and are asked to confirm they have completed the requirements of a daily health check before entering the school building. All visitors are required to sign in and out, and leave contact information.

Maintaining Physical Distancing

i.) Regulating Physical Distancing During the School Day

- Physical distancing continues to include avoiding physical contact, minimizing close, prolonged, face-to-face interactions, and spreading out as much as possible within the space available.
- Classrooms are **further** reconfigured to maximize space between desks/tables where possible, and have students facing in the same direction.
- Staff, as much as possible, try to maintain a distance of 2 metres from one another and from students.
- Public Health guidelines for the K-12 school setting recognize that physical distancing can be challenging –especially for younger students. There is a focus on physical distancing and reduced physical contact in those situations where physical distancing (2 m) is not practical. Students are to keep their hands to themselves. No hugs/handshakes/high fives, etc. are permitted.
- Classes go outside when possible for lessons and/or play-exercise times.
- Staff implements transition times to provide a greater amount of space for everyone in the hallways.
- Washroom areas are monitored and supervised. Traffic flow to and from the washroom is controlled. Staff assist with movement.
- **Assemblies are not being held at this time.**
- Where physical distancing measures cannot be maintained, such as in the office area, use of the partially open windows facilitate communication that is safe.
- All staff and students are required to wear non-medical masks at all times (except when eating or sitting alone in a classroom/staffroom), understanding that these have limitations.
- All visitors must wear masks.

Hygiene and School Cleanliness

i.) Personal Hygiene—Hand Washing

- Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. The school ensures that adequate hand-washing practices are followed: some classrooms have two sinks, and we use the sinks in the staff washrooms as well. When returning from outside activities, students wash with soap and water.
- Hand sanitizer is available to students/staff when they go outside to the playground.
- Staff members wash or sanitize their hands when they arrive as well as frequently throughout the day. (Wearing of gloves does not preclude hand washing. Hands must be washed/sanitized before and after using gloves.)
- Teachers provide instruction and assist younger students (as needed) to properly wash their hands. Hand washing signs are posted near all sinks.
- Teachers incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into their daily schedule. Students wash hands/use hand sanitizer when necessary but at least:
 - When they arrive at school and before going home
 - Before eating and drinking
 - After using the toilet
 - After sneezing/coughing into hands or tissue
 - Whenever hands are visibly dirty
 - When transitioning to different area (e.g. outdoor to indoor; gym to classroom)
- If a sink is not available, students/staff use alcohol-based sanitizer. Hand sanitizers are available in each classroom and other areas including the front entry to the school, office, staff room, gym, library, etc.

ii.) Food and Drink

- Food and drinks may not be shared by students.
- Group food preparation activities (Hot Lunch) were reintroduced in the fall, and parent volunteers are aware of safety procedures. These volunteers are not allowed entry to classrooms.

iii.) Storing Belongings

- Students use their sanitized blue ‘cubbies’ to store items. Doors have been removed to reduce points of contact.
- Students should each have a lunch kit/water bottle which will be stored within the classroom to reduce time spent in the hallways.

iv.) Remain on Site

- Staff and students are to remain on site and not leave during lunch or other break times, unless they have a medical appointment.

v.) School Cleaning/Sanitizing Protocols

- The school is regularly cleaned and disinfected in accordance with the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) *Cleaning and Disinfectants for Public Settings* guidelines. Cleaning practices are in line with the Provincial Health Officer's COVID-19 *Public Health Guidance for Childcare Settings*.
- High touch surfaces (door and cabinet handles, stair railings, washroom areas, shared office spaces, desks, communication devices, keyboards, light switches, etc.) are regularly cleaned and disinfected. Staff assist with this. Music equipment and sports equipment is sanitized after each use.
- Mr. Bencze sprays all frequently touched surfaces in common areas with an approved disinfectant daily.
- Washrooms are cleaned daily, keeping in line with the high touch surface areas protocols.
- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises is completed by the custodians at least once (1) a day as required.
- Shared items where cross-contamination is possible (e.g. shared school supplies, devices, cutlery, etc.) should not be used. Students should bring their own cutlery.
- Drinking fountains are accessible for refilling water bottles only. Students are encouraged to bring their own water bottles.
- Laminated or glossy paper-based products (e.g. books, magazines, worksheets, etc.) and items with plastic covers (e.g. DVDs) are low risk items. Regular book browsing and circulation processes can occur as normal in the Learning Commons/Library. There is no need to clean, disinfect or quarantine these items for any period of time.
- According to the BC Centre for Disease Control, there is no evidence that the COVID-19 virus is transmitted via textbooks, paper or other paper based products.
- Garbage and recycling containers are emptied daily.
- The mattress in the medical room is encased in plastic and is disinfected after use.
- The plant manager (Mr. Bencze) ensures that hand washing supplies are available at all times (i.e. soap, paper towels and 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer.) Also, cleaning products (e.g. Lysol wipes) are provided for cleaning photocopiers and other common devices.
- The custodians are trained in how to follow cleaning protocols in the school under these new requirements. This includes window cleaning in the office.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Health and Sickness

- Should children and staff have more than one common-cold, influenza, or COVID-19 like symptoms, they should stay home; they may be assessed by their health care provider, and tested for COVID-19. **The Omicron variant seems to be more of an upper respiratory illness – i.e. up in the nose & throat area and not the lungs; symptoms of sinus congestion, scratchy throat, coughing, headaches from the sinus pain.**
- When someone is symptomatic, they should self-isolate and follow directions provided by their health care provider.
- Staff or students who are *unsure* of if they should self-isolate should be directed to use the *BC COVID-19 [Self-Assessment Tool](#)*.
- We're moving towards the “if you test positive, don't wait for public health to call you; instead follow the [self-management advice](#)” provided in the link.
- An online reporting tool is now available <https://reportcovidresults.bccdc.ca/>. (Completing the form allows Fraser Health to keep some measure of what's going in the community regionally and by identified employment sectors. There is a line for parents of students and for staff to identify which school they attend.)
- Self-management means following isolation guidelines specific to the individual, reporting a positive test through a provincial report and notifying close contacts (using the new definition of who is a close contact).
- “Contacts” definition has shifted towards mainly those who are [household members or intimate contacts](#). *(Live in the same home as you, or you have spent longer than 15 minutes with, where you and others were less than six feet (two meters) apart while not wearing a mask. This includes people that you may have worked, carpooled or socialized with (examples: sports teams, fitness classes, parties, weddings or religious gatherings).*
*In a school setting, the majority of people wear masks and maximum spacing is practiced – therefore, very few students/staff will meet the new close contact criteria. Schools are not expected to do an assessment to determine close contacts or to instruct a person to self-isolate based on the school’s assessment.
- Public Health is not requiring persons to report to their schools that they tested positive: assume sickness is COVID-19.
- Public health staff and the Superintendent’s Office will work with the school to determine whether or not a functional closure of a particular class will occur due to a shortage of staff, or if the entire school needs to be temporarily closed due to the number of students absent because of illness or need to isolate.
- Schools will monitor cases (school, class, staff) and reach out to the COVIDSchoolHub@fraserhealth.ca to help assess the need to keep a class of students home, or close the school temporarily.

- High case counts may lead to additional communications and other measures. Fraser Health will provide guidance on specific school situations as needed.
- There is no expectation for schools to send their own messaging about COVID exposures.

i.) Daily Health Assessments

- Staff members must assess themselves daily for more than one symptom of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school.
- Parents have the responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school. Parents are to ensure their child is free from more than one symptom of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before they are to come to school.
- If a student develops COVID symptoms, parents/guardians MUST keep their child at home until their symptoms have resolved; they should be assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases.

ii.) If student/staff becomes ill during the day

- Individuals who show more than one sign of illness will be sent home until they are well.
- Until they can be retrieved by a caregiver, they will be isolated from others.

Staff Illness: Staff members who start feeling ill while at work are to return home and monitor their symptoms. They are to let the school secretary know how they will get home.

Student Illness:

- The office will call the parent to arrive as soon as possible when notified their child is ill.
- The office will record illness in First Aid records in the event this information is later needed.
- Staff members will put on PPE (mask and gloves) and immediately separate the sick child from others and put them into a supervised area until the parent/guardian arrives. We apply physical distancing, respiratory etiquette, and hand hygiene principles while waiting for pick up. We avoid touching a student's body fluids (mucous/saliva). We wash hands thoroughly before donning gloves and after removing them.
- Staff members clean/disinfect the area where the child was relocated. Garbage is removed.
- Allergy symptoms should be managed with medication so that coughs, runny eyes and nose, and sneezing do not present themselves.
- Students with known allergies are not required to present a doctor's note stating this is the case.
- Quarantining is required for those who are considered a close contact of a case that has been confirmed by public health, and are waiting to see if they develop COVID-19.

iii.) Provincial Health Officer (PHO) and the BCCDC Guidelines

- Anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 must self-isolate at home; symptoms include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, skin rashes or discoloration of fingers or toes, fatigue, diarrhea, loss of sense of smell or taste, and new muscle aches or headache.
- Quarantining is NOT required if you are ages 5-17 years and completed the [primary series](#) of COVID-19 vaccines. OR
- You had confirmed COVID-19 within the last 90 days (you tested positive using a [viral test](#)).
- [Get tested](#) at least 5 days after you last had close contact with someone with COVID-19. If you test positive or develop COVID-19 symptoms, isolate from other people and follow recommendations in the [Isolation](#) section. If you tested positive for COVID-19 with a [viral test](#) within the previous 90 days and subsequently recovered and remain without COVID-19 symptoms, you do not need to quarantine or get tested after close contact.
- Anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada, or who is a contact of a confirmed COVID-19 case is to self isolate for 14 days and monitor symptoms.
- When a staff, student or other adult can return to school depends on the type of symptoms they experienced (as indicated in the K-12 Health Check [app](#) and BCCDC “When to get tested for COVID-19” [resource](#), if a COVID-19 test is recommended, and the type of illness they had (e.g. COVID-19 or other illness). See [Appendix A COVID19 Symptoms, Testing & Return to School](#) for more information regarding what to do when experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Fraser Health will no longer be able to provide exposure notifications, as they would not be accurate due to the nature of the Omicron variant.
- Health authorities will not be posting school exposures on public webpages.

Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

- Refrain from touching their eyes and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Refrain from sharing any food, drinks, unwashed utensils.
- Cough or sneeze into their elbow sleeve or a tissue. Used tissues are thrown away immediately and hands are thoroughly washed.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Cloth and disposable masks can be labeled with the students initials and should be kept in a labeled plastic or cloth bag; ideally a backup mask will also be available, although the school can provide these. Reasonable exceptions for medical conditions will be made. The school will provide disposable masks to students who forget theirs at home.
- Due to the rise in cases of COVID-19 in BC, the Provincial Health Officer has recommended that all staff, adult volunteers and visitors, and all students from

Kindergarten to Grade 12 should wear a non-medical mask or face covering (a “mask”) at all times while indoors at school, subject to the exceptions noted below.

- o The recommendations above should not apply as follows:
 - To a person who is unable to wear a mask because they do not tolerate it (for health or behavioural reasons);
 - To a person unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person;
 - If the mask is removed temporarily for the purposes of identifying the person wearing it;
 - If the mask is removed temporarily to engage in an educational activity that cannot be performed while wearing a mask (e.g. actively playing a wind instrument, high-intensity physical activity, etc.);
 - If a person is eating or drinking;
 - If a person is behind a barrier;
 - While providing a service to a person with a disability or diverse ability (including but not limited to a hearing impairment), where visual cues, facial expressions and/or lip reading/movements are important.

We support student mask use through positive and inclusive approaches, and not punitive or enforcement activities that exclude students from fully participating in school or that could result in stigma.

No student should be prevented from attending or fully participating in school if they are not wearing a mask.

- Masks are not to be worn during high-intensity sport activities (stationary or with movement, indoor or outdoors).

During high intensity physical activity, respiration rates are increased (resulting in a wet mask) and the wearer is more likely to touch their face and adjust the mask frequently. These factors lessen the protective value a mask may offer. In addition, a wet mask is more difficult to breathe through; those wearing masks during high intensity activities should change them as soon as they become wet.
- Staff are aware of the limitations in regard to respiratory droplets, and masks are expected to be worn at all times unless eating or working alone in classrooms/staffroom.
- Gloves are a personal choice. Their use would not preclude students and staff members from regular hand washing.
- Staff wear PPE when administering First Aid.
- Itinerant teachers (French, Music, PE and Learning Resource Department) may wear a protective visor during instruction to facilitate reduced congregate exposure. A mask must also be worn even if social distancing can take place.

Student Morning Drop Off

- Parents must park in the lower church parking lot across the street from the church, or in the lower lot near Tim Horton’s. The street drop off zone is open, but parents are not to exit their vehicles. All students except Kindergarten will gather in classroom lineups

on the gravel field across from the school. Students in Kindergarten will gather inside the fenced area just outside their classroom.

- Students in before school care will be escorted to the field, or to Kindergarten.
- Staff members collect students starting at 8:45.
- In the event of the field being unusable due to severe rain, students will be admitted at 8:30 through **the usual entry doors** to the school, whereupon they must sanitize their hands and head straight to their classroom. Masks must be worn.
- Students may not be dropped off in the alley.
- As most of the children in our school are not vaccinated, mask wearing or keeping the 2 m distance is recommended for parents/grandparents/older siblings when dropping off/picking up students from school.

Entering the Building

- All staff enter the building through the back doors of the school.
- All students are guided to specific entry doors by a staff member after being collected.
- Students in K enter from their own doors.
- Students in Grades 1, 3 and 4 enter through the front doors; students in Grade 6 follow them.
- Students in Grade 2, Grade 5 and 7 enter through the east door by the Grade 2 classroom before going upstairs.

Exiting the Building

- Students exit from the same doors that they entered through, starting at **3:00**.
- All students are guided outside by a staff member.

After School Pick Up

- Parents are to arrive punctually to pick up their children after school.
- Teachers/EAs escort the children to the field.
- **Parents are to remain distanced from students as they gather in lineups on the field. Cones will help ensure boundaries are understood.**
- **Students are to go straight home after school.**
- On exceptionally rainy/snowy days, children whose last names start with letters A-M will be dismissed first from the paved area directly outside the front doors of the school . This will be announced on the school website by 2:30 on the days when the decision must be made (typically because the gravel field is under water). This is to ensure easier visibility, better spacing, and efficiency in collecting children quickly and heading home.
- Students in after school care are escorted back into the building for their afternoon snack.

Recess & Lunch

- Students are restricted to certain zones to take physical distancing into account.
- Each zone has a staff supervisor to ensure students are safe in their play. An additional supervisor will circulate in case a child needs to enter the school. The school principal and vice principal are also in circulation.

Student Supplies

Students coming to school are to:

- Wear their school uniform. Summer uniforms will again be acceptable in the spring; parents will be notified of the exact date. **Students are no longer required to change into black dress shoes. Students do not need to change into their gym strip at this time.**
- Bring appropriate outerwear for the weather.
- Personal, labeled hand sanitizer is optional; (odour free please).

Before/After School Care

- Students who register for this program may arrive at 7:00. Masks must be worn.
- Students are escorted to the field at 8:30 to meet their classmates.
- After school care is provided until 6:00.
- Students are escorted to the classroom from the field.
- Kindergarten students are escorted to/from the classroom by a staff member.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES AND TRAINING

- Everyone in the school community (staff, students and parents) knows the policies around staying home when they are sick. This information is communicated in writing and reviewed regularly.
- All staff are trained and informed as to how to keep themselves safe while at school.
- Staff will be informed of changes made to work policies, practices, and procedures due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the daily check-in after morning prayer, updates will be provided when available.
- The health and safety measures in place prior to the pandemic are still in place.
- The administration will keep records of training meetings. COVID-19 related meetings are documented and minutes are available in Google doc form on our shared drive.

MONITOR THE WORKPLACE AND UPDATE PLANS

- As new information is provided, some of these protocols and guidelines may change.
- Steps will be taken to update policies and procedures and involve the staff in this process.
- All staff are asked to raise any safety concerns with the Principal or Vice Principal.

ASSESS AND ADDRESS RISKS FROM RESUMING OPERATIONS

- New employees will be trained.
- Parent volunteers will be trained.

Additional Information:

Changes to contact tracing for COVID-19 in K-12 settings:

The Omicron variant spreads rapidly and, as such, contact tracing is a less effective measure in the timely management of COVID-19. What this means is that Public Health is no longer able to contact everyone who tests positive. Individuals who test positive for COVID-19 should follow advice from the BC Centre for Disease Control, found here:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/if-you-have-covid-19>, which includes:

- How long to self-isolate depending on vaccination status
- How to report a positive test result
- How to notify close contacts

As Public Health is not contacting every person who tests positive, school exposures will not be issued by Public Health for individual cases. In the event of a declared outbreak, Public Health will issue a public notification.

Public Health will continue to work with schools if, for example, there is a significant increase in absenteeism that is atypical for the time of year, and actions are to be taken, such as notification to the parents and guardians of the affected grade or school community.

Recordkeeping

Classroom Teachers

- Prepare a classroom seating chart, and update these as they change. This may be shared with public health if needed. Strict attendance is kept.

Office Staff

- Keep a list of the date, names and contact information for all visitors who enter the school.
- Monitor school attendance to track student and/or staff absence and compare against usual absenteeism patterns at the school.

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, independent schools have been asked to provide information that enables the Ministry to make well-informed reporting, planning and policy-related decisions regarding the delivery of educational services. The Omicron variant is presenting new challenges and the Ministry needs timely input to know the extent of potential daily workforce absences. With that in mind and until further notice, independent schools are asked to complete a web-based survey on workforce absences and functional closures by 10:00 am PT each workday.

Ventilation and Air Circulation

We ensure that the ventilation system operates properly, and have installed air purifiers in all classrooms, the Learning Commons, the activity room and the staffroom.

- Should the ventilation be temporarily compromised eg. during a power outage, all classroom windows, doors and hallway windows will be opened; classes will take place outside if the weather allows.

PREP (Parish Religious Education Program)

- Classes are currently held in our school.
- All the desks and chairs, door handles etc. will be sanitized before PREP starts by PREP volunteers. They will also sanitize the desks and chairs after PREP.