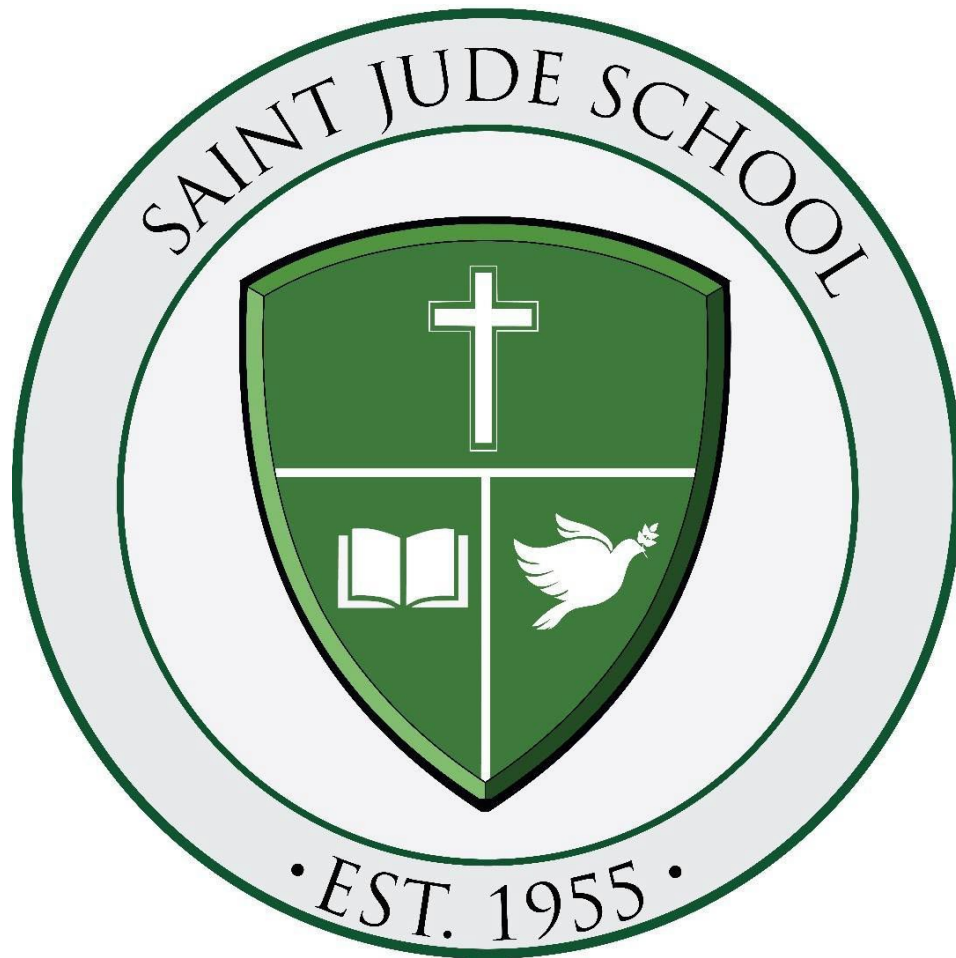


# St. Jude School

## Communicable Disease Plan



## September 2024

**For the most up-to-date information Please refer to the BCCDC, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education.**

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/safe-caringorderly/k-12-communicable-disease-guidelines.pdf>

## **Introduction**

Further to the Provincial Health Officer statement on June 17, 2021, the Provincial Health Officer stated that:

Employers are no longer required to maintain a COVID-19 Safety Plan but must instead transition to communicable disease prevention<sup>1</sup>. Communicable disease prevention focuses on reducing the risk of workplace transmission of COVID-19 and other communicable diseases, and includes both ongoing measures (e.g. hand hygiene, cleaning) and additional measures to be implemented as advised by public health.

WorkSafeBC's [Communicable disease prevention: A guide for employers](#) outlines a four-step process to reduce the risk of communicable disease transmission in the workplace. Steps include understanding the level of risk, implementing appropriate measures, communicating policies and protocols, and updating measures and safeguards as required.

School and district administrators must regularly review their communicable disease plans, and should do so with their Site Committees and Joint Health and Safety Committees and address areas where there are identified gaps in implementation.

This plan is informed by:

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-guidelines/guidelines-for-workers-compensation-act#SectionNumber:G-P2-21>

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/books-guides/communicable-disease-prevention-guide-employers?lang=en>

## **Prevention Management**

The following principles are applied by the school to communicable disease prevention and management in schools:

- Aligning communicable disease prevention measures with public health guidance to support student and staff wellness.
- Using an inclusive and trauma-informed lens, with a focus on mental health and wellness.
- Focusing supports to address unique student and staff needs, recognizing the different impacts that communicable diseases may have on individuals and communities.
- Consulting and working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to address the unique educational and learning needs of their communities when we have First Nations, Métis and/or Inuit students attending our school.
- Engaging and collaborating with parents/caregivers, staff, and community partners to develop local solutions when needed.
- As required by WorkSafeBC, the PEC, CISVA and St. Matthew's School will ensure the health of their workers by ensuring steps are taken to reduce the risk to workers from communicable diseases.
- The Provincial Health Officer or local Medical Health Officers may issue temporary provincial, regional or local recommendations or orders of additional prevention measures during times of increased communicable disease risk.

## **Communicable Diseases Prevention Guidance**

As part of the infection prevention and exposure control measures to create a safe environment for staff and students, the following measures are in place to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases.

“School administrators should ensure that staff, other adults entering the school, parents, caregivers, and students are aware that they should not come to school if they are sick and unable to participate fully in routine activities. School administrators can support this practice by communicating the importance of everyone doing a health check. A health check means a person regularly checking to ensure they (or their child) are not experiencing symptoms of illness that would limit their ability to participate fully in regular activities before coming to school to prevent spread of communicable diseases within school settings. Schools do not need to monitor students or staff for symptoms of illness” – BCCDC

# Environmental Measures

## Cleaning Regimens

- The following recommendations (in black font) have been made by PHO and WorkSafe BC with respect to K to 12 education. St. Jude School has contracted Educlean to clean our school daily.
- General cleaning and disinfecting of the premises will occur at least once a day.
- Frequently touched shared surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least once a day. (e.g. door knobs, light switches, toilet handles, tables, desks, chairs, electronic devices, keyboards and toys).
- St. Jude School will provide each classroom with a disinfectant kit so that teachers can frequently clean the high touch areas. **Oxy Q Virus Disinfectant Spray** Bottles are in each classroom.
- We will be reducing the number of shared items in the school. If an item such as an iPad is to be shared, it will be disinfected before and after use.
- Clean and disinfect any surface that is visibly dirty.
- Educlean is our contracted cleaner and they will ensure that proper cleaning precautions are in effect. Oxy-Q Virus Disinfectant is used on surfaces and floors throughout the school.
- Empty garbage containers daily.
- Washrooms will be cleaned daily keeping in line with the high touch surface area protocols.
- Water fountains. Our upstairs water fountain is touchless for water bottle refills and is operational. The mouthpiece water fountain has been disabled.

## CLEANING AND DISINFECTING BODILY FLUIDS

The school will follow these procedures, in conjunction with school policies, when cleaning and disinfecting bodily fluids (e.g. runny nose, vomit, blood, stool, urine)

- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning blood or body fluids.
- Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.
- Follow regular health and safety procedure and regularly used PPE for blood and bodily fluids.
- Ensure that the medical room has appropriate ventilation

## Ventilation and Air Exchange

- Each classroom has an air conditioning unit that pumps fresh air in and an air exhaust fan that draw air out
- The air exchange is designed so that air flows in one direction and fresh air circulates through the classroom
- Each classroom is also outfitted with a HEPA Filter unit for clean air exchanges

## **Administrative Measures**

### WHAT TO DO WHEN SICK

- For the safety of all, when a person is symptomatic of a communicable disease, such as a cold and/or flu virus, the individual must not enter the school. They must stay home and follow the directions of the BCCDC and the Ministry of Health.
- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or other communicable diseases before sending them to school.
- Parents and caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is not feeling well and/or symptomatic. Staff must leave the school as soon as possible if they are not feeling well and/or symptomatic.
  - o Some students/staff may not be able to be picked up immediately. Students or staff can wait comfortably in the sick room until they can be picked up.
  - o The supervising staff will avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible, practice diligent hand hygiene and socially distance themselves when possible. Ventilation will be increased in the medical room via windows and fans.
- Staff, children, or other persons can attend school if their symptoms are consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition (e.g., seasonal allergies) or symptoms have improved enough to where they feel well enough to return to regular activities and their fever has resolved without the use of fever-reducing medication (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen).

The Principal must:

- Clearly communicate the responsibility of the staff, parents and caregivers to assess themselves and/or their children daily before entering the school.
- Established procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school. This entails staff and students being sent home as soon as possible.
- Ensure staff/students or other adults who are sick/unwell will not be permitted to enter the school
- The school will track illnesses and will contact VCH in the event that our illness numbers are tracking above average

## **Personal Preventative Measures**

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Both students and staff can pick up and spread germs easily, from objects, surfaces, food and people. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene. Parents, caregivers and staff can teach and reinforce these practices amongst students.

Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve, or a tissue. Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene. Students will need to have their own personal supply of tissues with them – we will not supply tissues to students as we want to avoid communal sharing of tissues.

Wearing a mask is a personal choice unless stated otherwise by either a Provincial or Federal Authority and that choice is to be respected by all

Outdoor Education will follow the guidelines established by BCCDC for camps and will work with Camp Elphinstone, the bus company, and BC Ferries, to ensure a safe trip is had

Administration will consult WorkSafe BC and Provincial Health Officer Orders if further restrictions are needed

## **Health & Functional Closures**

Medical Health Officers play the lead role in determining if, when and how to communicate information regarding increased communicable disease activity within a school. St. Jude School will routinely communicate to our community the need to practice health awareness and to stay home when sick. We will only communicate communicable disease notifications as directed by public health and/or the CISVA superintendent's office.

### **SCHOOL CLOSURES**

There are two types of school closures that apply to St. Matthew's School: public health closure and functional closure.

- A public health closure of a school is ordered by a Medical Health Officer when they determine it is necessary to prevent the excessive transmission of a communicable disease.
- A Functional Closure of a school is determined by the CISVA Superintendent's office. A functional closure is due to a lack of staff to provide the required level of teaching, supervision, support, and/or custodial to ensure the health and safety of students. This would likely be due to a high absenteeism of all staff or certain employees required for a school to function and the inability to replace those absences.

### **OTHER CLOSURES**

Closures due to snow, extreme heat, power outages, extreme weather or other events are outside of these types of closures and are separate from these health and safety plans. For more information on these types of closures, please refer to the parent handbook.

## **Supportive School Environments**

St. Jude School provides supportive environments for communicable disease prevention by:

- Having staff model personal practices (e.g., hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette), and assist younger students as needed.
- Sharing reliable information, including from the BC Centre for Disease Control, Office of the Provincial Health Officer, and local health authorities to parents, families and caregivers.
- Promoting personal practices in the school (e.g., posters).
- Ensuring individual choices for personal practices (e.g., choosing to wear a mask or face covering) are supported and treated with respect, recognizing varying personal comfort levels.

## **Vaccines**

Vaccines are important tools to protect against serious outcomes of many communicable diseases. Students and staff are encouraged to ensure they are up to date on all recommended vaccines for communicable diseases.

<https://immunizebc.ca/children/vaccines/vaccines-by-age>

St. Jude School will share evidence-based information and promote opportunities to be vaccinated in partnership with public health and the local medical health officer.

The Support Services for Schools Order and the Inter-Ministerial Protocols for the Provision of Support Services to Schools require boards of education and participating independent school authorities to provide a designated space in each school for public health nurses or other qualified health personnel to carry out their duties (including immunizations). St. Jude School complies with this order and ensures that health personnel feel welcomed and supported when they are in our school.

## **Supporting Students with Disabilities/Diverse Abilities and/or Receiving Health Services**

“Staff and those providing services to students with medical complexity, immune suppression, receiving direct or delegated care, 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. “ – BCCDC

St. Jude School has a communicable disease prevention measure that promote inclusion of students with disabilities/diverse abilities.

In-class instruction may not be suitable for some children (or families) with a severe immune compromise or medical complexity, which should be determined on a case-by-case basis with a medical care provider. St. Matthew's follows regular practices for those needing alternative learning arrangements due to immune compromise or medical complexity to ensure access to learning and supports.

Those providing health services that require being near to a student should follow the student's individual care plan (if one is in place) and their standard risk assessment methods to determine what PPE is needed for communicable disease prevention (e.g., gloves for toileting).

St. Jude School will continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one.