



Communicable Disease Prevention Plan



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Introduction

This revised plan ([updated September 30th, 2023](#)) has been developed in alignment with the [Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K – 12 Setting](#) ([Updated September 2023](#)) in British Columbia.

BCMA Schools (Surrey Muslim School and BC Muslim School) are committed to providing safe, caring, and healthy learning environments for all students, staff parents/guardians ("parents"), volunteers, and visitors. Communicable disease control is an essential part of maintaining uninterrupted learning and reducing health risks in BCMA schools settings.

This plan outlines ongoing prevention measures, roles, responsibilities, and procedures to reduce the risk of transmission of communicable diseases such as measles, colds, influenza, COVID-19, norovirus, and other illnesses.

BCMS/SMS will also follow any temporary public health measures issued by a local Medical Health Officer during periods of elevated risk.

KEY PRINCIPLES

Our BCMA schools follow the Ministry of Education's key principles for communicable disease prevention to guide the K-12 sector:

- 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.
- Engaging and collaborating with parents/caregivers, staff, and community partners to develop local solutions when needed.
- As required by [WorkSafeBC](#), all boards of education, independent school authorities and schools must 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.



TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICE

Trauma-informed practice is a compassionate lens of understanding what 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 needs of students and staff.

Educators and support staff should be aware of changes in student behaviour, including trauma-related behaviours which may include fear, hyperactivity, aggression, body aches and pain, depression, self-harming behaviours, excessive shyness, or withdrawal. To support educators and staff in identifying and responding to the needs of students who have experienced trauma, the Ministry has created [trauma-informed practice resources](#) that are available on the [erase \(Expect Respect and a Safe Education\) website](#).

Communicable Disease Prevention Guidance

SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS

BCMA Schools promote respectful and 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.
- Promoting mental health and wellbeing with compassion.

BCMA Schools administrators are encouraged to regularly issue reminders on health and safety prevention topics as well as on topics that support mental health and wellbeing of both students and staff.



Communicable Disease Prevention Plans

Communicable diseases included in the scope of this Plan are those commonly found in school environments and typically caused by respiratory or gastrointestinal viruses. These illnesses are generally spread through direct or indirect human contact, shared surfaces, or close interactions within classrooms, hallways, prayer spaces, and other school settings.

This Plan applies to all staff and students at BCMA Schools, as well as parents, guardians, volunteers, visitors, and contractors who enter either campus.

All employees are required to review, understand, and consistently follow the communicable disease prevention measures and procedures outlined in this Plan as part of their responsibility to maintain a safe and healthy Islamic learning environment.

What is a Communicable Disease?

WorkSafeBC advises that communicable disease is an illness caused by an infectious agent that can be transmitted by contact with infected individuals or their bodily discharges or fluids or by contact with contaminated surfaces or objects. Examples of communicable diseases that may circulate in a workplace or school include the common cold and seasonal influenza as well as norovirus-like illnesses, chickenpox, and COVID- 19.

Communicable diseases are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

- Respiratory droplets/particles/aerosols when a person coughs or sneezes.
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
- Touching something contaminated with virus and then touching your eyes, nose or mouth before washing your hands.

Refer to the Vancouver Coastal Health [“Sneezes and Diseases: A Resource Book for Caregivers & Parents”](#) or to the Fraser Health [Illness in the classroom - Fraser Health](#) to review fact sheets for individual illnesses and diseases which may impact students.



EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION DRILLS

Emergency and evacuation planning, and drills should consider communicable disease prevention plans. In the event of an actual emergency, communicable disease prevention measures can be suspended to ensure for a timely, efficient, and safe response.

Environmental Practices

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

BCCDC Guidance

Regular cleaning and disinfection can help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Cleaning of frequently touched surfaces should occur in line with regular practices and when visibly dirty.

As part of maintaining a sustainable and effective communicable disease management system, **Surrey Muslim School (SMS)** and **BC Muslim School (BCMS)** continue to implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices across both campuses whenever feasible. These practices help ensure a safe, clean, and healthy learning environment for students and staff.

- **General Cleaning**
 - Custodial staff at both SMS and BCMS perform daily general cleaning of all classrooms, hallways, offices, prayer areas, and shared learning spaces.
 - Routine cleaning includes floors, desks, washrooms, multipurpose rooms, gym spaces, and all high-traffic areas
- **Products and Procedures**

To support effective cleaning and sanitization:

- **Cleaning**
 - Use water and detergent (e.g., liquid dish soap) or other commonly used, school-approved cleaning solutions.
 - For detailed cleaning or hard-to-reach surfaces, use a scrub brush; rinse thoroughly before application of disinfectant.
- **Disinfecting**
 - Use commercially available disinfectants approved for use in schools.
 - Where applicable, follow Health Canada guidance regarding disinfectants proven effective against specific communicable diseases.
- **General Procedures for Cleaning & Disinfecting**



- Wash hands before and after handling shared objects or cleaning supplies.
- Any items or surfaces contaminated with saliva, mucus, vomit, urine, stool, or other bodily fluids must be cleaned **immediately** and again between uses by different individuals.
- Dishwasher-safe items may be sanitized using a dishwasher on the **sanitize cycle** with the appropriate heat setting.
- General cleaning of school premises occurs every day, with additional disinfection applied when necessary.

- **Frequently Touched Surfaces and Shared Use Items**

Frequently touched surfaces across both campuses must be cleaned and disinfected **at least once every 24 hours**, and more often if visibly soiled. These include:

- Doorknobs, door handles, and push plates
- Light switches
- Railings and hallway touch points
- Water fountain buttons
- Classroom and office equipment (desks, chairs, tables)
- Shared technology (keyboards, mice, tablets)
- PE equipment, sports gear, and shared learning tools
- Computer Lab equipment
- Common-use appliances (microwaves, fridges, kettles)
- Service counters and library

Shared Items

- Learning resources such as toys, manipulatives, blocks, puzzles, or fabric-based items **may continue to be used**, even if not easily cleaned, provided hand hygiene practices are followed.
- Carpets, area rugs, and soft seating (especially in Kindergarten classrooms) are permitted.
- Any equipment that comes into **direct contact with the mouth** (e.g., musical instrument mouthpieces, water bottles, utensils) **cannot be shared** unless appropriately cleaned and disinfected between users.

Hand Hygiene Before and After Shared Equipment Use

- Students must wash or sanitize hands before and after using any shared equipment or manipulatives.
- Teachers will supervise and guide younger students as needed.

Focus of Cleaning Activities

Cleaning priorities emphasize:

- Areas used by students and staff during the school day
- High-traffic and high-touch zones
- Spaces used for learning support or prayer



Cleaning and Disinfecting Bodily Fluids

When handling bodily fluids (e.g., runny nose, vomit, stool, urine), the following procedures must be followed:

- Wear **disposable gloves** when cleaning any bodily fluids.
- Practice strict hand hygiene **before putting on** and **after removing** gloves.
- Staff must follow established school health and safety procedures, including the use of required PPE (e.g., gloves, arm sleeves, disposable gowns if necessary).
- All contaminated surfaces should be cleaned first, and then disinfected using approved products.
- Any reusable materials must be properly cleaned and disinfected before reuse or discarded if appropriate.

VENTILATION AND AIR EXCHANGE

BCCDC Guidance

BCMA Schools are committed to maintaining healthy indoor air quality across both campuses as part of our communicable disease prevention strategy. In alignment with BCCDC and WorkSafeBC guidance, BCMA Schools ensure that all mechanical heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are operated, inspected, and maintained to support safe learning environments for students and staff.

HAND HYGIENE

- BCMA Schools provide regular opportunities for students and staff to wash or sanitize their hands (arrival, before/after eating, after washroom use, after recess, and after coughing or sneezing).
- Handwashing stations and alcohol-based sanitizers (minimum 60% alcohol, Health Canada approved) are available throughout both campuses.
- Soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer supplies are kept fully stocked in all classrooms and common areas.
- When hands are visibly dirty, **soap and water** must be used. If unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand wipe followed by hand sanitizer.



RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

Parents and staff can teach and reinforce good respiratory etiquette practices among students, including:

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

Administrative Practices

HEALTH AWARENESS AND WHAT TO DO WHEN SICK

School administrators at Surrey Muslim School (SMS) and BC Muslim School (BCMS) ensure that all staff, students, parents, caregivers, visitors, and volunteers understand that **no one should attend school while sick or unable to participate fully in regular activities**. This is an important step in preventing the spread of communicable diseases within our school community.

Administrators support this practice by regularly communicating reminders through email, newsletters, staff meetings, and the school app, emphasizing the importance of staying home when unwell.

Daily Health Awareness (Home Health Check)

Families and staff are expected to perform a simple **health awareness check at home each morning**. This means ensuring:

- The student or staff member is **not experiencing symptoms of illness** that would prevent them from taking part in normal school activities.
- Symptoms are not new or unexplained.

Schools **do not need to screen or monitor students or staff** for symptoms during the day.

When to Stay Home

Anyone experiencing symptoms of illness—especially respiratory symptoms—should **stay home until they feel well enough to participate** in everyday school activities or unless otherwise directed by a healthcare provider.

- Some illnesses (e.g., gastrointestinal infections such as norovirus) may require a **longer stay-at-home period**, based on public health advice.
- Individuals with **known medical conditions** that may cause recurring symptoms (e.g., seasonal allergies, asthma) may attend school if:
 - Symptoms are consistent with their usual condition, **and**
 - They feel well enough to participate fully.

If unsure about symptoms or appropriate next steps, families and staff are encouraged to contact their healthcare provider or call **8-1-1** for medical advice.



WHAT TO DO WHEN SICK AT BCMA SCHOOLS

BCMA School administrators should also establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school.

- Continue to have non-medical masks on hand for those who have forgotten theirs but would like to wear one (for both the person who is sick and for those who may be assisting them).
- Make arrangements for the student/staff to go home as soon as possible (e.g., contact student's parent/caregiver for pick-up).
- BCMA Schools should have a space available where the student or staff can wait comfortably for pick-up and are separated from others.
 - Younger children must be supervised when separated. Supervising staff can wear a mask, should avoid touching bodily fluids as much as possible and practice diligent hand hygiene.
- Staff responsible for facility cleaning should clean and disinfect the surfaces/equipment which the person's bodily fluids may have been in contact with while they were ill (e.g., their desk in a classroom, the bathroom stall they used, etc.) prior to the surfaces/equipment being used by others. Cleaning/disinfecting the entire room the person was in (a "terminal" clean) is not required in these circumstances.
- Request that the individual stay home until symptoms have improved and they feel well enough to participate in all BCMA schools-related activities.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/DIVERSE ABILITIES AND/OR RECEIVING HEALTH SERVICES

Staff who support students with medical complexities, immune suppression, disabilities, or who require direct or delegated care must follow **routine infection-control practices** and the student's individual care plan. This ensures safe and appropriate support for both the students and staff.

SPACE ARRANGEMENT

At BCMA Schools, classrooms and learning spaces are arranged to support student learning needs and the instructional approaches used by our teachers. We design learning environments that promote engagement, collaboration, safety, and effective teaching while maintaining comfort and flexibility for all students.

TRANSPORTATION

School buses serving BCMS Schools follow the same communicable disease prevention measures used within our school buildings. This includes maintaining clean and well-ventilated buses, supporting hand hygiene practices, and ensuring that students follow safe and respectful routines while riding the bus.



VISITORS AND COMMUNITY USE OF BCMA SCHOOLS

All visitors, including parents, volunteers, service providers, and community groups using Surrey Muslim School (SMS) or BC Muslim School (BCMS) facilities, are expected to follow the communicable disease prevention measures outlined in this plan.

To maintain a safe and orderly environment:

- **Only visitors on school-related or BCMA business** are permitted inside the school building.
- **All visitors must sign in at the School Office** upon arrival.
- While **drop-in visitors are welcome**, booking an appointment in advance is encouraged and greatly appreciated.
- Schools are **not required to collect visitors' contact information** (e.g., phone numbers) for communicable disease prevention purposes.

These practices ensure the safety, security, and wellbeing of our students, staff, and the wider school community.

GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

School gatherings and events at BCMA Schools follow the same communicable disease prevention measures that are in place during the regular school day. Whether the event is held in classrooms, the gym, or outdoors, safety practices such as proper hygiene, respectful spacing, and cleaning routines are maintained to support a healthy environment for all participants.

CURRICULUM, PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

At BCMA Schools, communicable disease prevention practices, such as proper hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette, and appropriate cleaning are followed during all curriculum-based activities, school programs, and classroom learning experiences. Staff ensure that safety measures are applied appropriately based on the nature of the activity to maintain a healthy environment for all students.

FIELD TRIPS/TRADES IN TRAINING/WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS

Students from BCMA Schools participating in field trips must follow the communicable disease prevention requirements of the places they are visiting.

When a class or group attends an external program, the more stringent prevention measures—whether from the school or the destination—will be followed to ensure the highest level of safety for all participants.

To support student and staff wellbeing during off-site activities, BCMA office staff ensure the following:

- Hand sanitizer is provided and available for all students and staff throughout the field trip.
- A fully stocked First Aid Kit is taken on every field trip as part of standard safety procedures.



- Non-medical masks are available for any student or staff member who chooses to wear one or requires one during the trip.
- Teachers and supervisors reinforce proper hand hygiene and general safety practices based on the activity and the environment.

These measures help maintain a safe and healthy experience for students during learning activities that occur outside the school environment.

Personal Practices

HEALTH AWARENESS, HAND HYGIENE AND RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE

At BCMA Schools, all students, staff, parents and visitors are expected to practice [health awareness](#) (including staying home when sick), and to follow [hand hygiene](#) and [respiratory etiquette](#).

MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

Masks are one layer of protection against communicable diseases. They are most effective when worn properly and combined with other measures such as good hand hygiene and staying home when unwell.

SMS and BCMS support all individuals who choose to wear a mask by:

- Promoting a supportive school environment for mask wearing through mask-specific messaging, including at assemblies, in announcements, signs, and written communications. Include that some people wear masks to reduce risk of communicable disease and it is important to be respectful of other's choices. Include evidence-based, trusted information on masks from [BCCDC](#).
- Creating safe and inclusive learning environments free from discrimination, bullying and harassment. Set, communicate and consistently reinforce clear expectations that bullying and disrespectful behaviour and conduct related to personal mask use is unacceptable.
- Addressing any disrespect or bullying related to mask use in accordance with the School Code of Conduct.

PERSONAL SPACE

BCMA Students and staff are encouraged to respect one another's **personal space** and be mindful of comfort levels during interactions.

FOOD SAFETY

BCMA Staff, students, and other persons in the school setting should follow routine food safety practices, including diligent hand hygiene. More information may be found on the [BCCDC Food Safety webpage](#).

Staff and students at BCMA Schools should not share items that come in contact with the mouth (e.g., food, drinks, unwashed utensils, cigarettes, vaping devices). Shared-use items that touch the mouth should be cleaned and disinfected between uses by different individuals (e.g., water bottles, instrument mouth pieces).



Section 3: Administrator Protocols for Managing Communicable Disease Activity at School

BCCDC Guidance

Most communicable diseases experienced by students and staff within school settings can be managed by the individual/family and through routine preventative measures, such as staying home from school until well enough to participate in regular activities. Information resources are available to support management of routine communicable diseases, including [HealthLink BC](#), the [BCCDC Guide to Common Childhood Diseases](#), and other school health resources hosted on health authority webpages ([Vancouver Coastal Health](#); [Fraser Health](#); [Interior Health](#); [Island Health](#); [Northern Health](#)).

Public health works closely with education partners to support the health and wellbeing of students and staff in school settings. Public health may become directly involved if certain reportable diseases, such as measles, are identified where there are effective interventions available to prevent further spread and protect against severe disease. Additional time-limited public health measures may also be implemented at the discretion of the Medical Health Officer or the Provincial Health Officer in response to broader risk of communicable disease transmission in the community.

School or district administrators can contact public health if they have concerns about communicable disease transmission within the school setting and require additional support.

Communications and Protecting Personal Privacy

Medical Health Officers play the lead role in determining, if, when, and how to communicate information regarding increased communicable disease activity within a school.

Public Health has encouraged schools to routinely communicate to their school community the need to follow any recommended public health measures, practice health awareness, and to stay home when sick.

To protect personal privacy and to support accuracy, school should exercise caution in providing communicable disease notifications beyond when they are recommended by public health.

Functional Closures

A functional closure of a school is the temporary closure of a school determined by a school district or independent school authority 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 number of staff or certain employees away who are required for a school to function, and the inability to temporarily replace them. School districts (or independent schools) should notify their Medical Health Officer and the Ministry of Education and Child Care (erase@gov.bc.ca) when they are considering or implementing a functional closure.



Public Health Closure

A public health closure is the temporary closing of a school ordered by a Medical Health Officer when they determine it is necessary to prevent the excessive transmission of a communicable disease.

Section 4: References

- [*BCCDC Public Health Guidance for K-12 Schools \(PDF\) – BC Centre for Disease Control, BC Ministry of health, Updated September 13, 2023*](#)
- [*Provincial Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings, BC Government \(September 2023\)*](#)
- [*BC Provincial Health Officer, Public Health Orders, Ongoing*](#)

APPENDIX A: Hand Hygiene

HOW TO CLEAN YOUR HANDS

Help us prevent the spread of infections



Use hand sanitizer

- Remove jewelry
- Apply enough product to keep hands moist for 15 seconds
- Cover all surfaces of the hands, fingers and thumbs
- Rub all surfaces of hands and wrists until completely dry
- Do not use paper towels to dry hands



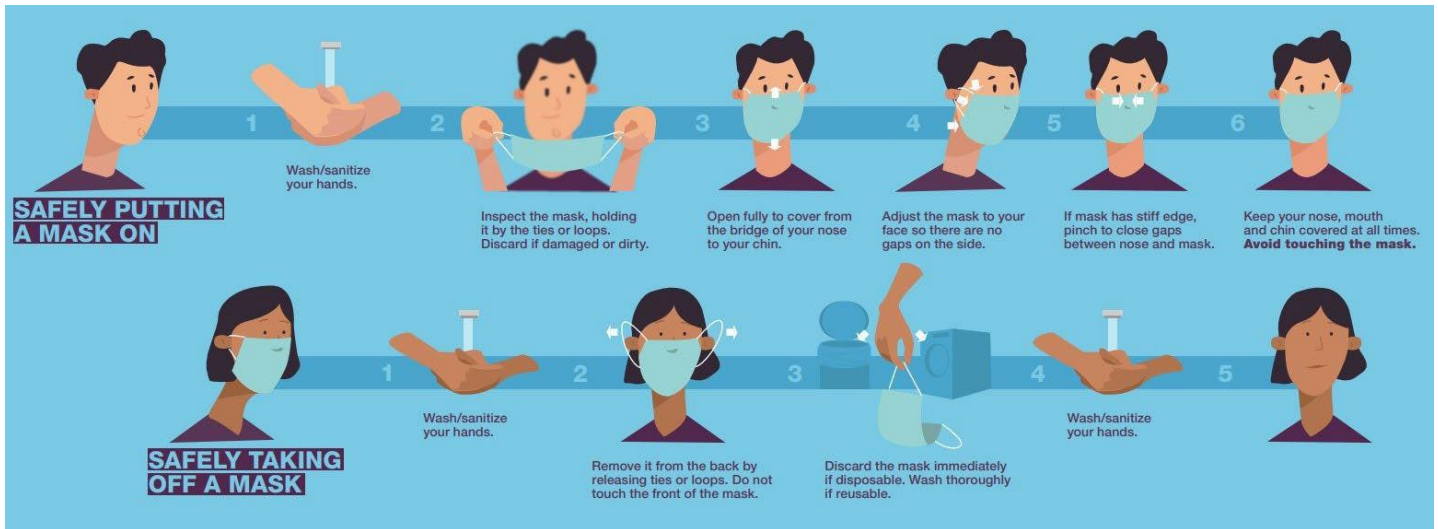
Wash hands with soap and water

- Remove jewelry
- Wet hands with water
- Add soap to palms and rub hands together
- Create lather, covering all surfaces
- Rinse hands well under water
- Dry with a single use towel
- Use towel to turn off the tap

Use soap and water if hands are visibly soiled

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APPENDIX B: How to Wear a Face Mask



Additional Protocols for Safely Wearing and Caring for a Face Mask

DO:

- Wear a 3 layered mask.
- Focus on a good fit.
- Make sure your nose and mouth are fully covered, it fits securely, and there are no gaps on the sides
- Make sure your mask isn't damaged, and it's clean and dry before wearing
- Replace your mask whenever it becomes damp or dirty
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer before and after touching the mask
- Use the ear loops or ties to put on and remove your mask
- Store your mask in a clean paper bag when it is not in use
- Wash your mask with hot soapy water and let it dry completely before using it again

DON'T:

- Wear masks that are damaged, dirty, or moist
- Touch the mask while wearing it
- Wear a loose mask or adjust it to leak/vent air
- Hang the mask from your neck or ears
- Remove the mask to talk to someone face to face
- Share your mask with anyone
- Store your mask where it may easily become soiled (e.g., unprotected in a purse, pocket, backpack, etc.)

APPENDIX C: Donning and Doffing of Gloves Procedure

