



**Central Okanagan  
Public Schools**

Together We Learn

## **Central Okanagan Public Schools**

**Pandemic**

**Response Plan**

**and**

**Novel Coronavirus  
(COVID -19)**

**Exposure Control  
Plan**

**As of March 18, 2020**

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## **Introduction**

This plan is fluid and serves as a guideline for conditions that are changing rapidly. In all matters related to the pandemic, the District will follow the directions of the Provincial and National Health Officers and the Ministry of Education. Updates can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>

and

<https://www.interiorhealth.ca/AboutUs/Leadership/MHO/Pages/MHOUpdates.aspx>

A pandemic is an outbreak occurring over a large geographical area, often worldwide, affecting a large proportion of the population with elevated mortality rates.

A pandemic may occur when novel virus is introduced or a virus radically changes and can easily infect humans, and against which people have little or no immunity. Three pandemics have occurred in the last century, the Spanish flu (1918), the Asian flu (1957) and the Hong Kong flu (1968).

An epidemic, on the other hand, is a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has determined that the COVID-19 virus is a pandemic. based on the WHO's definition.

The scope of this Pandemic Response Plan is to minimize exposure of all staff and students at Central Okanagan Public Schools to COVID-19 and provide as up to date as possible information concerning COVID-19. To achieve this, Central Okanagan Public Schools will take guidance from agencies such as the Interior Health Authority, BC Center for Disease Control, the Ministry of Education, Public Health Agency of Canada and WorkSafe BC.

The public health officials in BC will determine the need to close schools, based on the effectiveness of community-wide closures or province-wide closures in controlling the transmission and impact of COVID-19.

Contingency planning is essential for an effective response. This plan outlines the steps Central Okanagan Public Schools will take to ensure coordinated pandemic measures and continuity of work.

## **Plan Overview**

### **Organization and Structure of the Plan**

The main body of this plan is in three sections, which outline the key roles and responsibilities of Central Okanagan Public Schools in each of the three pandemic phases.

1. ***Pre-pandemic/Epidemic Period:*** This is the critical stage for plan preparedness and planning efforts need to focus on education, business continuity, and infection control.
2. ***Pandemic/Epidemic Period:*** The Provincial Health Officer (PHO) will declare when it is time to activate Plans for the pandemic/epidemic phase. Plans will adapt to reflect circumstances and situations as they arise. During this phase, the key goals will be to:
  - Minimize rates and spread of infection, and illness
  - Minimize educational and business disruptions
3. ***Post-pandemic/Epidemic Period:*** The post-pandemic/epidemic period begins when the Provincial Health Officer declares that the pandemic/epidemic is over. The primary focus of work at this time is to restore normal services, de-activate pandemic/epidemic response activities, review their impact, and use the lessons learned to guide future planning activities.

### **Risk Identification**

Two primary routes of transmission are anticipated for COVID-19, both of which need to be controlled. These include contact and droplet transmission.

#### ***Contact Transmission***

Direct contact involves skin-to-skin contact. Indirect contact involves a worker touching a contaminated intermediate object such as a table, doorknob, telephone, or computer keyboard, and then touching the eyes, nose, or mouth.

#### ***Droplet Transmission***

Droplets may be generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets travel a short distance through the air and can be deposited on surfaces or directly in the eyes, nose, or mouth. Health experts recommend keeping two meters (6 feet) between people wherever possible to mitigate this risk.

#### ***Airborne Transmission***

Currently, health experts believe that COVID-19 is not transmitted through airborne transmission.

## Signs and Symptoms

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death for confirmed COVID-19 cases. The following symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure\***.

- Fever
- Cough
- Sneezing
- Sore throat
- Shortness of breath

\*This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

**If individuals show any of the above symptoms they should not go to work or school.** If individuals begin to experience symptoms while attending a school, it is recommended that schools promptly separate the student or staff with symptoms in an area separate from others, with adequate ventilation until they can go home. People showing symptoms should follow the advice of health authorities.

Symptoms	Coronavirus	Cold	Flu
Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Common
Cough	Common	Common	Common
Sneezing	—	Common	Sometimes
Fever	Common	—	Common
Body aches	Sometimes	Mild	Common
Tiredness	Sometimes	Mild	Common
Headache	—	—	Common
Runny/stuffy nose	—	Common	Sometimes
Nausea	—	—	Sometimes
Shortness of breath	In severe cases	—	—

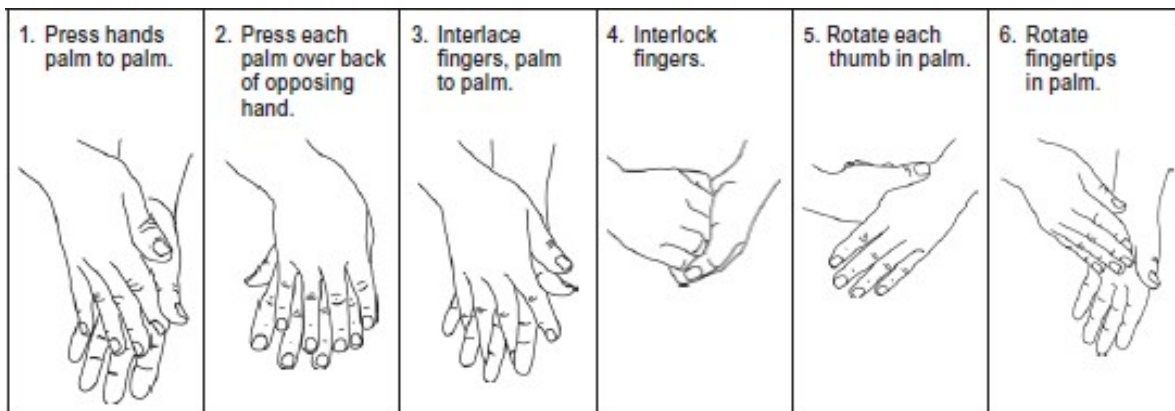
Source: World Health Organization and U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, via Cleveland Clinic

## Prevention Control

### *1. Hand Washing*

Hand washing is one of the best ways to minimize the risk of infection. Proper hand washing helps prevent the transfer of infectious material from the hands to other parts of the body, particularly the eyes, nose, and mouth or to other surfaces that are touched. Wash your hands immediately:

- Upon arrival at work or school
- After using the toilet
- Before eating, drinking, food preparation, handling contact lenses, or applying makeup
- Before leaving school



Proper hand washing includes using soap and a running water. Wash for a minimum of 20 seconds. If water is unavailable, you must use a waterless hand cleanser that has at least 60% alcohol. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on how to use the cleanser.

Health Authorities note that hand washing with plain soap and water is the preferred method of hand hygiene in schools and childcare centres as the mechanical action is effective at removing visible soil as well as microbes. In instances where hand-washing sinks are not available, supervised use of alcohol-based hand rubs may be considered. If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rubs may not be effective at eliminating the virus.

**2. Cough/Sneeze Etiquette**

Cough/sneeze etiquette includes the following components:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a sleeve or tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Use tissues to contain secretions and dispose of them promptly in a waste container.
- Offer surgical masks to people who are coughing.
- Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.
- Wash hands regularly.

**3. Proximity Recommendation**

Practice social distancing and attempt to keep a minimum two-meter (6 ft) distance between yourself and others whenever possible. Droplets may be generated when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Droplets travel a short distance through the air and can be deposited on surfaces or directly in the eyes, nose, or mouth.

It is still recommended that people sick with COVID-19 limit contact with animals until more information is known about the virus.

**4. Cleaning and Disinfecting**

Regular cleaning and disinfecting of objects and high-touch surfaces (e.g. door handles, water fountain push buttons) will help prevent the transmission of viruses. This can be done using existing school setting cleaning and disinfection protocols, if the disinfectant step is with a product active against COVID-19 (see “table” below).

**Cleaning** is the physical removal of visible soiling (e.g., dust, soil, blood, mucus). Cleaning removes, rather than kills, viruses and bacteria. It is done with water, detergents, and steady friction from cleaning cloth.

*Cleaning for COVID-19 virus is the same as for other common viruses.* In general, cleaning should be done whenever surfaces are visibly soiled.

**Disinfection** is the killing of viruses and bacteria. A disinfectant is only applied to objects, never on the human body. It is recommended that high-touch surfaces be disinfected at least twice/day. The following is a list of disinfecting agents and concentrations known to be effective against coronaviruses.

Agent and Concentration		Uses
1.	<b>Chlorine: Household bleach – sodium hypochlorite (5.25%) 1:100 (500 ppm solution) 10 ml bleach to 990 ml water</b>	Used for disinfecting general surfaces, e.g., hand railings, grab handles, door knobs, cupboard handles.
2.	<b>Chlorine: Household bleach - sodium hypochlorite (5.25%) 1:50 (1,000ppm solution) 20 ml bleach to 980 ml water</b>	Used for disinfecting surfaces contaminated with bodily fluids and waste like vomit, diarrhea, mucus, or feces (after cleaning with soap and water first). Allow surface to air dry naturally.
3.	<b>Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide 0.5%</b>	Used for disinfecting general surfaces (e.g. counters, hand rails, door knobs).
4.	<b>Quaternary Ammonium Compounds (QUATs)</b>	Used for disinfecting of general surfaces (e.g., floors, walls, furnishings).

5. ***If Individuals Show Symptoms***

**If individuals show symptoms as outlined above, they should not go to school or work.** If individuals begin to experience symptoms while attending a school, it is recommended that schools promptly separate the student or staff with symptoms in an area separate from others, with adequate ventilation until they can go home. This room should not be one that is commonly used for other purposes (ie, the lunchroom during non-meal times). It should not be a space through which others regularly pass. It is not necessary for this room to have a separate air supply (HVAC) system. Persons who are ill should be placed in well-ventilated areas and where at least two metres of distance can be maintained between the ill person and others.

A limited number of staff should be designated to care for ill persons until they can be sent home. These caregivers should not be at increased risk of viral infection complications (ie, pregnant women or persons that have a chronic illness), and they should be familiar with infection control recommendations to prevent the spread of the virus.

When possible, and if the sick person can tolerate it, he or she should wear a surgical mask when near other persons.

**Continuity Planning**

The District is planning a range of responses aligned with the possible continuum of outbreak severity. The district will be following all national or provincial requirements. Currently, gatherings of 50 or more people are



not permitted. Staff and students who have travelled abroad (including USA) are required to self-isolate for 14 days prior to returning to district facilities.

### **Health Monitoring**

There may be large numbers of students and staff absent due to illness during a pandemic or epidemic. Schools and district sites must report illness rates of 10% of the total population and include symptoms when known to their Assistant Superintendent. The Assistant Superintendent will then pass on this information to the Interior Health Authority if warranted. To minimize spread of infection, elementary classrooms in excess of 10% of absences due to similar symptoms should report the class to their Assistant Superintendent.

### **Staff Responsibility**

Staff are required to check the [COVID 19 Updates](#) located in the staff portal daily to receive updates and human resources instructions.

### **Staffing Continuity Planning**

The Human Resources Department has developed a plan to deal with staffing shortages during a pandemic. The District will continue to work closely with the Provincial Government, the Ministry of Education, British Columbia Public School Employers' Association, and to the Public Sector Employers' Council in advising staff on work and requirements that are instituted for specific groups, such as self-isolation. Employment Benefits available for members of the Central Okanagan Teachers' Association and Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 3523 continue to be outlined as per our local collective agreements.

### **Finance and Payroll Continuity Planning**

The Finance Department has developed plans to ensure continuity of the finance and payroll process. Plans are in place if payroll is required to be processed remotely.

### **Operations Continuity Planning**

The Operations Department has developed plans to ensure facility maintenance and cleaning, as well as transportation (busing) processes are addressed. Disinfection strategies of high touch points in facilities and school buses have been developed.

### **Travel Monitoring**

The Board of Education has currently cancelled all international field studies. All other field studies are subject to change or cancellation depending on developing circumstances. Staff/students travelling out of district on district sanctioned events must be tracked and reported to the organization. Field studies out of district must have established a protocol for isolating and transporting staff/students who exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 while on the field study.

### **At Risk Population**

Staff will identify at-risk students at their site. Principals should encourage the family of a medically fragile student to contact their physician and discuss plans for their student's safe engagement in the school learning community. The Principals and parents/guardians will develop a [Safety Plan](#) for the student.

### **School Closure Continuity Planning**

In the event of an extended closure of schools, Central Okanagan Public Schools has a plan, if required to provide limited education program services to all students K –12, using a variety of online technologies. The plan will be implemented in stages and will include support for classroom teachers, students and parents. A plan is in place to address graduating students, as well. Details of the education program support plan at each school will be communicated to all students and parents by the school Principal.



## Staff Roles and Responsibilities

### **Superintendent of Schools/CEO (hereinafter referred to as "Superintendent")**

1. Central Okanagan Public School District Pandemic/Epidemic Plan Team Lead
2. Activate Central Okanagan Public School District Pandemic Plan. Direct school closures as per *School Closure Guidelines* developed by the Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport, and the Office of the Provincial Health Officer.
3. Liaise with local Public Health Officials.
4. Works with the Communication Advisor to ensure effective and timely communication with parents, students and employees.
5. Continued communication with employee groups, COPAC and the community.

### **Deputy Superintendent/Assistant Superintendents/Directors**

1. Develop and maintain education plans for implementation if schools are closed and/or teaching or support staff, who are critical to program delivery, are away due to pandemic.
2. Support school principals and supervisors in the implementation of the Pandemic Plan.
3. Liaise with the District Health & Safety Manager.

### **Communications Advisor**

1. Maintain website updates and distribute electronic communication provided by the Superintendent or designate.
2. Track any Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education or Chief Medical Officer updates and communications.

### **Principals and Supervisors**

1. Educate all staff and students about proper hand-washing practices.
2. Educate all students and staff about proper sneezing/coughing etiquette.
3. Advise parents, students and staff that if they have flu like symptoms they should stay at home.
4. Send sick students and staff, who have flu-like symptoms, home. Move students, teachers, and staff to a separate room if they become sick at school, until they can be sent home. Limit the number of staff who take care of the sick person, and provide a surgical mask for the sick person to wear if they can tolerate it.
5. Discuss pandemic/epidemic planning at monthly safety committee meetings.
6. Ensure that parents/guardians have provided up-to-date contact information to the school.
7. Advise their Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and parents about Central Okanagan Public School District plans for pandemic/epidemic COVID-19, including website communications and personal preparedness.
8. Stay in regular communication with the District and local public health officials when the school absenteeism rate is significantly increased. That is when absenteeism is at or more than 10 per cent **above the normal rate of absenteeism for that time of year** and to report this to their Assistant Superintendent's Office and to the Medical Health Officer's Office.
9. Ensure that rigorous cleaning and infection control practices are happening in their school.

## **Director of Operations**

1. Continuation of core building functions.
2. Develop and execute deep cleaning protocols for schools and contact surfaces where the virus has been present.

## **Transportation Manager**

1. Create a transportation plan for students if a school is closed.
2. Ensure drivers follow procedures for transporting sick children.

## **Custodial Manager**

1. Ensure that custodial staff is trained in the safety requirements and the contact disinfection techniques for all three pandemic/epidemic phases.
2. Ensure that custodial staff has necessary personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies to prevent self-infection and cross contamination during all three phases of pandemic/epidemic planning.
3. Ensure that there is adequate supply of soap for increased hand-washing vigilance during all three pandemic/epidemic phases.
4. Continue flow of information and education to custodial staff.

## **Assistant Superintendent (in charge of technology)**

1. Ensure the continued operation of the District's electronic technology infrastructure.

## **Secretary-Treasurer/CFO**

1. Develop and implement key financial functions such as payroll.

## **Executive Director of Human Resources**

1. Assist departments with the development and implementation of cross-training strategies.
2. Develop and implement specific employee work practices for use during a pandemic/epidemic.

## **District Health & Safety Manager**

1. Continue communication with District Health & Safety Committee.
2. Provide district-wide support, advice and expertise to schools and district sites on communicable disease initiatives and events.
3. Provide Communication Advisor with information to be posted on the Central Okanagan Public Schools District website.

## **Staff**

1. Staff will need to follow communicable disease reduction strategies including:
  - checking the [COVID-19 Updates](#) daily to receive updates and human resources instructions. This is located in the portal under [All Staff](#).
  - staying home if they are not well enough to fully participate in regular school activities due to illness
  - practicing good hand hygiene by washing their hands with soap and water regularly, including coughing or sneezing into their elbow or a tissue (tissues should be disposed of in a lined wastepaper basket, and then hands should be washed).

2. In elementary schools, staff must report classroom illnesses in excess of 10% to their Principal who must report that to their Assistant Superintendent.
3. Students who are exhibiting signs or symptoms of fever, vomiting, or diarrhea should be sent by staff to the office for assessment and may be sent home.

### **Communication**

1. The Superintendent (or designate) or the Chair of the Board of Education act as the spokesperson for all *School District* related pandemic/epidemic issues.
2. The Interior Health Authority, Medical Health Officer is the spokesperson for all pandemic/epidemic health issues.
3. The Communications Advisor is responsible for updating the School District website with new information as it becomes available.
4. Staff are to access/use established communication systems across the District and at schools / worksites.

# Leadership Staff Roles and Responsibilities

## Superintendent of Schools/CEO

- Receives updates from the Ministry of Education, Provincial Medical Officer, Interior Health Authority
- Updates the Board of Education
- Gives direction to staff
- Works with Communications Advisor to ensure effective communication
- Designated media contact

## Deputy Supt/ Asst Superintendents/ Director of Instruction

- Contact person for administrators
- Monitor COVID-19 absenteeism
- Develop alternate curriculum models/contingency plans for Grade 12 exams
- Cancel all non-instructional use of TTOCs
- In the absence of the Superintendent, provide direction for educational programs

## Secretary-Treasurer

- Develops and implements key financial functions including continuity
- Receives and sends financial information
- Works with Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent and Assistant Superintendents to inform the Board
- Develops Policies/Procedures for Pandemic Plan
- In absence of Superintendent, provide direction to staff

## Executive Director of Human Resources

- Updates TTOC & casual support staff lists
- Ensures availability of replacement staff is adequate
- Communicates with unions
- Policies / Procedures for staff absences
- Policies/ Procedures for reassigning staff
- Assists departments with cross-training strategies

## Principals

- Updates Assistant Superintendents regarding absenteeism
- Updates list of students who are high risk
- Updates staff, parents, PAC, community rental groups as appropriate.
- Identify isolation room
- Directs work to minimize exposure
- Contacts parents to pick up ill students
- Discuss with staff the preparations for website learning

## Director of Operations

- Assists with school closures / openings
- Monitors HVAC systems
- Implements environmental cleaning as directed.
- Works with Managers to identify minimum custodial tasks that must occur each day.
- Works with the Transportation Manager to develop contingency plan for buses.

## District Health & Safety Manager

- Contact person for WorkSafe BC
- Contact person for staff regarding health & safety
- Report to the District Safety Advisory Committee

## **School Closure Decision-Making Process**

*(from BC Ministry of Education Pandemic Response Framework)*

The legal authority to close a school for public health reasons falls under the purview of the local Medical Health Officer and the Provincial Health Officer.

- The School Act requires health authorities to designate a school medical health officer for each school district in order to liaise between the health authority and the school district.
- The Medical Health Officer can require a Board of Education to close a school if there is a health risk to students.
- The Medical Health Officer must consult the Board of Education and the Provincial Health Officer prior to making his/her advice public.
- The Public Health Act also provides powers for the Provincial Health Officer and Medical Health Officers which may be used in the event of a serious pandemic to order closure of schools and other public places.
- A Board of Education has the authority to close a school on a required day of instruction if it believes the health or safety of students is endangered.
- A superintendent or principal may suspend an employee or student from a school for public health reasons subject to review by a school medical officer when the superintendent or principal believes the presence of the employee or student poses a danger or risk. A teacher may suspend a student for these same reasons in the same circumstances.

### **Recommendation for families and caregivers**

Prepare a contingency plan for childcare if schools close as a public health measure. Central Okanagan Public Schools will inform families/caregivers about continuity measures to continue classes, but it is a family or caregiver's responsibility to ensure adequate childcare when schools are closed. Here's a video to help children understand this health issue: <https://www.cbc.ca/kidsnews/post/watch-coronavirus-facts-versus-fiction>

### **Education and Training**

Staff will receive training in the following:

- The risk of exposure to COVID-19, and the signs and symptoms of the disease
- Safe work procedures to be followed, including hand washing and cough/sneeze etiquette
- Location of washing facilities, including dispensing stations for alcohol-based hand rubs, if available
- How to seek First Aid
- How to report an exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19

### **Record Keeping**

The District will maintain a database with information received from all District sites during a pandemic or epidemic. In addition, first aid records will be maintained.

### **Response Plan Review**

The Pandemic/Epidemic Response Plan will be reviewed and updated as required or as new information becomes available.