

## **Updated Communicable Disease Plan – January, 2022**

### **School Information**

Alert Bay Elementary School  
281 Larch Street Alert Bay BC  
250-974-5569  
Judith Lowe, Principal

### **Part 1 - Understanding the Risk:**

As per the Provincial Health Officer's order, this outlines updates to our **Communicable Disease Prevention Plan** in light of the highly transmissible Omicron variant.

- 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 regional measures to be implemented as advised by public health.
- Public health strongly encourages all eligible students and staff to be fully vaccinated (i.e., receive 2 doses + booster) against COVID-19 to protect themselves and those around them.
- Additional Regional Measures are likely to be similar to some of those in place during the 2021-22 school year and **will** include such things as:
  - Limits on gatherings and events;
  - Reconfiguring room arrangements or incorporating more activities that maximize space between people and reduce face-to-face contact;
  - Limiting visitors;
  - All staff and students in grade K – 7 will be wearing masks.

### **Part 2- Communicating**

- The Provincial COVID-19 Communicable Disease Guidelines for K-12 Settings have been developed by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the BC Centre for Disease Control, Indigenous rights holders and education partners, including district/school leaders, teachers, support staff, and parents.
- These guidelines are based on the public health guidance developed by the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Centre for Disease Control.
- Emails to families, telephone calls, PAC Facebook page, and the school website

### **Part 3- Measures, Practices and Policies to reduce the risk:**

#### **Reinforce Personal Prevention Practices**

ABES will be supporting the continued implementation of personal prevention practices through:

- Providing regular reminders to students, families, and staff about the importance of:
  - completing a daily health check,
  - staying home when sick,
  - following public health recommendations
  - Reminders from staff of how to practice personal prevention measures of mask wearing, hand hygiene, physical distancing, giving each other space, etc.

### Supportive School Environments

- Staff should utilize positive and inclusive approaches to engage students in preventive practices and should not employ measures that are punitive or stigmatizing in nature.
- Staff should also utilize a trauma-informed lens when planning school activities (e.g. gatherings and events) and interacting with other staff and students, including considerations around respecting others personal space.

### Staff/Students who become sick while at school:

#### Daily Health Check

- Before coming to work all staff members must conduct a daily health check/self-assessment and upon arrival at work must complete a [Daily Personal Health Check](#);
- Parents and Caregivers should assess their children daily for illness before sending them to school.
- The [K-12 Health Check App](#) be used for the daily assessment of symptoms.

#### Symptoms of Illness

- All staff and students who have symptoms of illness must stay home (students and staff who experience symptoms consistent with a previously diagnosed health condition, e.g. seasonal allergies, can continue to attend school when they are experiencing these symptoms as normal).
- For guidance regarding specific symptoms of illness, staff/students/parents/guardians can:
  - use the [Self-Assessment Tool](#);
  - call 8-1-1 or their family physician for guidance.
  - use the [BCCDC Symptom Guide](#)
- If symptoms appear after arrival to work staff members must return home, students will be directed to a designated isolation area until a parent or guardian is able to pick them up. ABES Medical Room is the isolation Area.
- Staff Members who call in sick please contact Judith Lowe 250-949-0671 before the start of the work day to report your absence from work
- Should a student begin to exhibit signs of illness after arriving at school they will be immediately directed to a designated isolation area until parent/guardian pick-up can be arranged.
- Rooms will have hand sanitizer, a garbage can and tissues;
- A spray bottle containing Oxivir Plus and cloths will be available in the room;
- When room is in use it must have signage posted to avoid anyone else entering;
- Upon entering the isolation room the student will be required to wash their hands and don a mask;
- If a staff member is assigned to stay with the student while they are in the isolation room the staff member will wash their hands and don a mask and gloves;
- Prior to leaving the isolation room and before removing their mask and gloves, the staff member assigned to stay with the student will use the Oxivir Plus solution and provided cloth to wipe down all hard surfaces in the room.
- Remove mask and gloves and dispose of them in garbage can provided;
- Wash hands immediately after doffing mask and gloves and before exiting room;

- Once the isolation room has been used it must not be re-entered until a thorough disinfection and terminal cleaning has taken place. Leave signage on door until terminal cleaning is complete. Report the use of this room to the principal.

### Hand Hygiene

- All classrooms where students are present will be provided with a bottle of hand sanitizer solution for staff and students to use (please do not dispose of spray bottles when empty – return to custodians and they can request additional supplies from Tacan);
- All students will spray their hands with hand sanitizer solution prior to entering the classroom or where possible wash their hands with soap and water upon school entry and before/after breaks and eating, using washroom and using frequently touched shared equipment.
- Hand washing posters are displayed at all sites.
- There will also be hand sanitization stations located in the Hallway, and Handwashing stations in all of the bathrooms and in the Primary Classroom, as well as the secondary kitchen located off of the office.

### Respiratory Etiquette

Students and staff should:

- Cough and sneeze into their elbow, sleeve, or a tissue.
- Throw away used tissues and immediately perform hand hygiene.

### Food Services:

- Food distribution services are following regular operational and food safe practices
- There is not restriction to the bottle filler at the water fountains and students are encouraged to bring their own water bottle
  - If they do not have a water bottle, they request a cup for their use which is then placed in the dishwasher for cleaning.

### Physical Distancing and Space Arrangement

1. We will be reinforcing appropriate social distancing in all instances. As well, other measures will be considered to help create space between people to support staff and students using a trauma informed approach by making sure we:
  - Remind students and staff about respecting personal space.
  - Use signage and visual supports.
  - Use available space to spread out.
  - Implement strategies to prevent crowding in areas where people may gather, at pick up and drop off times.
  - Stagger class transitions times.
  - Manage flow of people in common areas, including hallways.
- Students will be expected to enter and exit through their designated classroom outside entrances using the existing social distancing markings on the school floor and walls as guidelines;

- Classroom Teachers will reinforce personal space with students and use available space within classrooms to spread out in the classroom, reinforcing no touching, no sharing of food or supplies and no congregating in common areas
- Students will remain in their designated classrooms as much as possible with no congregating in common areas
- Prior to dismissal students will spray their hands with hand sanitizer solution;
- Upon dismissal students will be encourage to leave the building as quickly as possible and avoid congregating in common areas.

### Personal Protective Equipment- Masks

#### **The PHO Order – Face Coverings, requires all students, staff and visitors to wear a mask indoors at school.**

#### **Everyone who is able to (i.e., does not have a mask exemption) must wear a mask.**

Reminders will be communicated to students (and their parents/caregivers) and staff that includes:

- Wearing masks at school is required under a public health order.
- Proper fit is a key factor in mask effectiveness. Masks worn at school should fit well.
- Masks are most effective when everyone who is able to is wearing one.
- Those with mask exemptions continue to follow any strategies identified to reinforce and enhance other safety measures.
  - Those not able to wear a mask all day continue to be encouraged to wear one as much as they're able to.
- Administrators and staff use positive and inclusive approaches, aligned with existing professional practices to address non-compliant behaviour for those able to wear masks.
- For those with mask exemptions, administrators and staff support other strategies identified to reinforce and enhance other safety measures (as outlined in the Planning Resource: Mask Exemptions).
- For those with mask exemptions, alternative strategies identified are adjusted if needed, based on the additional prevention measures.

As indicated above, all K-7 staff are required to wear a mask or a face shield (in which case a mask should be worn in addition to the face shield) indoors in schools and on school buses. Additionally;

- All students in grades K-7 are required to wear a mask indoors in schools and on school buses.
- Our school (ABES) will have non-medical masks available for students who forget theirs.
- All visitors are required to wear a mask when they are inside a school or at a school site.

### Supporting Students with Diverse Abilities/Disabilities

- Supporting students with disabilities/diverse abilities may require staff providing support services to be in close physical proximity or in physical contact with a student.
- When staff are working with a student indoors, and the service cannot be provided from behind a barrier, staff are required to wear a non-medical mask, a face covering or a face shield.
- Students in Grades K to 7 are also required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering when receiving services indoors and a barrier is not present.

### Cleaning and Disinfecting

Increased cleaning and disinfecting is ongoing and will continue throughout the school including:

- Custodian(s) will rotate through the school on an ongoing basis ensuring all touch points are disinfected continually and that supplies are topped up as needed;
- custodian will perform regular cleaning duties as well as continued disinfecting
- Terminal cleaning will be performed each day after staff and students have left the building for the day from 4:00-7:00pm.

#### Visitor Access

- Visitors are limited to those that are supporting activities that are of direct benefit to student learning and wellbeing including: teacher candidates, immunizers, etc.
- Itinerant Staff, Teachers on Call, School district personnel not usually on site, and all other visitors are aware of school's health and safety measures, and have completed a daily health check prior to entering the school, and will understand their responsibility to follow them at all times.
- Parents are encouraged to make appointments with the staff they wish to visit. At this time telephone or zoom conferences are encouraged until otherwise advised by the School Board/Public Health Office
- Information for visitors is posted by the entrance to the school, on the school's website and included in communications to students and families.
- Parents/caregivers are encouraged to drop-off/pick-up students outside of the school.
- Exterior doors, including main school entrances, will be kept locked during the day to limit entry to facilities.

#### Ventilation and Circulation

- The District will ensure that heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort for workers (Part 4 of the OHS Regulation).
- School Districts should regularly maintain HVAC systems for proper operation and ensure that schools with recycled/recirculated air systems upgrade their current filters to a minimum MERV 13 filter or higher if possible.
- Where possible, natural ventilation should be maximized by opening windows and doors.
- Where possible, consider moving activities, such as lunch, classes, and physical activity outdoors when weather permits.

#### Staff Only Spaces

- Until otherwise indicated, all staff meetings, in-service and professional development activities will be held virtually – when able gatherings such as meetings, pro-d, etc will be held with respect to room occupancy limits, using available space to spread people out, as well as considering virtual options dependent staff comfort levels
  - Gatherings must occur in line with those permitted as per relevant local, regional, provincial and federal public health recommendations and Orders and any related WorkSafe BC guidance.
- Utilize floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow and prevent crowding (e.g. in the staff room, by the photocopier, etc.).
- Masks must be worn unless eating or drinking; see PPE mask requirements for staff.

#### School Gatherings and Events

- Due to Provincial Guidelines, school gatherings and events will be held virtually whenever possible. In addition;

- When planning assemblies or school gatherings, we will be respecting student and staff comfort levels regarding personal space.
- Use space available to spread people out as much as possible, respecting room occupancy limits, and ensuring enough space is available to prevent involuntary physical contact between attendees (i.e. overcrowding), does not exceed 50% of operating capacity, and spectators are not present.
- Extracurricular activities in the form of sports tournaments are paused.

### Personal Items

- Staff and students can continue to bring personal items to school, but they should be encouraged to not share items that come in contact with the mouth
- We will continue to manage the flow of students in hallways to minimize crowding and allow for ease of people passing through.

### Bussing – Part One:

- Private vehicle use or active transportation (e.g. biking, walking, etc.) by students is encouraged as much as possible;
- Bus drivers should wash or sanitize hands prior to entering bus;
- Masks and visors are to be worn during loading and unloading of students;
- Students are to clean their hands prior to leaving home to take the bus, when they leave school prior to boarding bus, and when they arrive home;
- Windows remain open as weather allows,
- If a driver suspects a student has symptoms of illness they will remain at the stop and contact Tacan via radio for further direction;
- Students will be directed to take the first open seat from the back of the bus forward and should have assigned seats whenever possible should the need for contact tracing occur;
- All students and staff are required to wear non-medical masks at all times while on the bus.
  - Exceptions will be made for those who are unable to wear a mask because they do not tolerate it for health or behavioural reasons, those who are unable to put on or remove a mask without the assistance of another person and while eating or drinking;

### Bussing – Part Two:

- Students should be spread out if empty seats are available;
- Students will not board the bus until the student in front of them is completely up the stairs;
- Students will be directed to exit the bus from the front first maintaining proper spacing as they exit;
- Touch points will be sanitized between runs and at the end of the day.

### General Overview:

At ABES, we will:

- encourage outside play whenever possible;
- Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the day;
- Common areas are marked with floor markings and signage to direct traffic flow;
- Procedures are in place to avoid crowding in common spaces;
- Outside volunteers may be permitted in certain instances; please check with Mrs. Lowe
- Promoting safety measures in the school through the use of visual aids like floor markings and signage are in place

### ADMINISTRATION:

- Will be reviewing the Updated Communicable Disease Guidelines with all staff prior to their return to in-class instruction;
- Will continue to reinforce the need for all staff to use the [daily health check](#) to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory diseases prior to entering the school;
- Will repeatedly remind and clearly communicate with parents/guardians their responsibility to complete an informal daily health check for their child/children **before** sending them to school;
- Will continue to communicate with parents/guardians what the process is for student drop-off and pick-up.

#### **Part 4- Monitor and Update plan as Necessary**

As new information becomes available we will:

- Ensure staff/parents are provided with any new information in a timely manner and review with staff the process for reporting any concerns;
- Establish a central location where new information relating to communicable diseases is posted in your workplace – on our OH&S board;
- Establish a process for regular review of communicable disease plans with:
  - District Joint Health and Safety Committee;
  - Site based Health and Safety Committee;
  - Staff
  - Partner Groups