**Background**

**COVID-19**

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses found mostly in animals. In humans, they can cause diseases ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS). The disease caused by the new coronavirus has been named COVID-19. While many of the characteristics of COVID-19 are still unknown, mild to severe illness has been reported for confirmed cases. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic in March 2020.

The BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool is available for anyone that develops symptoms and can be used to help determine if you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.

Link to BC COVID-19 Self- Assessment <https://bc.thrive.health/>

**Symptoms**

The symptoms of COVID-19 are similar to other respiratory illnesses including the flu and common cold. Symptoms include:

* Fever
* Chills
* New or worsening cough
* Sneezing
* Shortness of breath
* Sore throat and painful swallowing
* Stuffy or runny nose
* Loss of sense of smell
* Headache/Muscle aches
* Fatigue
* Loss of appetite

Symptoms can range from mild to severe. Sometimes people with COVID-19 have mild illness, but their symptoms may suddenly worsen in a few days. People infected with COVID-19 may also experience gastrointestinal symptoms like diarrhea, nausea and vomiting a few days after the onset of the above symptoms. If you only have gastrointestinal symptoms you may not have COVID-19. The symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

**What to do if You have Symptoms**

When a student is symptomatic, they shall self-isolate and follow direction provided by their health care provider. Self-isolation is also advised for those who are considered to be a close contact of a confirmed case and are waiting to see if they develop COVID-19 illness. If a person

is found to be a confirmed case of COVID-19, Public Health staff will ensure there is robust contact tracing and management of any cluster outbreaks. Public Health will ensure that students, staff and parents have access to health care providers and that appropriate supports are in place. The BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool is available for anyone that develops symptoms and can be used to help determine if you need further assessment or testing for COVID-19.

**COVID-19 and Children and Youth**

* COVID-19 virus has a very low infection rate in children and youth. In BC, less than 1% of children and youth tested have been COVID-19 positive. Most children and youth are not at high risk for COVID-19 infection.
* Children under 1 year of age and those who are immunocompromised or have pre-existing pulmonary conditions are at a higher risk of severe disease (visit the BCCDC Priority Populations page for further details).
* Children and youth typically have much milder symptoms of COVID-19 most often presenting with low-grade fever and a dry cough. Gastrointestinal symptoms are more common over the course of disease, while skin changes and lesions, are less common.
* Many children have asymptomatic disease. However, there is no conclusive evidence that children who are asymptomatic pose a risk to other children or to adults.
* Evidence indicates transmission involving children is primarily limited to household settings, and from COVID-19 positive adults to children. Most cases in children have been linked to a symptomatic household member.
* Clusters and outbreaks involving children and youth are unusual and tend only to occur in areas where there are high levels of community spread.
* Children are not the primary drivers of COVID-19 spread in schools or in community settings.
* Schools and childcare facility closures have significant negative mental health and socioeconomic impacts on vulnerable children and youth.
* Prevention measures and mitigation strategies involving children and youth must be commensurate with risk.
* Adolescent children should physically distance themselves where possible when outside the family unit or household. For younger children maintaining physical distance is less practical and the focus should be on minimizing physical contact instead.

**Transmission**

Coronaviruses are not known to spread through ventilation systems or through water. Coronaviruses are most commonly spread from an infected person through:

* Respiratory droplets when coughing or sneezing.
* Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hands.
* Touching something with the virus on it, then touching eyes, nose, or mouth before washing hands.

**COVID-19 Standard Precautions and Controls**

**1. Stay home if you are sick**

No staff or student who have symptoms of the common cold, influenza, COVID-19 like symptoms, are not allowed to enter the building.

Health Screening will include the following questions:

Do you have any of the following symptoms?

* + Fever or chills,
  + Cough or shortness of breath,
  + Sore throat *and* painful swallowing,
  + Stuffy or runny nose,
  + Sneezing
  + Loss of sense of smell or loss of appetite,
  + Fatigue,
  + Headache or muscle ache.

**2. Hand Washing is Essential**

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. Thoroughly washing your hands with soap and water is the best protection against illness.

Follow this instruction for handwashing:

1. Wet hands with running water.
2. Apply a small amount of liquid soap. Antibacterial soap is not required.
3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (sing the ABC’s). Rub palms, backs of hands, between fingers and under nails/creating a lather.
4. Rinse off all soap with running water.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
6. Turn off taps, using the paper towel – if required.

**Students Will Be Washing Their Hands:**

1. Immediately upon arrival at school and before going home.
2. Immediately after sneezing, coughing, or using a tissue.
3. Immediately after using the toilet.
4. Before and after eating, and drinking
5. After handling common resources such as equipment or supplies.
6. Before and after any transitions within the school setting (e.g. going to the library, going to the gym etc.).
7. Before and after any break, e.g. lunch and recess
8. Whenever hands are visibly dirty or greasy.

**3. Refrain From Touching Your Face**

* Try not to touch your face, eyes, nose or mouth (especially with unwashed hands).

**4. Respiratory Etiquette**

Respiratory etiquette includes the following components:

* Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing or cough and sneeze into the bend of your arm, not your hands.
* Use tissues to contain secretions and dispose of them promptly in a waste container. Wash hands immediately.
* Turn your head away from others when coughing or sneezing.

**School Site Protocol Hatzic Elementary**

1. No individual (staff or student) who exhibits any of the following symptoms will be permitted to enter the building:
   1. fever.
   2. dry cough.
   3. aches and pains.
   4. nasal congestion.
   5. runny nose.
   6. Sneezing.
   7. sore throat.
   8. diarrhea.
2. All individuals who enter the building (staff, students and “visitors who have an appointment”) are required to complete a Health Screening. A copy of the Health Screening can be found in Appendix A.
3. All “visitors” who enter the school with an appointment will be required to sign in at the front entrance. This documentation is required for Public Health contact tracing.

**Before coming to school:**

1. Parents are reminded to do a daily health check to assess their child for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school. Anyone who is symptomatic or becomes symptomatic during the day will be sent home.

Daily Health Check Questions (If you answered “Yes” to any of the following questions, your student needs to stay home)

* 1. Have they been ill in the last 24 hours?
  2. Do they have any of the following symptoms?

▪ Fever or chills,

▪ Cough or shortness of breath,

▪ Sore throat *and* painful swallowing,

▪ Stuffy or runny nose,

▪ Loss of sense of smell or loss of appetite,

▪ Headache or muscle ache.

1. Ensure that your child has a lunch, full water bottle, appropriate clothing for the weather, and their school supplies. We have a water bottle filling station, but water fountains are not to be used.
2. Please remind them to practice physical distancing and minimize physical contact.

Some key talking points:

* 1. Don’t forget to wash your hands at your classroom sink when entering and before exiting the classroom.
  2. Don’t forget to give other people space when we are waiting to get into the classroom.
  3. Don’t forget to keep your hands to yourself.
  4. Don’t forget to spread out while playing outside at recess and lunch.

**Arrival at school:**

1. Students are asked to arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 (regular school time with some leeway for late arrival) and be outside their classroom door while maintaining social distancing. Teachers will begin letting in students at 8:30 allowing students to wash their hands when they enter the room.
2. Parents are not allowed to enter the building when dropping off their student. Access to the school by non-district personnel, including parents, is by appointment only. The district requires that principals approve all visits.

**In the Classroom:**

Each classroom will look a little bit different depending on the learning needs and developmental age of the students.

* Students will be using desks or round tables with considerations for physical space.
* Furniture will be spaced out allowing for easy movement around the classroom. This measure is in place to avoid physical contact between students as they transition between activities.
* Each classroom sink will be stocked with soap for appropriate hand washing.
* Only one student will be permitted at the sink at any given time.
* If a student needs to leave the room for any reason (bathroom, refill their water bottle etc.) only one student will be permitted in the hallway per classroom. This will help with any congestion in the hallways.

**Learning Groups:**

Learning groups are comprised of no more than 60 students, Education Assistants, and Teachers who work and play in regular proximity to each other. Students in the same class and learning group are not required to be physically distant according to the guidelines set out by the Provincial COVID-19 Health and Safety Guidelines for K-12 Settings. However, physical spacing is encouraged and promoted. As such, the learning groups will be able to partner in

school activities as well as play together at recess and lunch. See the section on Recess and Lunch for more details.

**If a student gets sick at school:**

The student would be taken to the “sick room” across from the Principals office. The parent will be called to pick up their student and if needed the emergency contact will be called if the parent is unavailable. A mask will be worn by the adult supervising the student and if the student needs assistance and physical distancing cannot be maintained, the student will be asked to wear a mask as well. The student would remain in the sick room until picked up. If your absence is due to COVID like symptoms, you are required to stay home until you are asymptomatic, or the severity of your symptoms has decreased. If you have a COVID test, you must remain home until the results are back. If you have a negative COVID test, you can return to school, when you are feeling better. If you test positive for COVID, you are required to stay home for 10 days or you no longer have symptoms whichever is longer.

**School Supplies:**

School supply list are available on the school website and was emailed to parents in June. We are not allowing students to share supplies at this time. Please bring a water bottle that can be refilled. The water fountain will be closed but the water refill station will remain open.

**Masks**

The Provincial Health Officer has not recommended that Elementary school age children wear masks. The BC Ministry of Education Guidelines for Schools state that they are optional for Elementary students, a personal choice. If your child feels more comfortable wearing a mask they should. Please understand that if your student chooses to wear a mask, staff are not permitted to help students with the process. Please teach your child how to take on and off the mask. Each student will be provided with 2 masks for your family’s convenience.

**Dismissal:**

Primary dismissal time will be between 2:10-2:23. Teachers will open their doors at this time and dismiss students to parents/guardians that are at the door. Please remember to maintain your physical distancing. All students in kindergarten-grade 3 are required to have a parent/guardian pick up their student. If you have more than one student to pick up between these ages you would unfortunately have to go to both doors. This is because we cannot mix learning groups within the school. All Intermediate students (grade 4 -grade 6) will be dismissed at 2:23 through a staggered dismissal. Parents/guardians must remain outside of the school when picking up their children. We kindly ask that once you pick up your student, you continue to respect social distancing guidelines with other families. This includes limiting your time on school property after pickup.

**If you need to contact a staff member:**

At this time, we are encouraging communication between staff and our parent/guardian community, through emails or phone calls. If you need to speak with a staff member in person, you must make an appointment. Once an appointment is made, please come to the front door of the office. The door will be locked. You will then call the school (604 826 2481), our phone number will be posted on the door as well. Please tell the person who answers the phone that you have an appointment and who the appointment is with. You will be asked a serious of Heath Questions as part of the Health Screen (see below). Without the screening, you will not be permitted to enter. All visitors are asked to wear a mask when in the building until they have reached their destination. If physically distancing is possible at the meeting location, the mask can be removed. When you enter the building, a sign in sheet will be on a table to your left. Please sign in and leave your contact information. This information is for tracking purposes only

and will be given to Public Health if there was need for the information. All sign in sheets will be shredded once they are no longer deemed necessary.

Health Check Questions prior to entry

1. Have you been ill in the last 24 hours?
2. Do you have any of the following symptoms?

▪ Fever or chills,

▪ Cough or shortness of breath,

▪ Sore throat *and* painful swallowing,

▪ Sneezing,

▪ Stuffy or runny nose,

▪ Loss of sense of smell or loss of appetite,

▪ Headache or muscle ache.

1. Have you or someone in your household traveled outside of Canada in the last 14 days?

**Transitions**

To avoid greater than one class moving in the hallway, we have staggered the times that classes leave for library, PE and music, or have alternative entrances and exits for these rooms.

**Assemblies and Fieldtrips:**

At this time, there are no formal school assemblies or fieldtrips. The Health and Safety Committee are looking at other alternatives to these school events.

**Hot Lunches and Concession:**

At this time, there will be no concession on Wednesday and Friday. For our concession to open we must follow the guidelines of the province under “restaurant protocols” and unfortunately, our kitchen is too small to meet the requirements.

The hot lunch program will continue however, the options of which hot lunches are available to meet requirements will change. For example, there will be no “hotdog” day.

**Recess and Lunch**

Primary and Intermediate students will have a designated play area during recess and lunch that will be with their learning groups for the first few weeks at school. During this time, students will be taught and encouraged to maintain physical distance with all students while outside. This will be modeled and taught while students are in their learning groups. Once students practice and learn how to physical distance from others, playground areas will open to all students at recess and lunch, with only half of the school population outside during this time.

**Sports Teams**

At this time there will be no official sports teams at the school. This is because students and coaches are from different learning groups. I would be difficult for a coach to physically distance and for players to not share equipment. At this time, there is also no competitions amongst district schools or between other districts.