



SAINT MARY'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

NURTURING THE HEART, MIND & SPIRIT

Return to School Policy

Updated: May 21, 2020

Introduction:

With a return to school for students at St. Mary's School there have been many considerations in implementing strategies and policies to minimize risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19. This policy is to ensure that the school can operate safely.

Procedure:

1. An assessment of the risk at St. Mary's School (places people congregate, identifying jobs where people are in close proximity with one another, materials and equipment exchanged, surfaces often touched) completed by the Health and Safety Committee at school. There will be regular bi-monthly assessments by this team after school re-opens.
2. Protocols addressing who can be at the school, how to address illness that arise at school and how staff and students can be kept safe in adjusted working conditions will be communicated.
3. Protocols for maintaining physical distancing will be expected and monitored. When physical distancing cannot be maintained, staff and students would be expected to wear a mask and if needed gloves.
4. The school will address cleaning and hygiene. This will include providing adequate hand-washing facilities, a policy for staff and students addressing hand-washing and cleaning protocols for all common areas and surfaces in the school.
5. Communication plans and training to ensure that everyone entering the workplace, including workers from other employers, knows how to keep themselves safe while at St. Mary's.

At present, symptoms currently associated with COVID-19 are similar to many common respiratory illnesses that may be circulating through schools. Key strategies to prevent

and control respiratory viruses, including COVID-19, in schools and childcare settings are:

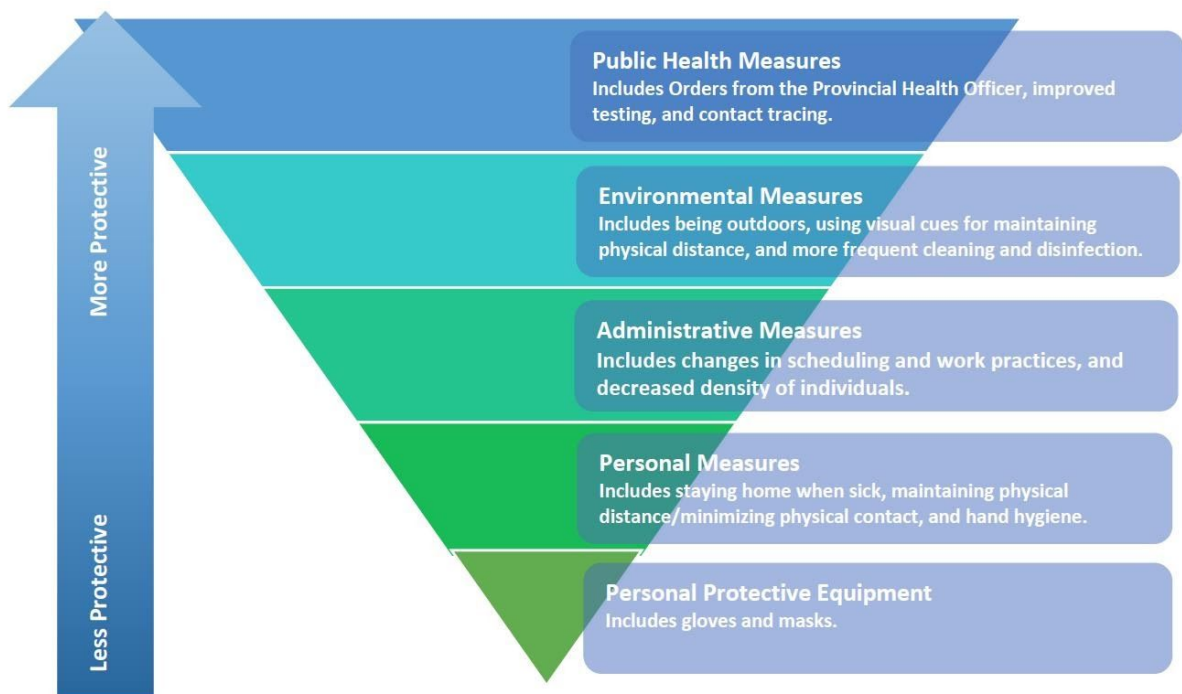
- For students and staff who are ill with fever and/or infectious respiratory symptoms to stay home from school/childcare
- The consistent practice of good respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene
- To ensure regular and routine environmental cleaning of the facility

Guidelines from WorkSafe BC, Vancouver Coastal Health, Public Health Guidance from the Government of Canada, BC Centre for Disease Control as well as guidelines and recommendations from our provincial health officer have been considered.

Infection Prevention & Exposure Control Measures:

Infection prevention and exposure control measures help create a safe environment for students and staff. Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease describes measures that can be taken to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Control measures at the top are more effective and protective than those at the bottom. By implementing a combination of measures at each level the risk of COVID-19 is substantially reduced.

Infection Prevention and Exposure Control Measures for Communicable Disease



Public Health Measures:

1. Mass Gatherings:

- The PHO order for mass gatherings prohibits gatherings and events of no more than 50 people.
- In a school environment, there can be more than 50 people (students & staff) in a school at a given time if they are not all in one area and are actively engaged in physical distancing to the greatest extent possible.
- No large assemblies of staff or students to be held.

2. Case Finding, Contact Tracing & Outbreak Management:

- Staff and Students (Families) should screen themselves daily prior to leaving their homes.
- Active testing of people with mild COVID-19 like symptoms (case finding) helps us identify cases early in the course of their disease, determine whether others in close contact with them are at risk for infection (contact tracing), and ensure they get appropriate care and follow-up. We are in communication with public health for consultation on the possibility of early identification of clusters and outbreaks. Enhancing policies regarding reporting employees and student absenteeism to public health can be helpful in early identification of clusters and outbreaks.
- Should a COVID-19 positive person be identified by public health staff, significant efforts are undertaken to determine if they are part of a cluster of cases or part of a local outbreak. Specific public health measures are implemented in facilities where an outbreak occurs to prevent further transmission of COVID-19 and keep others safe in school or workplace.
- Quarantine is a term typically reserved for persons who return from travel outside the country and are at risk of developing COVID-19.

Protocols for staff and students who may start to feel ill while at school:

Staff will immediately report to Administration/Office staff that they are feeling ill who will make the necessary accommodations for the staff member to leave the school grounds as soon as possible. A child would need to report to a staff member. If a staff member notices symptoms from a child, the staff member would report these observations immediately to Administration/Office staff.

The staff member would be asked to wait in the Meeting Room by the PE office or another appropriate space alone so that accommodations can be made for his/her replacement. The staff member/staff would wear a face mask and gloves. Tissues

would be provided to ensure their use with respiratory etiquette. Proper disposal of the tissue and hand hygiene should be performed after coughing or sneezing.

Work (desk area) of a potentially ill staff member would be sanitized. Staff members replacing ill staff would wear a face mask and gloves. Further environmental cleaning will be conducted as deemed appropriate.

Should the ill staff member be able to drive home on their own, he/she is expected to go home directly and follow self-isolation protocol outlined above. Arrangements will be made for ill staff members who do not feel well enough to get home on their own (calling a family member, etc.)

Signage would be posted outside the room and there would be environmental cleaning of the space the staff/student was separated to. This would be conducted once the staff or student has left. The replacement teacher and class would move to another location so that the space can be fully cleaned.

Environmental Measures:

Good cleaning and disinfection are essential to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in BC.

- Extra daytime cleaning help hired for 4 hours per day for frequently touched surfaces: to wipe down desk tops and tables during breaks and lunch, clean washrooms after breaks and during the day, wipe all light switches, door handles, handrails every hour, lunch rooms. Washroom and classroom doors will remain open to minimize touching of surfaces.
- Use of school-sanctioned and approved cleaning materials. General cleaning products will be available and accessible for staff in their classrooms and hallways. Staff will participate in some cleaning in their own work spaces. Specialized products will be used by janitorial staff and kept in the janitor's closets.
- Fixed playground equipment will be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Disabling water fountains for personal drinking; but filling of water bottles permitted (touchless)
- Limit the not easily cleaned items (fabric, soft items, etc.)
- Garbage and paper recycling emptied daily.
- Wear protective gear (gloves, masks, etc.) when cleaning blood or bodily fluids (runny noses, vomit, etc.)
- Wash hands before and after removing gloves.

- Current recommendations say there is no need to limit the distribution or sharing of books or paper based educational resources to students because of COVID-19.

Physical Distancing & Minimizing Physical Contact:

- A distance of 2 metres and above between 2 or more people is challenging in schools unless from the same household.
- Expectations will vary depending on age levels and activities.
- Younger students will need to be supported to minimize physical contact with one another.

Physical distance strategies at school:

- Physical distancing signage will be visible at all school entrances by posters, signboards and floor decals.
- Worksafe Occupancy Limit posters placed in each room upon assessment.
- OFFA protocols followed as a guide for employers and occupational first aid attendee. (24 employees are certified)
- Use tape to mark off 2 metre distances around desks, tables, etc.
- Plexi-glass shield installed at office and at group tables.
- 100 Pylons distributed and placed outside and in hallways for line-ups
- Avoid close greetings (hugs, handshakes, etc.)
- Regular reminders of “keeping your hands to yourself”
- Spread out and consider a different learning environment - classroom desk/table formations, playground, etc. allowing for the distance between students and staff.
- Take students outside as often as possible.
- Organize learning activities and unstructure time outside. School playgrounds can be used keeping the required distance and cleaned daily.
- Students will be asked to wear masks for group activities.
- Use activities that involve movement, group sports activities can be done but in an organized and thoughtful manner.
- Implement appropriate hand hygiene practices, before, during and after outdoor play.
- Organize students into smaller groups that can stay together throughout the day.
- Minimize the number of different teachers and educational assistants that will interact with the groups of students throughout the day.

Student Arrival and Departure

- Students will have a staggered arrival and departure times. (TBD)

- By Vehicle: Students will be dropped off using the front parking lot alongside the curb. Parents will not get out of the vehicle. Staff members will be assigned to complete a daily Health Assessment at the car window and assist students to the drop off area by the gym door. If the student is in good health, s/he will exit the vehicle on the opposite side with another staff member directing the child up the ramp to the gym door. Floor decals will indicate the appropriate 2m physical distancing. Once the student is clear from the vehicle the parent can drive out of the lot.
- By Walking: Students will be dropped off by the gym door where a health assessment will take place. The parent walks out of the lot.
- If a student is late, the parent would notify the school before arrival and report to the main door for check-in. A Health Assessment will be conducted to ensure safe access to the school. The student would be picked up and escorted to his or her classroom.

Staff/Student Daily Health Self-Assessment Check Questions:

- How are you feeling today?
 - How is your child feeling today?
 - Does your child have a cough, cold, or fever?
 - Is anyone in your family at home feeling sick or is sick?
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- Upon entering the building, the student will be directed to a washroom to wash his or her hands in the washroom in the gym foyer. There will be marked areas in the foyer for students to manage social distancing. The student will then be directed by staff to his or her classroom. Classes will stay with their teacher whenever possible.
 - At the designated pick up times, students will wait in the gym and be placed 2m apart according to guidelines. Parents will walk up the gym ramp and ask a staff member for their child(ren). The student will be retrieved from the gym and brought to the parent who is waiting outside.

Visitors to the school:

- Signage, including sandwich boards and posters, will clearly indicate physical distancing is in effect at St. Mary's and be in place at all entrances.
- All visitors will be reminded to avoid entering if they have any symptoms of COVID-19.

- A telecommunication system is available at the front door for visitors to communicate with the front office. Postal carriers and delivery drivers will be directed to enter the building and drop off mail or parcels at a designated location.
- We kindly ask all visitors to use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer upon entrance to the school.
- Masks are available for visitors at the main door.
- Parents will not enter the school without permission or an appointment. Parents with permission or appointments will be asked to identify themselves at the intercom and report to the office on the second floor once let in the building. Parents should wait outside the office as indicated by the floor decal 2m apart. If drop off of paperwork is necessary, there will be a bin outside the school to leave any items and an office staff member will retrieve it.

Recess & Lunch Breaks:

- Classes will have staggered recess and lunch breaks according to a schedule to limit numbers outside.
- All staff will be assigned supervision throughout the week from 8:30-3:30 and recess and lunch breaks will be provided as usual.
- Students will be expected to have their own lunch and snacks packed in their school bags for the day. There will be no lunch drop off outside the office or at the front door.
- For staff, coffee stations will be available in the staff room and downstairs kitchen area. There are two microwaves available in each area for warming up food. A refrigerator is available in both kitchens.

School Bus:

- Bus will be cleaned and disinfected according to the BCCDC's standards.
- A physical barrier could be used between driver and passengers.
- Students sit in their own seats, with no more than one student in a seat.
- Students from the same household can share a seat on the bus.

Buildings and Classrooms:

- Students & Staff are to wash their hands/sanitize prior to and after entering or leaving the building. Follow distinct markings and signs in the hallways for proper hallway flow. Keeping a distance of 2m apart and hands to ourselves

Entering Classes:

- Try to refrain from touching doorknobs and light switches.
- Upon entering the classrooms, staff & students must wash/sanitize their hands.
- Maintain 2m distance.
- Bring all supplies, backpacks and lunches to their desk and “safe space”.
- The use of washrooms is limited, so a designated bathroom period prior to “outside time”, with EAs in every classroom (K-3)
- Students may enter one door and exit from the other as determined by the classroom teacher.
- Protocols for bringing material into and out of schools (eg. bags, school supplies, etc). This would include students keeping their lunches, water bottles, personal belongings and supplies for school in their school bag. School bags will be kept by the student’s desk at all times.

Office:

- Upon entering the office, please ensure your hands have been washed/sanitized.
- Maintain 2m distance and respect the shields on the desks.
- Staff washrooms:
- Wash hands before and after entering and exiting the washrooms.
- Lunches and drinks are consumed in the classrooms.

LRC:

- Students & Staff are to wash their hands/sanitize prior to and after entering or leaving the LRC.
- Try to refrain from touching doorknobs and light switches.
- Maintain 2m distance
- Bring all supplies
- When more than one student or staff/student use the safety shield to separate.

Fine Arts Annex:

- Use the right door to enter and left to exit
- Staff and students are to sanitize their hands prior and after entering or leaving the building.
- Maintain 2m distance.
- Sit in designated chairs or space on the carpet.

- Room specifics to be determined by Music Teacher adhering to work safe and provincial guidelines.

Library:

- Use the right door to enter and the left door to exit.
- Students & staff are to wash their hands/sanitize prior to and after entering or leaving the room.
- Maintain 2m distance.
- Room specifics will be determined by the library teacher adhering to work safe and provincial guidelines.

Gym:

- The staff & students should wash/sanitize their hands prior to entering the gym.
- The use of equipment should be individual, minimal to no sharing.
- Maintain 2m distance.
- Washrooms: Two at a time.
- Rooms specifics will be determined by the PE teacher adhering to work safe and provincial guidelines.
- Utilize outside spaces and small groups as much as possible.

Use of Devices:

- Ensure school devices are up to date and have the necessary programs for remote learning.
- Students are to use school devices, please refrain from letting outside devices into the school and classrooms unless otherwise specified.
- Students and staff should have washed/sanitized hands when handling devices.
- Keep devices away from food or drink.
- Devices should be cleaned at the end of every usage or day.
- Students are encouraged to reuse the same device each day, minimizing contact with another person's device.

Personal Measures:

Stay home when sick.

- All students and staff who have symptoms of COVID-19 OR travelled outside Canada in the last 14 days OR were identified as a close contact of a confirmed case or outbreak must stay home and self-isolate, including children of essential service workers who are ill.

- Parents and caregivers must assess their child daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other infectious respiratory disease before sending them to school.
- Staff must assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, or COVID-19 prior to entering the school.
- School Administrators must ensure school staff are aware of their responsibility to assess themselves daily for symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19 or other infectious respiratory disease prior to entering the school.
- School Administrators must:
 1. Clearly communicate with parents and caregivers their responsibility to assess their children daily before sending them to school.
 2. Alternatively, conduct daily checks for respiratory illness at drop-off by asking parents and caregivers to confirm the child does not have symptoms of common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory disease.
 3. Establish procedures for students and staff who become sick while at school to be sent home as soon as possible.
- Those unsure of if they or a student should self-isolate should be directed to use the BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool.
- If concerned, they can be advised to contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further input.
- They can also be advised to contact a family physician or nurse practitioner to be assessed for COVID-19 and other infectious respiratory diseases.
- There is no role for screening students or staff for symptoms, checking temperatures, or COVID-19 testing. Such activities are reserved for health care professionals.

Appendix B: What to Do if a Student or Staff Member Develops Symptoms at School

<i>If a Student Develops Symptoms of COVID-19</i>	<i>If a Staff Member Develops Symptoms of COVID-19</i>
IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:	IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT HOME:
Parents or caregivers must keep their child at home until they have been assessed by a health care provider to exclude COVID-19 or other infectious diseases, AND their symptoms have resolved.	Staff must be excluded from work and stay home for a minimum of 10 days from the onset of symptoms AND until symptoms resolve, whichever is longer.
IF STUDENT DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL:	IF STAFF DEVELOPS SYMPTOMS AT WORK:
<p>Staff must take the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immediately separate the symptomatic student from others in a supervised area. 2. Contact the student's parent or caregiver to pick them up as soon as possible. 3. Where possible, maintain a distance of 2 metres from the ill student. If not possible, staff may wear a mask if available and tolerated, or use a tissue to cover their nose and mouth. 4. Provide the student with tissues to cover their coughs or sneezes. Throw away used tissues as soon as possible and perform hand hygiene. 5. Avoid touching the student's body fluids (e.g., mucous, saliva). If you do, practice diligent hand hygiene. 6. Once the student is picked up, practice diligent hand hygiene. 7. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the student was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas). 8. Contact 811 or the local public health unit to notify them of a potential case and seek further input. <p>Parents or caregivers must pick up their child as soon as possible if they are notified their child is ill.</p>	<p>Staff should go home as soon as possible.</p> <p>If unable to leave immediately:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Symptomatic staff should separate themselves into an area away from others. 2. Maintain a distance of 2 metres from others. 3. Use a tissue or mask to cover their nose and mouth while they wait to be picked up. 4. Staff responsible for facility cleaning must clean and disinfect the space where the staff member was separated and any areas used by them (e.g., classroom, bathroom, common areas). 5. If concerned, contact 8-1-1 or the local public health unit to seek further input.
<p>If a student or staff member is assessed by their family physician or nurse practitioner and it is determined that they do NOT have COVID-19, they may return to school once symptoms resolve.</p>	

Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 (BC Centre for Disease Control):

- Stay at home when sick. Do not go to work, school, or public areas, do not use public transport or taxis. Symptoms may include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat and painful swallowing.
- Wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer often.

- Ask friends or relatives if you require help with buying groceries, other shopping or picking up medication. Alternatively, you can order groceries and medication by phone or online.
- Do not have visitors in your home except if they are providing care or delivering goods and supplies, and in that case, maintain a distance of 2 metres.
- Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces.

Fact Sheet [Dos and don'ts of self-isolation for contacts and travellers](#)

Hand Hygiene:

Rigorous hand washing with plain soap and water is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness. Everyone should practice diligent hand hygiene. Parents and staff can teach and reinforce these practices among students.

How to practice diligent hand hygiene:

- Wash hands with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - Antibacterial soap is not needed for COVID-19.
 - If sinks are not available (e.g., students and staff are outdoors), use alcohol-based hand rub containing at least 60% alcohol.
 - If hands are visibly soiled, alcohol-based hand rub may not be effective at eliminating respiratory viruses. Soap and water are preferred when hands are visibly dirty.
 - To learn about how to perform hand hygiene, please refer to the BCCDC's hand washing poster. (displayed at all sinks)
1. Wet hands with warm running water.
 2. Apply a liberal amount of liquid soap.
 3. Rub hands together for at least 20 seconds (sing 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. Discard the towel in the waste container.

Strategies to ensure diligent hand hygiene:

- Encourage hand washing with soap and water upon arrival at school and entry into school buildings and classrooms.
- Handwashing and sanitation stations will be available at locations throughout the school building.

- Regularly remind staff and students about the importance of diligent hand hygiene.
- Incorporate additional hand hygiene opportunities into the daily schedule.
- Ensure hand washing supplies are well stocked at all times including soap, paper towels, and where appropriate, alcohol-based hand rub with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Staff should assist younger students with hand hygiene where needed.
- Sinks in washrooms, kitchen areas, classrooms.
- In addition to existing sinks, increased numbers of hand sanitizing stations (wall mounted and secured) as well as tissues and waste receptacles to be provided
- Triton Hand sanitizer available in spray bottles at school entrance in each school space out of reach of children.
- Tru BioBalance hand rub is available for staff only.

Appendix C: When to Perform Hand Hygiene at School

When Students Should Perform Hand Hygiene:	When Staff Should Perform Hand Hygiene:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they arrive at school and before they go home. • Before and after any breaks (e.g., recess, lunch). • Between different learning environments (e.g., outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom). • Before and after eating and drinking. • After using the toilet. • After handling common resources/equipment/supplies or pets. • After sneezing or coughing into hands. • Whenever hands are visibly dirty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When they arrive at school and before they go home. • Before and after any breaks (e.g. recess, lunch). • Between different learning environments (e.g. outdoor-indoor transitions, from the gym to the classroom). • Before and after eating and drinking. • Before and after handling food or assisting students with eating. • Before and after giving medication to a student or self. • After using the toilet. • After contact with body fluids (i.e., runny noses, spit, vomit, blood). • After cleaning tasks. • After removing gloves. • After handling garbage. • Whenever hands are visibly dirty.

Respiratory Etiquette:

Students & Staff should:

- Cover the mouth and nose during coughing or sneezing with a tissue or a flexed elbow.
- Disposing of used tissues in a plastic-lined waste container
- Perform proper hand hygiene.
- Refrain from sharing food, drinks, utensils, or water bottles or other resources.

Personal Protective Equipment:

Wearing a non-medical or cloth mask or face covering is a matter of personal choice, but can help to protect others. Some people can spread the virus when they have very mild symptoms or may be unaware they are infected. In this case, wearing a mask can help protect others by containing your own droplets from coughing, sneezing, speaking or laughing. Wearing a cloth mask will not protect you from COVID-19, but is a good option in situations where you cannot keep a safe distance from others for an extended period of time (transit, getting a haircut or visiting someone indoors). Any mask, no matter how efficient at filtration or how good the seal will have minimal effect if it is not used together with other preventative measures, such as frequent handwashing and physical distancing.

Masks:

<http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/prevention-risks/masks>

- Masks may be irritating to children and may lead to increased touching of the face and eyes
- There will be a designated area on the upper and lower floor to pick up desired protective health equipment such as gloves, masks and face shields.
- Managing students with complex behaviours or on a care plan/health emergency may require staff to work in close proximity with a focus on minimizing physical contact instead.
- Treat those wearing masks with dignity and respect.
- Students working in groups should wear masks and may benefit from wearing their own personal mask throughout the day.

Cleaning and Disinfection:

- Administration and staff are reminded that Material Safety Data Sheets and product labels provide additional information regarding placement, storage and warnings associated with ABHS (alcohol-based hand sanitizers)

Supporting those self-monitoring for symptoms or self-isolating:

- Families are treated with respect, fairness and compassion with a focus on dignity and privacy protection
- Steps are taken to reduce the potential for stigma and discrimination
- If students are self-isolating at home, measures are in place to provide meaningful homework to students so they do not fall behind
- If students are self-monitoring for symptoms, measures are in place to recognize symptoms while in school/childcare and to separate sick students and staff from others if symptoms develop.

Appendix A: Summary of School-Based Control Measures



1. STAY HOME WHEN SICK

All children and staff with common cold, influenza, COVID-19, or other respiratory diseases must stay home and self-isolate.



2. HAND HYGIENE

Everyone should wash their hands more often!

Thorough hand washing with plain soap and water for at least 20 seconds is the most effective way to reduce the spread of illness.



3. RESPIRATORY AND PERSONAL HYGIENE

Cover your coughs.

Do not touch your face.

No sharing of food, drinks, or personal items.



4. PHYSICAL DISTANCING AND MINIMIZING PHYSICAL CONTACT

Spread children out to different areas.

Take them outside more often.

Stagger lunch times. Incorporate individual activities.

Remind children, "Hands to Yourself!"



5. CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least twice a day.

General cleaning of the centre should occur at least once a day.

Use common cleaning and disinfectant products.